



THE ANSWER

(Part - I)

Your quest

on

*Forgiveness, Sufferings,
Temptation, Fear and Faith*

By: Group Captain A Iruthaya Raj

PREFACE

"The Goodness of the Lord and his Glorious Presence are With all Israel forever." (1 Esdras 5:61)

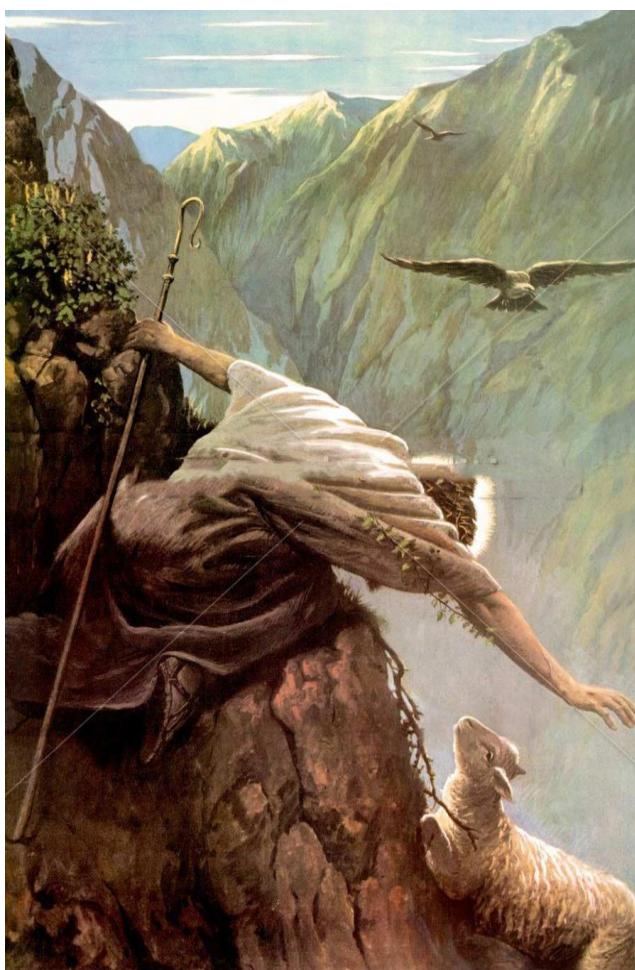
You are about to read a book "THE ANSWER: Part-I" which the author does not call it as a book, because, it is a discourse with God himself. My name is Group Captain A Iruthayaraj. I served the Indian Air force for 34 years. I am a firm believer in Christ. I had many spiritual encounters with Christ, which began in the year 1997. My encounter with Christ began when I experienced four major physical healing of incurable sickness during my first five days retreat at the Divine Mercy Retreat Centre, Chalakudy, Thrissur District, Kerala, India. My first five days retreat brought me close to our Lord Jesus Christ. Thereafter, I attended more than twenty such retreats in last twenty-three years at the same retreat centre through which my spiritual journey with our Lord continued with varied experiences.

My faith was put to test Jesus Christ! He gave me many more illnesses which did not respond for medicine. These illnesses were healed only through fasting, prayer & God's Words. After fasting Jesus will give me a Word of God through which my illness would be healed. ***In such experience, Jesus revealed me a great spiritual truth, that; our body is created by Words spoken by God, (Gen1:27) and our body will be healed by God's Words'.*** This understanding made me to fill myself with more & more God's Words and God's Promises.

In the year 2001, the Holy Spirit gave me an inspiration to make one (or) two-page hand-out through which I can convey to people about my spiritual understanding on certain doubts that were bothering them on spiritual issues. The Spirit gave me the questions which I started penning down, may be a few. The Spirit also guided me to answer them. Over a period, the questions multiplied like how the bread and fish multiplied when Jesus blessed them. (Luke 9:16)

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I answered all questions. The questions and answers continued to multiply! And the answers to the questions were compiled as books, which are; "The Answer Part-I & The Answer Part-II." When I offered myself in God's service, Jesus guided me to write eight more books in last twenty years. ***This is how my desire to pen down a small hand-out to enlighten people on certain spiritual issues bothering them, turned out to be books on 'Spiritual Truths'.*** These books; "The Answer Pt-I & Pt II and "God's Call for Repentance" Part-I and Part II are published in this web site.

Dear Believer, I am sure that these books will be of great help to revive your spiritual life. I pray for presence of the Holy Spirit to be with you to give understanding on the truths revealed in these books and reap full benefit of its contents. *'The Answer Part-I' speaks about Forgiveness of Sin, Human Sufferings, Fear, Temptation and Faith. Further, this book enlightens on; how to use God's Words as weapons (Eph 6:14-19 & 1 Tim 1:18) to fight against powers of darkness and win the world through faith. (1 Jn 5:4-5)* Therefore, the Satan will not like you to read this book, because; you will be enlightened on the evil tricks which he uses to lure people to indulge them in sin repeatedly, so that he can enslave them as captives & refugees. (Ezek 12:11-12) *Of-course Jesus & Mother Mary are always with us to protect from snares of the Evil One in this spiritual journey. Before reading the book, please pray for protection of 'Blood of Jesus' and Pray to Mary so that you will be shielded from all satanic attack.*



*“I will look for those that are lost, bring back those that wander off,
Bandage those that are hurt and heal those that are sick,
Because I am the Good Shepherd”.*
(Ezekiel 34:16)

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THE ANSWER FOR YOUR QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Is your mind pondering over certain questions concerning your spiritual life and Christian faith? Then you are fortunate to know the answers for those questions that are constantly disturbing you! You are chosen by God to know the answers for questions that are lying in the bottom of your heart. Though many times you searched for its answer, you were disappointed because; 'you did not get a convincing answer' for those questions that kept your heart burning.

Well, your favourite questions are listed in this book with answers that will give peace, joy, courage, strength, comfort and healing to your troubled, disturbed, wandered, disappointed, broken, rejected and ailing heart. The answer for the questions is given not out of author's imagination or out of his own theory, but the answers are based on Words from Good News Bible. (Today's English Version)

This book is based on the "Spiritual Truth" that; man, lives by "Words Spoken by God". For, his words are living words and his words endure forever. Yes, we live by word spoken by God, because:

His Words brings God's life-giving Spirit in to us. (Jn 6:63)

His Words brings healing (Ps 107:20, Prov 4:20-22, Wis 16:12)

His Words brings deliverance in our soul. (Heb 4:12)

His Words burns as a wall of fire to protect us. (Zech 2:5)

His Words brings light in our darkness. (Jn 8:12 & Is 42:16)

His Words guides and leads us. (Ps 119:105 & Is 30:20-22)

His Words gives grace to endure our sufferings. (2 Cor 12:9)

His Words counsels us in our desperate situations. (1 Jn 2:27)

His Words gives us peace in this lost world. (Jn14:27)

His Words brings peace which guide our decisions. (Col3:15)

His Words gives us the power to forgive others. (Lk 23:34)

His Words leads us to repent. (Wis 12:1-2 & Rom 2:4)

His Words forgives our sins. (Jn 8:11 Rom 8:1 & 33-34)

His words give us New Heart and obedient mind. (Ezek 11:19)

His Words brings eternal life. (Jn 11:25 & Acts 4:12)

His Words brings God's blessing upon mankind. (Is 55:10-11)

That's why Jesus Christ said that; "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God". (Mt 4:4)

QUESTION NO-1

WHO IS MY GOD?

Please read the answer given for the last question in the book "The Answer: Part II" which is also published in this same website after carefully reading all the questions and answers given the books "The Answer- Part -I & The Answer Part -II"

QUESTION NO-2

WHY DID GOD CREATE ME?

In this busy and troubled world no one has time to think; "Why God created man?" Because, man is always worried about his ever-increasing selfish desires. He is working tirelessly and endlessly to satisfy them. However, he never gets satisfied with what God has given, even if he gives plenty. His mind is not contented. So, endlessly man is chasing money, wealth, power and pleasure. Therefore, he has no time for himself & for God. It is time for us to take a break to examine ourselves to understand; "the purpose of creation"; why we are created and come into existence in the world?

What is the purpose of God's Creation?

We have been created to glorify God; for his Words says:

"They are my own people. I created them to bring me Glory." (Is 43:7)

"They will be my people and I will be their God. I will give them a single purpose in life to honour me for all time for their own good and the good of their descendants". (Jer 32:38-39)

*"Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you, who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself; but to God. He has bought you for a price. (Blood of Christ) **So use your body for God's glory.** (1 Cor 6:19-20)*

How do one glorify God' Spirit in his body? God said; "I the Lord almighty, I am Holy" I am the one you must fear. Because of my awesome holiness I am like a stone that people stumble over. (Is

8:13-14) *Because of God's awesome holiness, no one can glorify God's Spirit in his body unless he is holy. If we do not give up our sinful ways of living, the purpose for which God created us will be defeated. Hence, we are disappointing God and making him sad. For God's Word says; "How pain full it is to God when one of his people is lost from him". (Ps 116:15) Further his words say; "Do not make the Holy Spirit sad" by living in sin. (Eph 4:30 and 1 Thes 5:19 - 20)*

We Glorify God by giving-up sins: Yes, when we turn away from sins; by surrendering our body, mind and soul, God's Spirit will abide in us. The Spirit of Wisdom will take control of us in every thought, every word & every action. God's Spirit will strengthen us in his Words, in his Spirit and fill us with Power. (Wis 7:22-30) God's Spirit will transform us like a rock against powers of darkness, (Ezek 3:8-9) and make us as a bronze wall against Satan. (Jer 15 19-20) It will strengthen our spiritual life & give sure foundation. (1Pet 5:10)

If we offer ourselves as a thanks giving sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1) he will transform us inwardly (Rom 12:2) and use us as his instrument to spread the Good News on Repentance & Forgiveness. Yes, God will use us in the work of salvation as he says; *If anyone makes himself clean from all those evil things, he will be used for special purposes, because he is dedicated and useful to his Master, ready to be used for every good deed. Avoid passions of youth, strive for faith, love, peace & righteousness. (2Tim 2:21-22) God rewards those who offer themselves for God's service. He says; Wise leaders will shine with all the brightness of the sky. Those who taught many people to do what is right will shine like stars for ever. (Daniel 12:3)*

Dear believer, have you understood the purpose of your existence on earth?

Do you want to live a sinful life & cause pain to the Lord, your Creator and make the Holy Spirit sad? *Speak to God about it!*

You have been created to Glorify God's Spirit in your body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 6:19-21)

It is Time for Reflection

QUESTION NO-3

WHEN GOD CREATED MAN TO GLORIFY HIM, WHAT DID MAN DO?

DO WE HAVE FREEDOM TO CHOSE BETWEEN BLESSINGS & CURSE?

God created man to glorify God's Spirit in his body. He said; "They are my people. I created them to glorify me." (Is 43:7) St Paul said; "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you, who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself; but to God. He has bought you for a price. (Blood of Christ) So use your body for God's glory. (1 Cor 6:19-20) When God created man in his likeness, (Gen 1:27) God gave man freedom to choose either to obey God's Laws, live in his light & presence, and inherit all blessings. Or, to disobey God and lose blessings, his grace and his presence. There-by man will live in sinfulness and invite all miseries of the world upon himself. **Yes, God said; "I have now given you a choice between a blessing and a curse. (Duet 30:1) Today, I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death. (Duet 30:15) I am giving you a choice between life and death, between God's blessings and God's curse, and call heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Choose life! (Duet 30:19)** Here, when we speak about God's blessing, it is a life where we live in God's peace, joy, happiness, healthy life, power, authority, fruits & gifts of the Spirit. Finally, his blessing will lead us to eternal life. (Rom 6:23)

DOES GOD CURSE MAN?

When we talk about God's curse, it is not that God who created man in his own image & blessed him (Gen 1:27-28, 1 Pet 2:9-10, 1 Pet 3:9) will curse man to destroy him. If we choose to disobey God to live in sin, we make our own choice to lose God's blessings which God has kept for us according to his plan. (Jer 29:11) Consequently, we lose peace, joy, happiness, rest, fruits of Spirit & our health and we live in slavery as captives/refugees of Satan. (Ezek 12:11-12) **By living in sin, we invite all kind of miseries, sicknesses upon ourselves. Yes, our sin & wickedness bring sickness in our body and destroys it, (Prov 5:1-11) because Sin has the power to hurt our body. (Sir 19:4)** God says; Avoid sin as if it were a snake. If you go too near, it will sink its teeth into your soul like a lion & destroy you. If we indulge in sin, we will encounter such fate & lose blessings. **This is how we sin & invite curse upon ourselves by our disobedience. (Duet 26:15-68)**

By living in sin, we chose to lose God's presence in us. Yes, in disobedience we chose to lose God's grace, fruits & gifts of the Spirit. Thus, we live in miseries of this world which God calls as curse. God said; today I am giving you a choice between good & evil, between life & death. If you obey the commands of the Lord which I give you today, if you love him, obey Him, and keep all his laws, then you will prosper and become a nation of many people. The Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are about to occupy. (Duet 30:15-16)

DO WE HAVE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE BETWEEN LIFE & DEATH?

It is clear and beyond doubt that; God has given man freedom to choose life to inherit God's blessing in obedience or take curse upon himself by disobeying him. Yes, God has given us choice to choose between good and evil, between life and death, and between God's blessing and curse. When God gave freedom to choose, man chose to disobey God and preferred to live in sin and darkness. About such people Jesus said; ***"The light has come in to the world, but people love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil. Anyone who does evil things hates light and will not come in to the light because he does not want his evils deeds to be shown up.*** (Jn 3:19-20) Because people chose to live in darkness, (When people reject Jesus Christ and his teachings) they commit all kind of crime against humanity, such as; sexual abuse of women and children, infidelity, polygamy, murder, riots, atrocities, injustice, terrorism, abortion, prostitution, flesh trade etc. By indulging in such criminal acts man invite curse upon himself and live in grief & misery.

People encounter such awful situation, because; they have no reverence for God. There-by have invited miseries of the world upon themselves. St Paul explains how mankind have taken curse upon themselves by rejecting God and what are its consequences? He said; "They know God but they do not give him honour that belongs to him, nor do they thank him. Instead, their thoughts have become complete nonsense. Their empty minds are filled with darkness. They say that they are wise, but they are fools. Instead of worshipping immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles (Rom 1:20-23) "Because they do this, God has given them over to shameful passions. Even women pervert the natural use of their sex by unnatural acts. In the same way men give up natural sexual relation with women and burn with passion for each other. They sin against Ten Commandments. (Ex 20:1-5) ***Because man reject to honour immortal God & worship him, he loses blessings God promised. Thus, he invites spiritual death with-in him.***

DID MAN CHOSE CURSE TO LIVE IN DARKNESS?

Thus, human beings have gone away from God. They refuse to accept God's grace, blessings, joy, peace that comes from true worship. (Ps 15:1-5) By rejecting true God-Jesus, who is the light of the world (Mt 9:5) they have gone into darkness to live as slaves of sin. (Jn 8:34) Therefore, God asks man; *"Do you think I sent away my people like a man who divorces his wife? Where then are the papers of divorce? Do you think that I sold you into captivity like a man who sold his children as slaves? No. You went away because of your sins. You went away because of your crimes. (Is 50:1)* Yes, because people have turned away from God and his commandments (Ex 20:1-17) they have given up themselves to live unrighteous life as God said; 'everyone has sinned and gone away from the saving presence of God,' (Rom 3:23) and because of this appalling situation the whole world is under the power of sin/power of Satan. (Gal 3:22)

In disobedience mankind chose curse to live in darkness. Hence, they are bound by invisible chains, as God said; "Farmers shepherds and labourers out in the countryside (refers to whole mankind) were captured by the same inevitable fate (power of sin) and are bound in the darkness by the same invisible chain". (bondage of sinful life) (Wis 17:17) Because they refuse to keep in mind the true knowledge about God, he has given them over to do the things that they should not do. (Rom 1:26-28) They know that God's Law says that people who live in this way deserve death. Yet, not only they continue to do these very things, but they even approve others doing them. (Rom 1:32) Thus people have turned away from God. This is the fate of man today. (To know what God has spoken about such people, please read Rom 1:21-32) **Dear believer, are you also one among those in slavery & bound in darkness by invisible chains? (Wis 17:17) Speak to Jesus Christ about it. He is will redeem you from the awful situation you are in, because of the following reasons:**

- i) He is a God who loves you with an everlasting love. (Jer 31:3)
- ii) He is a God who wants to break all the chains that are binding you and set you free. (Nah 1:12-13)
- iii) He is a God who wants to bless you with a life in all its fullness. (Jn 10:10)
- iv) He is a God who wants to return the paradise that you lost due to sin. (Joel 2:25-26)
- v) He is a God who came down from heaven to redeem you from sins to give you the gift "eternal life". (Jn 3:16 & Rom 6:23)
- vi) **He is a God of impossible. (Luke 1:37) Nothing is too difficult for him and there is no limit for his power. (Num 11:23)**

QUESTION NO-4

WHY DO PEOPLE COMMIT CRIME & LIVE IN SIN?

ARE WE BLIND FOR SPIRITUAL TRUTHS?

When God created man in his own image, God blessed Adam & Eve, and said; "Have many children so that your children will live all over the earth and bring it under their control." (Gen 1:27-28) This blessing also includes; man should live in this world with all material blessings, (Duet 26:1-13) Spiritual blessings such as; fruits of the Holy Spirit, (Gal 5:22) gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:8-11) enduring grace (2 Cor 12:9) his word & his power, (Is 59:21) and authority over evil spirits. (Lk 10:19, Mk 16:17-18 & Mt 18:18) **After death & resurrection, Jesus Christ blessed the disciples with his own authority to forgive sins of believers who repent & confess their sins to them.** (Jn 20:21-23) Further, God willed mankind should live in love with one another so that God may live among them, as St John said; "No one has ever seen God. But if we love one another, God lives in union with us & his love is made perfect in us". (1Jn 4:12) By living in this manner man will glorify God in his life. (1 Cor 6:19-21)

WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR MAN?

However, the Satan who disobeyed God, earned enmity with him, works against God's will. (1 Pet 5:8) God's will for man is; "Man should glorify God in his life". Yes, God said; "They are my people; I created them to bring me glory." (Is 43:7) Yes, God said; "Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit where God lives." (1 Cor 3:16-17) Therefore, God warns us saying; "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself but to God. He bought you for a price. (Blood of Jesus). So, use your body for God's Glory. (1Cor6:19-20) God wants man should glorify his Spirit in him.

The Satan who knows God's will, is roaming around the world like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Pet 5:8) The Satan tempts us, lures us and deceives us to indulge in sin. Once we commit sin, we allow evil spirits to abide in our body. (Jer 9:21) When evil spirits abide in us, they captivate our soul & body. (Ezek 12:11-12) & abuse our body by making us to commit sin repeatedly. (Rom 7:14-20) This is how the evil spirits enter us and makes us to disobey God and deceives us do all kind evil deeds against man and

against God. St Paul said; because of our sin, the whole mankind has become slaves of the ruling spirits of the universe". (Galatians 4: 3)

Yes, we are enslaved by the worthless deceit of human wisdom which comes from the teachings handed down by men and from the ruling spirits of the universe and not from Christ. (Col 2:8) Yes, such awful thing has happened to mankind because; "The Gospel that is preached is hidden. It is hidden from only those who are getting lost. They do not believe, because their minds have been kept in dark by the evil God of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light shining on them, the light that comes from Good News about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God." (2 Cor 4:3 - 4)

Thus, the evil spirits blind our mind for spiritual truth and keeps us in darkness. Therefore, we are blind for spiritual truth that; "God created us to glorify God's Spirit in our body". Yes, we can glorify God's Spirit in us only by remaining Holy in everything, for God said; Be holy, for I the Lord who called you is holy.' (1 Pet 1:15)

IS THE POWER OF SIN DRIVING US TO COMMIT SIN?

In the present world we see that people commit repeated crimes such as murder, rape, gang rape, terrorism, prostitution, extra marital affairs, abuse of tongue, sinful bodily pleasures such as; addiction for liquor & drugs, sex, watching pornography etc. People also become greedy for money, power, wealth, status and position which leads to enmity and division amongst them. We can go on adding many crimes / sins to this list. People who indulge in such sins are blinded for the truth that; they are created to glorify God by living a life which pleases God. (Eph 5:10, 17, Ps 15:1-5 & Is 58:6-12) In their darkness, they are kept under the clutches of Satan as slaves and he abuse their body by indulging them in crimes & sin.

Many time criminals who were caught, were asked why they committed that crime? They have confessed that; 'they had no intention for committing that crime, "but something within them forced them to do it". What is this 'something with-in them' which drives human-beings to do this act of crime/sin, repeatedly? It is the power of sin which drives man to live against God's will. (Rom 7:17)

IS THERE CONFLICT WITH-IN MAN?

This 'Power' which drives man to do things against his will is known as 'Conflict in Man'. St Paul said: "I do not understand what I do; for I don't do what I would like to do; but instead, I do what I hate. Since what I do is what I do not want to do, this shows that I agree

that the Law is right. So, I am not really the one who does these things: rather it is the sin that lives in me. I know that good does not live in me-that is, in my human nature. For even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it. I don't do the good that I want to do: instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do. If I do what I do not want to do, this means that, I am no longer the one who does it; instead, it is the sin that lives in me". (Romans 7:14-20) This is how Scriptures explains the power of sin which forces man to indulge sin & crimes repeatedly and makes him live as slaves of sin.

ARE WE IGNORANT ON THE INFLUENCE OF EVIL OVER US?

From the above discourse, it is very clear that evil spirits enter the human beings, captivate their soul and influence them to do evil acts against each other and against God, repeatedly, without even realising why they are doing so. Well, many time people don't even know or understand that their soul is under the influence of evil spirits and hence they are committing crimes & sins repeatedly much to their dislike. Yes, to the dismay, people do not enjoy committing sin/crime, but still they indulge in those sinful acts because they have become slaves of evil spirits/Satan. Because of people's ignorance on this truth, Jesus, while he was hanging on the cross, said; "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Lk 23:34)

People who betrayed, judged, scourged, persecuted & crucified Jesus were under the influence of the evil spirits. They thought; 'by killing Jesus, they were doing a service to God and mankind, for they said; "It is good for one man to die for the good of mankind". (Jn 11:50) Because, the Satan had influenced their mind to that extent and kept them in darkness to commit such crime against Son of God. (Jn 19:6)

Are we bound by invisible chains? When we commit sin/crime, we are come under the influence of evil spirits as King Solomon said *"People of this world are captured by the same inevitable fate (Sin) and are bound in darkness by the same invisible chain by Satan.* (Wis 17:17) This is the reason why people repeatedly commit sin & crime, and sin against their own body through sexual sins. (1 Cor 6:18) They commit sin against God by worshipping things that are created instead of worshipping the Creator. (Exodus 20:1-5 & Rom 1:21-30)

***Dear believer, take a break in life to understand why you commit same sin repeatedly?
You will understand the truth!***

QUESTION NO – 5

WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL TRUTH ABOUT SIN?

Well, if you have realized that you are living in bondage of sin or if you have understood that you are living as slaves for sin & crimes, then it is a great blessing. Because only a person who realises that he is in bandage of sin/crime will try to break free from the bondage with the help of the Holy Spirit, who is our helper. (Jn 14: 16 & 26) Yes dear believer, God who created you, who knew you even before you were conceived in your mother's womb (Jer 1:4-5) and loves with an everlasting love (Jer 31:3) wants to help you to come out of the slavery of sin. Yes, God offers you solution to deliver you from this awful situation. He says; *'The word of God is alive and active sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through where our soul and spirit (evil spirit) meet and to where joints and marrow come together and sets you free'*. (Hebrews 4:12)

"IS OUR SOUL ENSLAVED BY EVIL SPIRITS"?

In the previous Chapter we understood that we indulge in sin, because we are influenced, we are tempted and we are driven by the evil spirits to commit sin, as explained by St Paul, that; 'we commit sin because there is a 'Conflict in Us' (Romans 7:14-20) Further, God says that; if we commit sin, the evil spirits enslave our soul. Yes, when we commit sin, we invite evil spirits in us. That is why God says, "Do not make my Temple as house of robbers." (Jer 7:11) Yes, our body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16) where God lives. But if we get tempted and commit sin, (Jas 1:14-15) then the evil spirits abide in our body and they enslave us as slaves of sin, because Jesus said; "A person who sins, is a slave of sin". (Jn 8:34 & Rom 6:16) We must be aware that evil spirits are roaming around the world like roaring lions looking for someone to devour. (1Pet 5:8)

But these evil spirits cannot enter our body & soul without our consent. Because, God has promised to protect us from the evil spirits, saying; that he will burn around as a wall of fire. *Yes, God promised that; "the Lord himself will be a wall fire round the city (human beings) to protect it (to protect us from the powers of darkness) and he will live there (our body) in all his glory."* (Zech2:5)

This gives a clear understanding that our body belongs to the Lord and that, he burns around us as a wall of fire to protect us from the powers of darkness. If our body is God's temple, and if God is

burning around us as a wall of fire to protect us all time, then, how do the Satan enter our body & soul? Very interesting question, isn't it? The Scriptures gives answer/explanation for this question. Yes, God explains how the evil spirits enter the human body, soul and make them as captives and refugees, when we sin. (Ezek 12: 11-12)

DO WE INVITE EVIL SPIRITS IN OUR BODY & SOUL?

The answer is 'Yes'. We do extend invitation to Satan for him to enter our body and soul. How? When a person is tempted, he is drawn away and trapped by his own evil desire. His evil desire conceives & gives birth to sin. Sin when it is full grown gives birth to death. (Jas 1:14-15) Yes, when we are tempted, lured by the Satan, we choose to exercise our freedom to yield for sin. We choose to do evil in our thoughts, in our words, in our actions, in our relations with others, and in our worship. When we displease God by going against his will, we do things that pleases the Devil and invite him in our life. *Thus, we invite evil spirits to enter our body/soul by committing sin.*

IS GOD BURNING AROUND US AS A WALL OF FIRE?

Now let us understand what happens when we sin? *"The Lord has promised that he himself will be a wall of fire around the city (his people) to protect it (from Satan) and that he will live there in all his glory. (God will dwell in our body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit)" (Zech 2:5)* These words give us clear understanding that; God is burning around us as a wall of fire to protect us from the evil spirits. God gave this promise because; God knows that we, human beings, are weak in flesh to resist sin and so he wanted to protect us from temptations & sin. Jesus said; Human spirit is willing, (to remain holy) but their flesh is weak for sin. (Mt 26:41) The Satan is wanting to use our weaknesses to deceive us in temptations, and enter our body through sin, to steal our blessings & destroy us, as Jesus said; "the thief comes only in order to steal, kill and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life. Life in all its fulness". (John 10:10)

St James said; "When a person is tempted, he is drawn away and trapped by his own evil desires. (Jas 1:14) At this juncture, when we go through 'the moments of temptation', God gives us a choice; either to reject temptations by strengthening ourselves by observing fasting & prayer or to yield for temptations and commit sin. If we exercise our freedom and chose to commit sin, instead of rejecting temptations, then our evil desire conceives & gives birth to sin. When sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death in soul. (Jas 1:15)

At the time when we are tempted, if we give in for desires to commit sin, we deceive ourselves & yield for sin. The evil spirits have no authority to break the wall of fire which is burning around us, because God has placed this wall to protect us from sin. That is why they cleverly tempt us, trigger our weakness/desires to commit sin, so that we with our consent and free will breach this wall of fire.

When we are deceived to commit, we dig a hole in the wall fire & breach the wall of fire that God has placed around us to protect us from evil spirits. Yes, dear believers, it is we, with our own consent and conscious will, we dig a hole in the wall of fire for the evil spirits to enter our body & soul, as explained by Prophet Ezekiel, who spoke about this spiritual truth in his book. He said; "they (we) will be refugees & captives. The prince (the Satan) who is ruling them will shoulder his pack (shoulder us with burden of sin) in dark & escape through the hole that they dig for him in the wall." (Ezek 12:11-12)

Once the evil spirits enter us, they make captive & abuse our body, there-by we commit sin. Yes, when the evil spirits enter our life, they abuse us, by luring us to commit sin repeatedly and bind our soul with invisible chains. Thus, we lose joy, peace and become restless, because our sins take away our freedom and privilege of being God's free people. St Paul said; 'Freedom is what we have in Christ. Christ has set us free! Stand then as free people. Do not allow your freedom to make yourselves to become slaves again. (Gal 5:1) Prophet Baruch said; "Do not surrender your glorious privilege of being God's free people to others (Satan). Happy are people of Israel, you have the advantage of knowing what pleases God". (Bar 4: 3-4)

Once Satan enters our body, he makes us do all evil/filthy actions against man and against God. Having committed sin, the Satan binds our soul with invisible chains and escapes through the hole that we made for him in the wall of fire. We become captives for crimes & prisoners for sins as God said; "Do you think I sold you into captivity like a man who sells his children as slaves? No, you went away captives because of your sins; you were sent away because of your crimes'. (Is 50:1) Yes, dear believers, we invite evil spirits in our body and soul and they bind us with invisible chains. (Wis 17:17)

ARE WE BOUND BY INVISIBLE CHAINS?

Once the evil spirits enter us, they bind our soul with invisible chains. Thus, we lose freedom to rejoice in the Lord (Phil 4:4) and we lose peace that Christ offers us. (Jn14:27) Also, we lose freedom

in our mind and body, because our soul is bound by invisible chains. King Solomon explained this spiritual truth. He said; "Farmers, shepherds, and laborers (refers to mankind) out in the countryside (all over the world) were captured by the same inevitable fate (Sin) and bound in the darkness by the same invisible chain. (Wis 17:17)

And King David said: "Some were living in gloom & darkness, prisoners suffering in chains. Because they had rebelled against the commands of the Almighty God and had rejected his instructions. Thus, the evil spirits which enter our body and soul bind us with invisible chains, make us captives & refugees and force us to indulge in sin repeatedly as explained in the previous chapter. That's why criminals when they confess, say that; 'I did not do this crime of my own will. But something with-in me was forcing me to do it; and I did it'. This is how human beings are enslaved by the evil spirits and we become slaves of the ruling spirits of the universe. (Galatians 4:3)

WILL GOD DELIEVER US FROM THESE INVISIBLE CHAINS?

God who knows that we are weak for sin & our weaknesses, and so we will fall in sin repeatedly & will be bound by invisible chains. But God in his mercies and ever-enduring love, has not left us to our destiny to remain as captives & refugees for the Satan forever. For Jesus said; "When I go, I will not leave you as orphans" (Jn 14:18) "I will ask the Father to send you a helper who will be with you forever". He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive him, because it cannot see him or know him. But you know him, because he remains with you and is in you". (Jn 14:16-17) "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you." (Jn 14:26) The Holy Spirit is our deliverer, comforter & teacher who will break the invisible chains that are binding us. The Spirit is mark of God's ownership on you, a guarantee that the Day will come (which it is today) when God will set you free." (Eph 4:30)

Yes, the Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive all that Gods has promised his people, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his." (Eph 1:14) This is how God has promised to deliver his children who are bound by invisible chains. Yes, he Promised; "Even though the Assyrians are strong and numerous they will be destroyed & disappear. My people I made you suffer, but I will not do it again. I will now end the power of Assyrians over you and break the chains that bind you. (Nah 1:12-13) Yes, the word of God is alive and active sharper than any double-edged sword

and it cuts all the way through where our soul and spirit (evil spirit) meet and to where joints and marrow come together and set you free". (Heb 4:12) Here God says that; "his Word is a double-edged sword". It will penetrate/enter between our soul and the evil spirits which have enslaved the soul and deliver our soul from the evil spirits. Yes, the Spirit of God will deliver our soul from its captivity, because of the Holy Spirit is the deliverer. For, where ever there is Spirit of God is present there is freedom from bondages. (2 Cor 3:17)

About our deliverance God says; "Now I have heard the groaning of the Israelites whom the Egyptians (evil spirits) have enslaved. I have remembered my covenant with them. So, tell the Israelites that I say to them; "I am the Lord, I will rescue you and set you free from your slavery to the Egyptians. (Refers to the evil spirits who have captivated our souls) I will raise my mighty arm to bring terrible punishment upon them and I will save you. I will make you my own people and I will be your God. And you will know that I am your Lord your God, when I set you free from the slavery in Egypt." (Ex 6:5-7) And when I break the chains of those who made them slave, they will know the I am their Lord. (Ezekiel 34:27)

Our God continues to speak about deliverance of captives from the invisible chains. He said;

- *Because of my covenant with you that was sealed with blood of sacrifices, I will set you free from this water less pit of exile. (Zech 9:11)*
- *Look up heavens; look at the earth! The heavens will disappear like a smoke; and all people will die like flies. But the deliverance I bring will last forever; my victory will be final. (Isaiah 50:6)*
- *Listen to me who know what is right, who have my teachings fixed in your hearts. Do not be afraid when people (evil spirits) taunt you & insult you. They (evil habits/bondages) will vanish like moth eaten clothing! But the deliverance I bring will last for ever; my victory will endure for all time. (Isaiah 50:7-8)*

**Dear Believers in Christ, are you enslaved for evil habits / bondages or for in sinful relations?
Meditate on these words to experience
deliverance in your
Body & Soul!**

QUESTION NO-6

WILL GOD FORGIVE MY SINS & CRIMES?

This is the question which troubles many faithful people. Yes, many faithful believers have this doubt in their mind. Having committed grievous sins/crimes, in faith they confess their sins to a Priest in the R C Church according to the promise for forgiveness given Jesus after resurrection. *Jesus said to his disciples; Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."* (Jn 20:21-23) This is the Sacrament of Confession which is the 'Ministry of Forgiveness' instituted by Jesus for forgiving sins of believers who truly repent for their sins & confess them to Priests who are consecrated disciples of Jesus in the Roman Catholic Church.

Yet, having confessed their sins, they still have doubt that; "Will God forgive my crimes/sins"? They doubt words of Jesus, who said; if his disciples forgive sins of believers who repent & confess to them, their sins are forgiven. Having confessed sins, they doubt their action taken in faith. Hence, it is sin for them, because, they doubt their faith. **For God says; any action not based on faith is sin. (Rom 14:23) Yes, it is sin to doubt the action taken based on Word of God.**

It means; 'If you doubt your action which you have taken in faith according to Word of God' then, you displease God by your doubting attitude. Because, God puts people right with himself; it is through faith from the beginning to end. God says; "A person who is put right with God through faith shall live." (Rom 1:17) He becomes righteous, not only by having faith in God's Word, but by doing what God said, without doubting." (Rom 4:3) People doubt the forgiveness given by Jesus in the Sacrament of Confession, because; they fail to realise that; Jesus, 'the only Son of God' shed his precious blood for forgiveness of sins of Mankind. (Jn3:16) And, on the Cross Jesus took all sins of Mankind upon himself because of which all hurts caused by our sins (Sir 19:4) are healed by wounds which Jesus suffered. (1 Pet 2:24) **It means; "All our sins are nailed to Cross and hence we are forgiven by the power of death and resurrection of Jesus Christ".**

Yes, St Paul said; "You were at one time spiritually dead, because of your sins and because you were Gentiles without Law. But now, God has brought you to life with Christ. God forgave us all

our sins; he cancelled the unfavourable records of our debts with its binding rules and did away with it completely by nailing it to the Cross. And on the Cross Christ freed himself from the power of the spiritual rulers and authorities; he made a public spectacle of them by leading them as captives in his victory procession. (Col 2:13-15) Thus, Paul explains how all our sin are nailed to Cross and how by the Power of death of Christ on Cross our sins are forgiven, if we act in faith according to words spoken by Jesus, written in Jn 20:21-23.

Therefore, God calls believers to repose faith in the Sacrament of Confession which is "Ministry of Forgiveness" instituted by Jesus Christ after resurrection. Jesus established the Sacrament of Confession by giving his own authority to the disciples to forgive sins of believers who repent and confess their sins to them. Consequently, in the Sacrament of Confession; 'the authority of Jesus to forgive sins operate/comes alive to forgive sins of believers. (Lk 5:24 & Mt 28:18) *If believers repent for their sins truly, and confess them to the Priests who are disciples of Jesus and are the 'Ministers' of Roman Catholic Church, their sins are forgiven forever, because, Jesus said to his disciples; "If you forgive sins of people, they are forgiven in heaven". (Jn 20:21-23) And 'I will forgive their sins and I will no longer remember their wrongs.'* (Heb 8: 12)

After resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and said; "Peace be with you. As Father has sent me, so I send you". Then he breathed upon them & said; "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive sins of people, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." (Jn 20:21-23) This promise for forgiveness of sin is fulfilled in the Sacrament of Confession, because; **Jesus is truly present in Spirit in the form of the Priest in the confession & forgives sins of believers. He never remembers sins which we have confessed.**

Yes, Jesus said to his disciples "Whatever you prohibit on earth it will be prohibited in heaven. Whatever you Permit on earth (if you permit sins to be forgiven on earth) will be permitted in heaven. (Those sins will also be forgiven in haven) (Mt 16:19 & 18:18) Consequently, if Disciples of Jesus (Priests) forgive sins of believers who repent and confess their sins to them, their sins are forgiven by Jesus in heaven.

This is the Spiritual truth about the Sacrament of Confession. People who truly repent for their sins and confess them, receive healing in soul (spiritual deliverance) and healing in body (healing of sicknesses) by the power of anointment of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confession, because the power of Christ works in them.

DID GOD PROMISE TO FORGIVE OUR SINS?

Jesus loves sinners and not their sins: When Jesus Christ came to the world, this is what he said about sinners:

- *"I came to seek the lost. I came for the sinners." (Mt 9:12-13)*
- *"People who live in darkness (sin) will see a great light. On those who live in dark land of death the light will shine." (Mt 4:16)*
- *"Happy are those who know that they are spiritually poor (living in sin) for the kingdom of God belongs to them. (Mt 5:3)*

All these words of Jesus undoubtedly confirm that; we, in our human body are living in sinful nature. Yes, we are born in flesh, which is weak for sin. So, we are bound to fall in sin. That's why Jesus said; **the flesh is weak (for sin) but the spirit is willing.** (Mt 26 : 41)

Jesus knows that we are weak in flesh and so we will commit sin repeatedly. *But what he expects in a sinner is 'true repentance'.*

When we realise our sins and make a firm commitment to Jesus that "I will not to sin again and give-up sins or turn away from my sins", and make sincere attempt to turn away from those sins, which is true repentance, then Jesus promises to forgive our sins unconditionally. He said; *Because of my covenant with mankind that was sealed by blood of sacrifices (His sacrifice on cross) I will set my people free from the waterless pit of exile."* (Zech 9:11) Yes, Jesus promises to cleanse our sins with his precious blood to restore our lost paradise.

Many believers are not able to believe in this promise for forgiveness. Therefore, God continues to speak about his forgiveness and says:

- *"However red your sins are, I will pour my blood and cleanse them and make it as white as wool." (Is 1:18)*
- *"I will forgive their sins and will no longer remember their wrongs" (Heb 8:12)*
- *"I will not remember their sins and evil deeds any longer. So, when these have been forgiven, an offering to take away sins is no longer required. (Heb 10:17-18)*
- *"I am the God who forgives your sins and I do this because of who I am. I will not hold your sins against you. (Is 43:25)*
- *"I have swept away your sins like a cloud. Come back to me; I am the LORD who can save you." (Is 44: 22)*

All these promises give us unconditional assurance that God will forgive our sins and take us back into his kingdom. That is why out of his everlasting love, three times God said;

- *"Turn back to me, I will turn back to you." (Mal 3:7)*

- "Return to me, I will return to you". (Zach 1:3)
- "Come near to God, and he will come near to you." (Jas 4:8)

*Are you accepting God's unconditional offer for forgiveness by repenting with broken heart and return back to God? **If you repent truly, God will give you the grace to accept his forgiveness!***

"IS THE SATAN DECIEVEING OUR MIND ON FORGIVENESS?"

The Satan lures a person to fall in sin. (Jas 1:14-15) Then he makes him a captive for sin and abuse his body by luring him to commit sin repeatedly. Thus, he becomes a slave for sin. However, through abundance of God's grace (Rom 5:20) and with help of the Holy Spirit, we repent (Rom 2:4 & Wis 12:1-2) and raise from sin in Spirit. (Rom 8:11) We confess sins to a Priest in R C Church and receive absolution. This is the truth & true faith which the RC Church teaches believers. However, the Stan – the cunning beast deceives believers mind by instilling doubt about forgiveness which Jesus gives in the Sacrament of Confession. This doubt takes away peace in mind & rest in soul which Jesus gives by forgiving our sins in the Sacrament of Confession. Thus, the Stan hold us as captives for guilt.

This is how the Satan deceives our mind, thereby, believers are kept blind for the free gift of forgiveness given by God through Jesus, for his words says: "Sin pays its wage-death; but God's free gift is 'eternal life' (through his forgiveness) in union with Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 6:23) Because believers do not trust in this promise, they are bound in guilt of their sins and lose peace, rest, joy & deliverance that Jesus offers to them in the Sacrament of Confession.

Now one may ask a question, "Why do we have to confess our sins only to a Priest in Roman Catholic Apostolic Church? Can't we confess sin directly to God"? Will not God forgive our sins?

This is a very important and valid question! Every believer in Jesus must know the right biblical answer! Let me support the answer with the Words spoken by 'God the Father' and Words spoken by 'Jesus Christ' so that, there is no argument over this spiritual truth.

Now let us first listen to what God the Father said:

At the time when Jesus was baptised in the river Jordan, God the Father said: He is my beloved Son; obey his teachings. (Mt3:17)

At the time of transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, in the presence of Peter, James & John, Jesus was speaking with Moses &

Elijah. "While Jesus was still speaking, a shining cloud came over them and a voice from cloud said (Voice of the Father), "This is my Son with whom I am pleased; listen to him" (Mt 17:1-5, Lk9:28-35) *By saying so, God the Father conveyed that; Jesus is his heir to whom he has given power to forgive of sins of mankind. (Mt 28 :18)*

Now let us listen to what Jesus Christ said:

Jesus said; The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. By saying so, he forgave sins of the paralysed man who was lowered from the roof and healed him of his sickness. (Lk 5 :22-24)

Further, Jesus said: 'I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.' (Jn 14:11) And "No one can go to the Father except through me." (Jn 14:6) It means, we cannot pray to God the Father in heaven directly pleading for forgiveness of sins. *"Because, God the Father has placed Jesus as redeemer of the World to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given, as Jesus proclaimed; I have been given all authority in heaven & on earth, which include authority to forgive sins of mankind. (Mt 28:18)* It gives clear understanding that; "It is only through Jesus we receive forgiveness of sins through the Sacrament of Confession, instituted by Jesus as explained above.

And Jesus gave authority to disciples to continue the ministry of forgiveness of sins. Jesus gave his own authority to disciples, 'to forgive sins of believers'. He said; "Whatever you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven & whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven." (Mt 16:18-19 & 18:18) The meaning of this promise is; "if the disciples forgive sins of believers, they are forgiven in heaven". In succession, the disciples passed on this authority to Pope who in turn passed on the authority to forgive sins of believers to Bishops & Priests in RC Church to practice 'Ministry of Forgiveness' instituted by Jesus through Sacrament of Confession. The Priests are practicing Ministry of Jesus as Ministers of Church to forgive sins of believers on behalf of Jesus. By the power of Promise for Forgiveness given by Jesus after resurrection (Jn 20:21-23) it is Jesus himself who forgives sins through the Priests in the Sacrament of Confession.

Now let us listen to Jesus what said after resurrection:

Gospel of Mathew: After resurrection, Jesus drew near to disciples and said; *"I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.* (By saying so, Jesus reiterated that God has placed him as the only authority to forgive sin) Go, then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples; baptise them in the name of the Father, Son & the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. I will be with you always to the end of the age". (Mt 28:18-20)

By saying so, Jesus recalled the command, which he gave to the disciples 'on the authority he conferred upon them' to forgive sins when he did ministry, through his words as written in Mathew 18:18 where he said; "Whatever you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven & whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."

Gospel of John: After resurrection, Jesus said to his disciples; "Peace be with you. As Father has sent me, so I send you". Then, he breathed upon them and said; "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive sins of people, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." (Jn 20:21-23) This is the Sacrament of Confession.

Now let us listen to what the Scriptures says:

"If any one rejects the Son; Jesus Christ (His authority to forgive sins) he also rejects the Father". Whoever accepts the Son has the Father also. (1 Jn 2:23) It means; if you accept forgiveness given by Jesus in the Sacrament of Confession, it is as good as you are accepting forgiveness given by the Father in heaven.

The Scriptures further says; "Any one does not stay with the teachings of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God. Whoever does stay with the teaching, has both Father and Son. So then, if someone comes to you who does not bring this teaching (about the ministry of forgiveness of sins through Sacrament of Confession) do not welcome him in to your homes". (2 Jn: 9-10) It is very clear that; God the Father has placed Jesus as the only spiritual authority & ruler (Col 2:10) who is empowered to forgive sins. (Mt 28:18) **Therefore, Believers cannot confess sins directly to God the Father in heaven.**

The Scriptures further confirms this truth through St Paul. He said; "We receive forgiveness of our sins only through Jesus and that God has placed Jesus as the only authority to forgive sin," as we read here: **Because of God's love, he had already decided that through Jesus (It is through the ministry of forgiveness of sins which is the Sacrament of Confession instituted by Jesus after resurrection) he would make us his children-this was his will and purpose".** (Eph 1:5)

By the sacrificial death of Christ, we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. In all his wisdom and insight God did what he purposed and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ (by forgiving sins of mankind). This plan which God will complete when the time is right to bring all creation to gather, everything in heaven and on earth,

with Christ as head. (Eph 1:9-10). *Since Christ is the head for the Church, he is conferred with full authority to forgive sins of mankind because, "Jesus Christ has been placed as supreme authority over every spiritual ruler and authority." (Col 2:10) And Jesus Christ has given his own authority to his disciples to forgive sins of believers who repent and confess sins to them in the Sacrament of Confession.*

Words of St James: Based on the authority that was conferred by Jesus Christ on the apostles to forgive sins, St James said; "Confess your sins to one another, so that you will be healed." (Jas 5:16) Yes, if we confess our sins to Priests in Roman Catholic Church, who are Ministers of the Church, our sins will be forgiven and our soul will be delivered from invisible chains which bind them. (Psalm 107:13-14)

From the above discourse we clearly discern the following:

- God the Father sent Jesus Christ to redeem the mankind from the bondage of sin. (Jn 3:16 & Col 2:13-15)
- God the Father has told mankind to listen to Jesus and obey his teachings. (Mt 3:17, Mt 17:1-5 & Lk 9:28-35)
- Jesus proclaimed that; 'No one can go to Father for forgiveness of sin, except through him'. (Jn 14:6)
- While doing ministry, Jesus gave authority to the disciples to forgive sins of believers. (Mt 16:19 & Mt 18:18)
- After resurrection Jesus said; "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me by my Father in heaven." (Mt 28:18)
- After resurrection, Jesus appeared to disciples and gave his own authority to them, to forgive sins of believers. (Jn 20:21-23)
- St James said; "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you will be healed". (Jas 5:16)

Thus, the Scriptures reveal the spiritual truth, that; "as believers in Christ, we are to repent and confess our sins to a Priest in the RC Church to receive absolution of sins according to teachings of Jesus".

To put it in simple words:

God has given Jesus all authority over humanity, which includes; Authority to forgive sins. So, Jesus said "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on the earth". (Mt 28:18) Therefore; Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins of man. (Lk 5:22-24)

After resurrection, to continue his Ministry, Jesus conferred his own authority to forgive sins of mankind upon the Apostles who were the first Ministers of Church. (Jn 20:21-23) In continuation of this Ministry, in succession to apostles, this authority to forgive sins of

mankind was conferred by the apostles upon Pope, who in turn confers this authority to forgive sins of Mankind upon Bishops and Priests in Roman Catholic Apostolic Church. Thus, the Priests in Roman Catholic Apostolic Church receive authority of Jesus to forgive sins of believers, through the ministry established by Jesus to administer "Sacrament of Confession" which is being practiced now.

This is how forgiveness of sins in Sacrament of Confession works through the Ministry of Jesus Christ, in faith. And Jesus said; "Blessed are those who do not doubt me". (Mt 11:9) It means:

- *Do not doubt the authority of Jesus to forgive your sins.*
- *Do not doubt the Ministry of Forgiveness (Sacrament of Confession) which Jesus instituted through his Disciples, who are Pope, Bishops and Priests in Roman Catholic Apostolic Church who hear confession of believers and forgive their sins.*
- *Do not doubt the authority of Priests in RC Church to whom the Ministry of Jesus confers authority to forgive sins of believers.*

For further explanation on this subject, you may read Chapter-20: "Forgiveness of Sins by a Priest in Sacrament of Confession", in my Book; 'God's Call for Repentance-Part: I', hosted in this website.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ON FORGIVENESS GIVEN BY JESUS?

People who do not understand the truth on forgiveness of sins given by Jesus in 'Sacrament of Confession', punish themselves by various physical torments. Some think they are not worthy to live because of their sins & take extreme step to end life. There are examples in the Bible on one punishing himself & the other accepting forgiveness:

1. Judas Iscariot: He felt guilty & repented for betraying Jesus. But he did not return to Jesus. Because of guilt feeling, darkness around him rendered him to think he is not worthy of living which led him to commit suicide. (Mt 27:3-9) This will be the fate, if you repent and confess your sins to a Priest and yet live in the feeling of guilt after receiving forgiveness given by Jesus in the Sacrament of Confession.

2. Peter: Peter was very close to Jesus. Yet, he denied Jesus thrice before crucifixion. But Peter repented, returned to Jesus who forgave him and made him the foundation stone for the Church. (Mk 14:66-72) Most importantly, Peter accepted forgiveness given by Jesus. He did not hold to the guilt feeling; that he denied Jesus thrice. So, Peter could head the Church and brought glory to God through his Ministry.

3. The Prodigal Son: We also read in the Gospel of Luke, that; when the prodigal son realised his sins in squandering his life and wealth,

he came to his senses. He repented for his sins, came back to his father to ask for forgiveness with a repentant & broken heart. Seeing his repentance & humbleness, his father without questioning forgave him, accepted him as his son and celebrated his homecoming. (Luke 15: 11-24) The prodigal son also accepted the forgiveness given by his father. He rejoiced in his father's house, because he did not hold on to past sins and guilt feeling. Thus, he regained the lost paradise.

DO YOU DOUBT THE FORGIVENESS GIVEN BY JESUS?

Dear believers, are you living in bondage of guilt feeling after having confessed your sins to a Priest in R C Church. It is a satanic bondage which does not allow you to accept the forgiveness given by Jesus and to rejoice in the Joy of the Lord (Phil 4:4) and experience the peace & rest Christ gives in Sacrament of Confession.

Thus, the Satan keeps you as a slave for your own thoughts (Guilt feeling) lest you rely on Word of God (Prove 3:5) in which Jesus promised to forgive sins that we confess to his disciples. (Jn 20:21-23) It is a dangerous situation, for; "it is a sin to doubt your faith by not believing in forgiveness given by Jesus through a Priest in the Sacrament of Confession," because; "Any action that is not based on faith is sin". (Rom 14:23) Such a state of mind will destroy your life.

This is what Satan wants; "That we should fall in faith, and reject forgiveness given by Jesus and live in distress, pain, fear, anxiety so that our joyful life is destroyed". He comes to steal, kill & destroy. (Jn 10:10) If you accept forgiveness given by Jesus in the Sacrament of Confession, Jesus will give you life in all its fullness. (John 10:10)

Never doubt forgiveness offered by Christ through a Priest when you confess sins. In faith accept the gift of forgiveness given by Jesus in the Sacrament of confession. ***If you are still not convinced on forgiveness given by Jesus in confession, here are more promises for forgiveness which will deliver you from bondage of guilt feeling.***

- God makes all mankind his friends through Jesus Christ: God did not keep an account of their Sins." (2 Cor 5:19)
- God takes pleasure in forgiving sins & tramples them down under his foot & sends them to bottom of the sea. (Mic7:18-19)
- "As far as east is from the west, so far does the Lord remove our sins from us". (Ps 103:12)

Jesus said; "This is my blood, which seals God's Covenant, my blood poured out for many for forgiveness of sins". (Mt 26:28) ***Here, Christ used words "God's covenant" which means God's***

*promise to redeem mankind from sins through forgiveness he offered through Christ. This promise was made by Jesus Christ on his blood. **If you are still not convinced and if guilt feeling is hunting you, here is the final word which will heal your mind & reaffirm that God will not hold you guilty of sins for which you repented & have confessed.***

Who can accuse God's Chosen Children? God himself declares them not guilty. Who then will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus who died, or rather who was raised to life and is at the right-hand side of God pleading with him for us. Yes, Jesus Christ is pleading to God the Father for our forgiveness and salvation. (Romans 8:33-34)

Yes, my dear believer, remove the guilt feeling from your mind and set yourselves free from this bondage of guilt feeling, and in faith enjoy the freedom, joy and peace that Christ gives. **Because, there is no condemnation for those who live in union with Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:1) And, freedom is what we have in Christ. Jesus Christ has set us free from the bondage of sin & guilt! (Galatians 5:1)**

DO WE FORGIVE OURSELVES?

Many of us do not forgive ourselves for our sins and crimes. Hence, we punish ourselves in many ways, because, we continue to remain in guilt feeling even after confessing our sins and receiving absolution in the Sacrament of Confession. **It is very, very important to understand that; "this guilt feeling does not come from God. It comes from the Satan who is trying to prove all God's promises for forgiveness of sins given above are false & void. God's Promises to forgive sins are true & real because "God is faithful to all his promises and he is merciful in all his acts" (Ps 145:13) Yes, God is faithful to all his promises, for he cannot be false to himself. (2 Timothy 2:13)**

Hence, believers are unconditionally forgiven of their sins in true repentance & confession of sins. The Satan deceives our mind so that we will not trust in God's promises. Also, he destroys our faith in the spiritual truth on forgiveness of sins given in the Sacrament of Confession which was instituted by Jesus after death & resurrection.

Jesus said; Believe in God & believe in Me. (Jn 14:1) If you doubt, the Satan will make you to fall in faith. And you will doubt the forgiveness given by God through Jesus in the Sacrament of Confession and live in grief.

QUESTION NO-7

IS MY GOD REALLY LOVING ME?

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ON GOD'S LOVE AND CARE FOR MANKIND?

Well, the very fact you are alive to ask this question gives the answer that; 'God still loves you & cares for you'. Because, in spite of we being so sinful & unworthy of him, God has kept us alive out of his great mercies which endures for ever, (Ps 136:1 & 100:4-5) and out of his everlasting love. (Jer 31:3) This is the proof that how much God loves & cares for you. If you love someone, you will take interest to know more about him, intimately. *God also expresses his intimate love towards you. That's why he said; "I have known you even before you were conceived in mother's womb". (Jer 1:4-5)*

Yes, dear believer, in spite of God knowing very well that we will be sinful, unfaithful & ungrateful to him, (Job 15:16 & Mt 15:18-19) *he chose us and gave the precious gift-Our Life. And that's how even before we are born, even before we were conceived in our mother's womb, he had devised a plan for us. (Jer 29:11) And, that's how God chose the parents to who we were to be born, the time of our birth, our physique and appearance would be and all blessings that we enjoy. (Jer 32:42-42 & 1 Pet 3:9) In spite of knowing how sinful we would be, out of his great love he gave us life & continues to provide all good things that we need to live a happy, comfortable and healthy life, because, God is the provider of all good things. (Mt 6:26) He is the provider for the body (Ps 66:9-13) and from the abundance of his wealth, God provides all that we need. (Phil 4: 19)*

Above all, knowing all our weaknesses in flesh for sin, he did not condemn us for eternal damnation. *Instead, he sent his only Son Jesus Christ, who paid the price, his 'Precious Blood' for our salvation. (Jn 3:16) In spite of knowing that God gave his only Son as a sacrifice and price to redeem the fallen mankind, we continue to sin endlessly. (Rom 1:21-23) Yet, his everlasting love & enduring mercies, comes to us every day as fresh as morning dew, and as sure as sun rise. (Lam 3:22) Yes, God still loves us and shows constant love. (Ps 62:11) Because of his great everlasting love and mercies, God is still waiting for his rebellious children to return to him with repentant heart, broken heart, (Rom 10:21) so that our soul may not be condemned to perish in eternal fire. (Revelations 20:10 and 21:8)*

That's why out of his forgiving love and sacrificial love, God forgives us when we repent and come back to him. He never remembers our sin, (Heb 8:12) but accepts us as his son and returns everything that we lost due to sin, in double measure. (Is 61:7 & Zech 9:12) Yes, out of his everlasting love, Jesus who died for us did not leave us to perish in sin. After resurrection Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Confession to forgive our sins that we commit endlessly out of ignorance. (Jn 20:21-23) And, through this Sacrament, God reconciles the fallen mankind with himself, absolves our sins and cleanse our soul, so that we may be united with him in eternal life (Jn 11:25) and be a part of heavenly family with Jesus as head of the family. This is God's eternal plan for mankind. (Eph 5:7-11) ***God devised such a master plan for us out of his ever-enduring love, (Eph 3:18-19) so that we may live in his presence & enjoy the everlasting Splendour of God. (Bar 5:9) This is the proof that; 'God still loves us unconditionally in spite of our sinfulness/unworthiness'. (Rom 3:10)***

IN HIS LOVE GOD SAYS: WE ARE HIS CHOSEN CHILDREN

The very fact that you are reading these questions & answers is a proof that God has chosen you to know the truth concerning the heavenly Kingdom, for he says; ***"You did not choose me but I chose you to bear much fruits."*** (Jn 15:16) ***Yes, God has chosen you to read this book to get enlightened on spiritual life.*** Yes, when we love our children, we give them the best. Similarly, God sent his son Jesus, who, out of fullness of his grace has blessed us all giving one blessing after another. Through Christ, Gospel was given to the world and through Gospel we inherit all blessings. (1 Cor 1:4-9 & 1 Peter 3:9)

Because we are God's sons & daughters, God says; You are the chosen race, the King's Priest, holy nation God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness in to his own marvellous light. (1 Pet 2:9) At one time you were not God's People. But now you are his people. At one time you did not know God's mercy, but now you have received his mercy. (1Pet 2:10)

In many ways God acknowledges that we are his dearest children. (sons/daughters). To show that we are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his 'Son-Jesus' into our hearts. The Spirit cries out 'Father my Father'. So, then you are no longer a slave but a son. And since you are his son, God will give you all that he has for his sons." (Gal 4:6-7) So, he said; "You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask I will give you all the nations; the whole earth will be yours. (Ps 2:7-8) Yes, God says; "Israel you are my dearest son, the

child I love the best. When I mention your name, I think of you with love. My heart goes out to you. I will be merciful- In spite you being so sinful. (Jer 31:20) Finally, to celebrate his relation with us as sons/daughters, God said; My son you are always with me and everything I have is yours.” (Luke 15:31) This is how God speaks to us, to reveal his love and thus he established his relation with us as Father & son.

DOES GOD SHARES HIS AUTHORITY & GLORY WITH US?

God who accepted you as his son/daughter has called you by name, (Is 43:1) so that you may live a life in all its fullness in union with him. (Jn 10:10) The Scriptures refers “Life in all its Fulness” as “Fullness of Christ in us”. (Col 2:6-19) It means; ‘to live with life giving words of Jesus’ (Jn 6:63 & 68) and experience its richness & glory, (Col 3:16) so that we live with fruits of the Spirit, (Gal 5:22) and gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:8-11) and witness Jesus Christ in our life & be as his instrument to do the work of Salvation. (2 Tim 2: 21)

To become an instrument in his hand, God gives you power and authority over the kingdom of Satan. He said; “I make a covenant with you; I have given you my power and my teachings to be yours for ever and ever. And from now on, you are to obey me and teach your children and your descendants to obey me for all time to come.” (Is 59:21) **Further, Jesus said;** “I have given you authority, so that you can walk on snakes & scorpions and overcome the power of the enemy (Satan) and nothing can harm you.” (Luke 10:19) God who called you, promises to give authority so that you can rule over Kingdom of Satan. And thus, God shares his glory with his children.

Further, about sharing his glory with us, he said; “*Those whom God has already chosen, he also set them apart to become like his Son, so that the Son would be the first among many brothers. And those whom God has set apart, he called and put right with him and shared his glory with them. (Rom 8:29-30). Yes, St Paul said* “God called you to this through the Good News we preached to you. He called you to possess your share of Glory of our Lord Jesus.” (2 Thes 2:14) This is how God spoke regarding sharing his own glory with us.

WILL GOD PROVIDE ALL OUR NEEDS?

God who created you has called you, and gives you all that he has. i.e., his power and authority over the Kingdom of Satan and shares his own Glory with you to show his love for you. Further, God expresses his love & care and provides all your needs. We understand his love & care through the words/promises spoken by him, as below:

- The Lord provides everything for those whom he loves while they are asleep. (Ps 127:2)
- He shows care for the land by sending rain. He makes it rich and fertile. He fills the streams with the water. He provides earth with crops. This is how he does it. He sends abundant rain on the ploughed land and soak them with water. He softens the soil with showers and causes the young plants to grow. What a rich harvest his goodness produces! Wherever we go, there is plenty. The pastures are filled with flocks, the hillsides are full of joy. The fields are covered with sheep, the valleys are full of wheat and everything shouts and sing for joy". (Ps 65:9-13)
- He provides food for those who honour him. He never forgets his covenant". (Ps 111:5)
- He keeps the gates strong; he blesses your people. He keeps your border strong (security for nation) and satisfies you with finest wheat. (Ps 147:13-14)

DOES GOD EXPRESSES HIS INTIMATE LOVE FOR US?

The most intimate love of God to each one of us is revealed in the following promises: *"Israel (you may put your name here), the LORD who created you says; "Do not be afraid – I will save you". I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you. Your troubles will not overwhelm you, when you pass through fire, you will not be burnt. The hard trails that come will not hurt you, for I am the Lord your God, the holy God of Israel, who saves you. I will give up Egypt to set you free. I will give up Sudan and Sheba, I will give up whole nations to save your life because; "you are precious to me and because I love you and give you honour". Do not be afraid, I am with you; from the distant east and the farthest west I will bring your people home." (Is 43:1-5) Israel, (put your name here), you are my dearest son/daughter the child I love the best. Whenever I mention your name, I think of you with love. My heart goes out to you; I will be merciful. (Jer31:20)*

This is how God cares for us! Because of his great love he said; "With all my abundant wealth through Jesus, I will supply all your needs". (Phil 4:19) Because his love for us is so great, he protects us from the power of evil spirits by his presence. He said; "I will never leave you. I will never abandon you." (Heb 13:5) His promises for protection are given in Ps 23, 91 & 121. God said; "I will send an angel (our guardian angel) a head of you to protect you as you travel and bring you to a place which I have prepared". (Ex 23:20) Because of his continued presence, we enjoy freedom from evil spirits, as God

promised "Wherever the Spirit of the Lord is there, there is freedom". (2 Cor 3:17) **Yes, to protect us from the Satan, God promised that; "I myself will burn around my children as a wall of fire". (Zech 2 :5)**

This is how God expresses his intimate love for us & provides all our needs to protect our physical & spiritual life and to lead us in salvation. In the path of Salvation, he fights for us. Yes, he says; The Lord will fight for you & there is no need for you to anything. (Ex 14:14) I will fight against whoever fight against you & I will rescue your children. (Is 49:25-26) **In our fight against enemy (Eph 6:12) God promises victory by saying; You will succeed not by military power or by your own strength, but by my Spirit. The obstacles that are as great as mountains will disappear before you. (Zech 4:6-7) This is how our God reveals his unending, intimate love to us.**

DO YOU STILL DOUBT GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU?

The Lord who offers love says; "My mercy for you is as great as my majesty. (Sir2:18) His love for you is so great that while you were spiritually dead in disobedience, he brought you to life in union with Christ. It is God's grace that you have been saved in union with Christ, who raised you up with him to rule with him in the heavenly world. (Edh 2:4-6) He says; **"Mountains & hills may crumble but my love for you will never end."** (Is 54:10) **To those who are rejected by their loved ones, God says;** Can a women forget her own baby & not love the child she bore? Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you. Jerusalem, I can never forget you. I have written your name on the palm of my hand. (Is 49:15-16) My Mercy & love will flow for you like a river that never runs dry. (2 Esd 2:32)

Do you still have doubt on God's love for you? If you believe, your eyes will be opened to realise his love, feel & experience his Love in every area of your life at every moment. You will be thankful to God for his love always, in every circumstances.

**May you come to know of Christ's love, although it can never be known or understood how broad & long, how high & deep it is!
(Eph 3:18-19)**

QUESTION NO- 8

WHY ARE WE SUFFERING FROM VARIOUS DISEASES AND PAIN?

Well, it is a genuine question which every mind ponders and every heart throbs to know the answer. But to understand this spiritual truth, one must know; "What God wants us to do in this world"? or "What kind of life we should live to please our God?". In other words, what is God's will for us? **How can we find out what is God's will for us?** There is no readymade answer like a written manual which gives; what is God's will for each one of us! But the Scriptures gives an answer; it says we can understand God's will for us in prayer through faith. Yes, St Paul says; "We will come to know God's will through faith. (1Tim 1:4) Faith come by reading Scriptures, (Rom 10:17) and obeying word of God. (Lk 11:27-28) We can understand God will for us by discerning on inspired messages. (1 Thes 5:19-20)

If you live in this manner, the Holy Spirit will give you the insight and understanding on Scriptures. (Sir 6:37) He will help you to understand the inspired messages (1 Thes 5:19-20) and lead you in light of the Lord. (Sir 50:28-29) If you obey Scriptures, God's words will be light to your path and it will guide your feet to do his will. (Ps 119:105) The Spirit of Wisdom will be with you in every thought (Wis 6:16) and will help you to discern on God's will for you and lead you to do it. The Spirit will take control of your thoughts & actions and lead you in this spiritual journey to do God's will for you!

God's will for each one is different in accordance to his plan. God said; "I alone know the plan I have for you. The plan to bring you prosperity not disaster; plans to bring about the good future that you hope for." (Jer 29:11) God's will for us depends on what God's plan for us is, in order to accomplish his 'Eternal Plan', in which all beings in the heaven and on the earth will be gathered as one family with Christ as head. (Eph 1:7-11) This is how God's will for us work.

God who created us provides of all good things and righteous people lacks nothing (Ps 84:11) The Scriptures gives wisdom on how God provides everything to his children, even before we ask for.

i) In creation, God first created everything on the earth (Gen1:1-31) and then he created Man so that all needs of Man were met. Yes, after everything was in place for Man, finally, God created Man. Then

he created Women so that Man is not left alone. God willed that Man & Women should obey God and enjoy everything he created. In the order of creation, God made it very clear to us that; he is the greatest provider of all, because in creation Man and Woman lacked nothing.

ii) St Paul says; 'the LORD is provider for the body'. (1 Corinthians 6:13) Yes, when God created Man, he did not leave him alone. To provide a companion for him God created woman. This is how he revealed how much he loves us & cares for us. And hence, he says; "Leave all your worries to me, because I care for you." (1 Peter 5:7)

iii) God who created human beings and filled the earth with good things, who knows our needs and says; "With all my abundant wealth through Jesus Christ, I will supply all the needs of man". (Phil 4:19)

iv) Again, God said; 'By my great power and strength I created this world, mankind, and all animals that live on the earth and I give it to anyone whom I chose'. (Jer 27:5) Yes, God fulfils all our requirements for we are his chosen children. (Jn15:16 and 1 Pet 2:9)

ARE WE LIVING A LIFE THAT PLEASES GOD?

Now we understand that; God cares for us & provides all our needs. Let us introspect ourselves to understand; How we are living? Is our life pleasing to God? (Or) Are we living a life according to God's will? Before we discern God's will on 'what kind of life we should live to please him,' we must know; God has given certain commands which clearly & openly tells 'how we ought to live to please God'? Such as:

- God who chose you as his own child, said; "I have called you by name. You are mine. I have engraved your name in my palm. You are precious to me. (Is 43:1-5) God who called you is holy. So, he says; remain holy in everything you do. (1 Pet 1:15)
- You did not choose me, but I chose you & appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. (Jn 15:16)
- You are his chosen people, the King's Priests, the holy nation God's own people, chosen proclaim wonderful acts of God who called you out of darkness in to his marvellous light. (1 Pet 2:9)
- Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in you. (1 Cor 3:16) The Spirit was given to you by God. You do not belong to yourself but to God; he bought you for a price. (Blood of Jesus) So, use your body for God's Glory. (1 Cor 6:19-20)
- People of Israel, be sure that you do everything that God has commanded you. Do not disobey his Laws. Obey them all so that; 'everything will go well with you' and 'you will continue to live in this land that you are going to occupy'. (Duet 5:32-33)

God who loves & cares for us also made a covenant with us.

- He said; "Obey faithfully in everything I have commanded you and all will go well for you & your descendants forever, because you will be doing what is right; what pleases God". (Duet 12:28)
- Further he said; "I will show my love to thousand generations of those who love me and obey my laws. (Ex 20:6)

These commands are very clear that; we are supposed to live in obedience to God's Laws so as to enjoy prosperous & healthy life. If things have gone wrong; if we are suffering from incurable disease, if we encounter troubles/sufferings, if our prayers are not answered, we must reflect on our past life, introspect ourselves to understand;

- *Did we really live a life that pleased God in the past?*
- *Are we presently living a life that pleases him? (or)*
- *Are we living a life that is pleasing our mind and body?*
- *Are we honouring God in everything we do?*

WHAT KIND OF LIFE PLEASES GOD?

The Scriptures reveals what kind of life we should live to please God? King David, Prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah have spoken on what kind of life pleases God. God who gave us precious life, provides all good things & given salvation through Jesus says; we should live 'Righteous Life' to enjoy good life. *Jesus said; I have come in order that you might have, life - life in all its fullness". (Jn 10:10)*

LET US UNDERSTAND-WHAT IS RIGHTEOUS LIFE?

*About Righteous life King David said; **LORD**, who may enter your Temple? Who may worship God on Zion, your sacred hill? Those who obey God in everything and always do what is right, whose word are true and sincere, and who do not slander others. They do no wrong to their friends nor spread rumours about their neighbours. They despise those whom God rejects, but honour those who obey the LORD. They always do what they promise, no matter how much it may cost. They make loans without charging interest and cannot be bribed to testify against the innocent. Whoever does these things will always be secure, (Psalm 15:1-5) because they are righteous people.*

Through Prophet Ezekiel God said; "Suppose there is truly a good man religious & honest. He does not worship idols, or eat sacrifices offered at forbidden shrines, he does not seduce another man's wife or have intercourse with a woman during her period, he does not cheat or rob any one, he returns what a borrower gives him as security, he feeds the hungry & gives clothes to the necked, he does not lend money for profit & refuses to do evil & gives honest decision

in any dispute, such a man obeys my commands & carefully keeps my laws. He is righteous & he will live, says the Lord". (Ezek18:5-9)

Through Prophet Isaiah God said; "When you fast, you peruse your own interest & oppress your workers. Your fasting makes you violent; you quarrel & fight. Do you think this kind of fasting will make me to listen your prayers? When you fast, you make yourself suffer. You bow your head like a blade of grass, spread sack cloth & ashes and lie on. Do you think that I am pleased with that? (Is 58:3-5)

The kind of fasting I want is this. Remove your chains of oppressions and the yoke of injustice and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with hungry and share your home with the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear and do not refuse to help your own relatives. (Is 58:6-7)

Then my favour will shine on you like a morning sun. Your wounds will heal quickly. I will always be with you to save you. My presence will protect you from every side. When you pray, I will answer you and when you call, I will respond. (Is 58: 8-9)

If you put end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt and every evil word, if you give food to the hungry & satisfy those who are in need, the darkness around will turn in to brightness of noon. I will always guide you & satisfy with good things. I will keep you strong & well. You will be like a garden with plenty of water, like a spring that never runs dry. Your people will rebuild what has long been in ruin, build again on the old foundation. You will be known as people who rebuilt walls, who restored the ruined house. (Is 58:10-12)

About Righteous life St Paul said; God wants you to be holy and completely free from sexual immorality. Each one of you should know how to live with his wife in a holy and honourable manner. Not with a lustful desire like the heathen who do not know God. In this matter, then, no man should do wrong to his fellow Christian or take advantage of him. We strongly warn you that; the Lord will punish those who do that. God did not call us to live in immorality but in holiness. So then, whoever rejects this teaching is not rejecting man, but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit." (1 Thes 4:3-8) God warns about "Righteousness in Martial Life" and says; "Marriage should be honoured by all. Husband & wife must be faithful to each other. God will judge who are immoral & those who commit adultery. (Heb 13:4)

A person who trusts God unconditionally and lives by Faith is Righteous. When God promised Abraham for a child at a very old age, he believed and hoped in God, even though there was no reason for hopping. So, God accepted Abraham as righteous. (Rom4:13-18) Jesus promises to give 'Life in all its fullness' if we live righteous life!

IS GOD THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD THINGS?

If you accept God's words & honour his words by obeying him, (Lk 11:27-28) *he promises good life & health, for he said; "But for you who obey me, my saving power will raise on you like the sun and bring healing like sun rays. You will be as free & happy as calves let out of a stall.* (Malachi 4:2) Yes, God blesses a person who obey him.

My brother / sister, are suffering from chronic illness? *Is your life is filled with all kinds of sufferings & miseries? Is your business is incurring loss? Are your investments incurring loss? Is your children's life is not settled? Is there no peace in family? Is there no rest in your soul? Are you living in sadness, depressed, anxiety and distress? Is your family falling apart? **Reflect upon your past. Were you living a life that was pleasing God as brought out in this chapter?** If not, change your life as God wants you to live, so that there will be a change in personal life & in family, and all storms in life will die down.*

In the Gospel we read; "Jesus calmed the storm in the sea". *When evening came the boat was in the middle of the sea, while Jesus was alone on land. He saw the disciples struggling at the ores, because they were rowing against the wind. Sometime between 3 & 6 O'clock in the morning Jesus came to them walking on the water. He was going to pass by them and they saw him walking on the water. 'It is a ghost!' they thought & screamed. They were all terrified when they saw Jesus. He spoke to them at once and said; 'courage'. It is I, do not be afraid. Then, Jesus got in to the boat and the wind died down. The disciples were all completely amazed. (Mk 6: 46-51)*

It is very, very important for us to understand the spiritual meaning of this passage so that it will change our way of living and we will overcome all problems/storms. Now we will understand this passage:

When evening came the boat was in the middle of the sea and Jesus was on land. (Mk 6:47) Evening refers to darkness in which people are groping. *They live in sin, (Is 59:10-13) instead of accepting God's words, obey it (Sir 50:28-29) and to walk in the light of Christ. (Jn 9:5) Regarding people who disobey God, Jesus said; the as light has come in to the world, but people choose to live in darkness. (Jn 3:19)*

Jesus saw the disciples struggling at the ores, because they were rowing against the wind. (Mk6:48) *Jesus says; people are struggling & suffering in life, because; they are living against God's words. If they obey God's Words, then their life will be good & prosperous. **God***

warning says 'People of Israel, be sure that you obey everything what the Lord has commanded you to do. Do not disobey his laws. Obey them all, so that; everything will go well with you'. (Duet 5: 32 - 33)

***Sometime between 3 & 6 O'clock in the morning, Jesus came to them walking on the water. (Mk 6:48) Seeing the disciples struggling in the storm Jesus came to them.** Yes, seeing our struggles, every day in the morning between 3 & 6 O'clock, Jesus is passing next to our bed to see who is awake to seek him and worship him so that he can bless them, comfort them and deliver them from all their sufferings and struggles. Yes, Jesus is definitely passing by your bed every day.*

***The Jesus got in to the boat & the wind died down. The disciples were all completely amazed. (Mk 6:51)** If you seek Jesus & worship him every day in the morning between 3 & 6 O'clock and obey his word in truth (Lk 11:27-28) then Jesus will come in to your life, (Rev 3:20) and solve all your problems and the storms in your life will die down.*

Jesus is waiting to bless you with 'life in all its fulness', as God gives a promise, that; 'I will make an eternal covenant with them. I will never stop doing good things for them and I will make them fear me with all their heart, so that, they never turn away from me. I will take pleasure in doing good things for them, and I will establish them permanently in this land. (Jer 32:40-41) Jesus promises good life to those who obey him. And he will put an end to all storms in your life.

WILL GOD FORGIVE US & END YOUR SUFFERINGS?

In the past, if you have lived a life that displeased God, he offers forgiveness for all sins. He says; 'if an evil man stops sinning & keep my laws, if he does what is right and good, he will not die, he will certainly live. All his sins will be forgiven and he will live because, he did what is right'. Further, God says; 'Do you think I enjoy seeing a sinner die? No, I would rather see him repent and live'. (Ezek 18:21-22) It is painful to the Lord when one of his people dies. (Ps 116:15) Yes, our God is God of love and compassion. He says; I will not reject humble & repentant heart. (Ps 51:17) That's why he said;

- *'I will forgive their sins and no longer remember their wrongs'. (Jer 31:34 & Heb 8:12)*
- *'I am GOD who forgive your sins and I do this because of who I am. I will not hold your sins against you'. (Is 43:25)*
- *God forgives sins, for his mercies endure forever. (Ps 136:1-26)*
- *For a brief moment God may forsake us, but with great compassion he will gather us. (Is 54:7)*

IS OUR SUFFERING A MERCIFUL DISCIPLINING?

We should be wise to understand; God gives disease, pain & suffering, to change our thinking & attitude so that we may give-up evil ways, become perfect and live righteous. For the scripture says; God sends suffering in order to make us perfect like how Jesus was made perfect. (Heb 2:10) Solomon puts it in right perspective. He said; Your immortal Spirit is in every one of them, gently reminding of what they are doing and warning them about it, so that they may abandon their evil ways & put their trust in you Lord". (Wis 12:1-2)

Job said; "God corrects man by sending sickness & filling his body with pain. (Job 33:19) God teaches men through sufferings and uses distress to open their eyes". (Job 36:15) He says; If people are bound in chains, suffering from what they have done, God shows them their sins & their pride. He makes them to listen to his warning to turn away from evil. If they obey God & serve him, they will live out their life in peace & prosperity. (Job 36:8-11) God Calls our suffering as merciful disciplining to change our ways to make us righteous people.

Are you enduring chronic disease, suffering, family issues, distress & disturbance? Now listen to voice of God and give up everything that you are doing against teachings of Bible and repent. You will experience healing in your ailing body and in your sick soul, because God keeps up his promise. (Joel 2:12-28) And all your problems will settle down progressively. God says; 'If you who obey me, my saving power will rise on you like the sun & bring healing like the sun's rays. You will be as free and happy as calves let out of a stall. On the day when I act, you will overcome the wicked & they will be like dust under your feet. (Mal 4:2-3) Yes, if you obey God & live a changed life, you will experience healing, for, God is faithful to all his promises and merciful in all his acts. (2 Tim 2:13 & Ps 145:13)

The Scripture says:

People were living in gloom and darkness, prisoners suffering in chains because they disobeyed God. In their trouble they called out to the Lord and he saved them from their distress. He brought them out their gloom & darkness and broke their chains in pieces. (Psalms 107:10-14)

QUESTION NO-9

WHY DO RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE SUFFER IN MANY WAYS?

WHY DID JESUS SUFFER AS A RIGHTEOUS MAN?

Well, in all creations God uses all that he created for his own glory and purpose. In creation, God's purpose is; 'every soul on earth must be saved through the saving knowledge of Christ' as St Paul says; "Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Jesus, so that we would be holy and without fault before him. (To receive eternal life) Because of his great love, God had already decided through Jesus, that; "he would make us his sons"; this was his pleasure and purpose. (Eph 1: 4 - 5)

Yes, this is the eternal plan of God; in which God wants to bring all creation to gather, everything in the heaven & on the earth, with Christ as head. But 'the human beings', cannot be united with heavenly beings because; they have fallen and corrupted themselves by sinning. Therefore, in order to redeem the fallen mankind, God decided to wash away sins of Mankind through precious blood of Jesus Christ. (Is 1:18 & Mt 26:18) And that's why God sent his Son Jesus to suffer the fate of a criminal, shed blood & die for mankind. Because, according to God's Law without bloodshed there is no forgiveness. (Heb 9:22) And without sacrifice, there is no Salvation. (Heb 9:28) This is the truth about our sins and Salvation.

Therefore, God the Father decided to send his own Son to be offered as 'Sacrifice' for sins of Mankind so that the fallen human race would receive Salvation. This is how Jesus Christ; the righteous one, Son of God went through passions. Yes, though he was Son of God he humbled himself, suffered the fate of a criminal and walked in the path of obedience, all the way to death-his death on the cross. (Phil 2:6-8) This is how Jesus Christ, the righteous, one suffered the fate of a criminal and died for Salvation of mankind. In Creation all things are done according to God plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people in union with Jesus Christ, because of his own purpose, based on what he decided from the very beginning. (Eph 1:11) And God decreed that; by the Sacrificial death of his Son Jesus Christ, we will be set free, and our sins are forgiven. How great is God's grace which he gave to us in such large measure! (Eph 1:7)

Now we understand; Jesus the righteous one, though being Son of God, out of his great love for mankind suffered & died on the cross like a criminal to redeem the fallen mankind and give them Salvation.

DOES GOD ACCOMPLISH HIS ETERNAL PLAN THROUGH SUFFERING?

As believers in Jesus Christ, we must not lose focus on the purpose of creation. Yes, God created everything for his own pleasure, (Rev 4:11) and when God saw all that he created on earth he was pleased. (Gen 1:31) However, the very purpose of creation was, that; mankind should glorify God. For he said; They are my own people; I created them to glorify me. (Is 43:7) Yes, he said; I have a single purpose for them in life; to honour me for all time, for their own good and good of their descendants. (Jer 32:39) Further, God said; "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who was given to you by God". (1 Cor 3:16) Therefore, you do not belong to yourself, but to God. You have been purchased from slavery by paying price. (Blood of Jesus) So, glorify God's spirit in your body. (1Cor 6:19-20)

In all his wisdom and insight God did what he had purposed and made known to us the secret plan which he had already decided to complete by means of Jesus Christ. This is God's eternal plan, which he will complete when the time is right. God's Eternal Plan is; "to bring all creation to gather, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head". (Eph 1:8-10) In his eternal plan, God wanted to unite the fallen mankind with the heavenly beings as one family with Jesus as head! But how such thing can happen, because, the human race is corrupted by sin? (Rom 5:12) Yes, the seed of sin was planted by the Satan in human race when Adam & Eve disobeyed God and committed sin. Therefore, human beings who live in sin cannot be united with heavenly beings and Jesus Christ who are holy.

However, in order to complete his eternal plan, i.e., to unite human beings with heavenly being as one family with Jesus Christ as head, God decided to cleanse the human race and forgive them by washing their sins by precious blood of Jesus Christ. Consequently, God sent his only Son Jesus Christ to earth, to pay the price for sins of mankind, and that; whoever believes in him shall receive eternal life. (Jn 3:16) Though Jesus Christ was without fault, he was insulted, humiliated, tortured, persecuted, shed his precious blood & crucified on the cross like a criminal for forgiveness of sins of mankind (Heb 9:22) and to give them Salvation through his death. (Hebrew 9 :28)

Though Jesus was "Righteous One," God the Father made him to suffer like a criminal, in order to give free gift 'Eternal life' to the fallen mankind. (Rom 6:23) We discern that; God does not make a righteous person to suffer unless he has a specific purpose to achieve in completion of his eternal plan, which is to bring all creations to gather, everything in heaven & on earth with Jesus as head. (Eph 1:7-11) Yes, righteous people suffer for salvation of mankind, for St

Paul said; 'By means of our physical suffering we are helping to complete what still remains of Christ's sufferings on behalf of his body, the Church". Consequently, in our physical suffering we take part in Christ's suffering for salvation of mankind. (Colossians 1:24)

In God's wisdom Salvation for mankind was to be obtained only through sufferings.

Yes, this is the will of the Heavenly Father on which no one has authority to question! We understand this spiritual truth from Scriptures. "When Jesus Christ was in the garden Gethsemane, in his anguish he asked his heavenly Father to take away the cup of suffering from him, if it was in his will"! But the Heavenly Father did not take away the sufferings from his own Son. Instead, he sent an angel to strengthen his Son by filling him with more grace (power) to go through the suffering and to complete his mission on earth which is; to suffer and die on the cross for Salvation of Mankind. (Lk 22:39-44) **This is how God the Father willed that; his only Son Jesus has to go through the way of the Cross & die on the Cross.** God the Father made Jesus to pay price for our sins. We receive salvation through Jesus for there is no Name other than the Name JESUS is given under the heaven & on the earth for our Salvation. (Acts 4 :12)

ARE WE SUFFERING FOR SALVATION OF MANKIND?

Having known that Jesus suffered & died for our sins, we still continue to live in sin. Though the Son of God died for our sins, mankind has no reverence for his death, because of which, the whole world is reeling under the power of sin. (Gal 3:22) Therefore, for salvation of mankind, more sufferings are required. This requirement is fulfilled through human suffering which people presently undergo as a righteous people. Yes, through our sufferings, we complete the uncompleted sufferings of Christ, for salvation of mankind. Hence, St Paul said; I am happy about my suffering for you, for by means of my physical suffering, I am helping to complete what still remains of Christ's suffering on behalf of his body, the Church. (Colossians 1:24)

We, who are believers in Christ, are united as one body as Church. (1 Cor 12:12-30) God says; "All of us are Christ's body and each one of us is a part of his body". (1Cor 12:27) And, our sufferings as righteous people have meaning and a purpose. The sufferings of righteous people are used by God for forgiveness of sins and for salvation of members of the church in order to accomplish God's eternal plan. That's why Peter said; "Be glad you are sharing Christ's suffering, so that you will be full of joy when his glory is revealed.

Happy are you if you are insulted because you are Christ's followers; this means; the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God is resting upon you. (1 Pet 4:13-14) If you suffer because you are a Christian, do not be ashamed of it, but thank God you bear Christ's name. (1Peter 4:16)

That's why St Paul said; "You have been given privilege of serving Christ not only by believing in him but also by suffering with him". (Phil 1:29) "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will go through sufferings and they will be persecuted. People who do evil & impostors will keep on going from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived themselves. (2 Tom 3:12-13) Because you do will of God, by turning away from evil and work for salvation of people, the Satan who is surprise by your life will cause you more trouble & sufferings and they will insult you. (1 Peter 4:4)-

King Solomon said; 'It might appear that we have suffered punishment'. But we have the confident hope of immortality. Our sufferings will be minor compared with the blessings/reward that we will receive. God has tested us like gold in a furnace, and found us worthy to be with him. He has accepted us, just as he accepts the sacrifices which his worshipers burn on the altar. (Wis 3:4-6) Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings he keeps for his people & we will also possess with Christ what God has kept for him; for if we share Jesus Christ's suffering, we will also share his glory.

St Paul said; the sufferings that we go through/we endure at present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed. (Rom 8:17-18) Just as we have a share in Christ's many sufferings, so also through Christ we will receive God's great help. If we suffer, it is for your help and for salvation of the Church; if we are helped, then you too are helped and given strength to endure with patience the same sufferings that we also endure. So, our faith and hope are never shaken; we know that just as you share in Christ's sufferings you also share in God's great help. (2Cor1:5-7)

About our suffering as a righteous person St Paul finally said; In those days, after God's light had shone on you, you suffered many things, yet, were not defeated by the struggle. You were at times publicly insulted and mistreated, and at other times you were ready to join those who were being treated in this way. You shared the sufferings of prisoners and when all your belongings were seized, you endured your loss gladly, because you knew that you still possessed something much better, which would last forever. Do not lose your courage, then, because it brings with it a great reward. You need to be patient, in order to do the will of God and receive what he

promised. For, the scripture says; "Just a little while longer, and he who is coming will come; he will not delay. My righteous people, however, will believe and live; but if any of them turns back, I will not be pleased with them." We are not people who turn back and are lost. Instead, we have faith and are saved. (Heb 10: 32-39)

Yes, dear believer; Are you suffering though being a righteous person? Be sure that because you take part /share the sufferings of Christ, you will also receive the help and reward from him, because your sufferings are for salvation of others-the Church, body of Christ.

Dear believer, if you are experiencing perpetual physical or spiritual suffering or chronic ailment even though you live righteous life, then you are chosen to take part in the sufferings of Jesus for salvation of mankind. Praise God for your call to share his suffering.

WILL GOD GIVE US GRACE TO ENDURE SUFFERINGS?

We read in 2 Cor 12:7-8 that; St Paul speaks to the Lord three times about his physical suffering. St Paul asked the Lord thrice to heal him of his physical illness since he could not bear the pain & suffering. But God did not answer him nor did he heal him of his illness. *God told him; My grace is all you need to endure this suffering & my power is the greatest when you are weak. (2 Corinthians 12:9)*

From this discourse we understand; God's reply for perpetual suffering of righteous persons is; "You are chosen to suffer for salvation of the Church-Body of Christ', the mankind. Nevertheless, for those who are chosen to suffer for salvation of the Church, God assures them saying; "My grace is sufficient for you" to endure your pain & suffering. This means; "God is in full control of every situation in your life and he will give you power to endure your pain /suffering".

God has permitted you to suffer for the glory of God, because; you are called to glorify God in your life. (1 Cor 6:18-20) God said; in perpetual suffering he will bless us, if we endure undeserved suffering because we are conscious of his will. (1Peter 2:19) *In God's will, more sufferings are needed for the salvation of mankind. Yes, once again, God says; 'It was to this (to suffer for the Salvation of Church) God has called us, for Christ himself suffered for us and left us an example so that we would also follow his steps'. (1Peter 2:21)*

DOES GOD'S SPIRIT REST UPON YOU IN SUFFERINGS?

While enduring perpetual suffering, if you accept the truth, that; "through your perpetual suffering you are sharing sufferings of Christ for Salvation of mankind" and accept your chronic ailment,

perpetual physical & spiritual sufferings for the glory of God, then you will no longer suffer within yourself. All your suffering will be transformed in to comfort, (Jn 16:33) by the presence of Christ in you. Yes, you will experience the comfort of Christ in you, because he says; "Come to me all who are tired and carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. Take my yoke & put it on you and learn from me, because I am gentle & humble in Spirit. You will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy & the load I will put on you is light." (Mt 11:28) Jesus Christ will turn your suffering in to joy, for he said; I am telling you the truth. You will cry and weep, but the world will be glad; you will be sad, but I will turn your sadness in to joy. (Jn 16:20)

This is the reason why God spoke through St Peter & said; "My dear friend, do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering as though something unusual has happened to you. Rather be glad that you are sharing sufferings of Christ, so that, you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed. Happy are you, if you are undergoing all kinds of suffering, because you are Christ's follower. This means, the glorious Spirit the Spirit of God is resting upon you". (1Pet 4:12-14)

DO WE RECIVE SURE FOUNDATION IN OUR SUFFERING?

Dear brother/sister, are you a person suffering from chronic disease/ physical suffering/ perpetual physical or mental or spiritual torment being a righteous person? Then, dedicate yourself to God and offer your sufferings for salvation of the world. God looks for such disposition of mind and he will be highly pleased with such attitude & reward you. Your reward may not be immediate tangible (or) material blessing. Your reward will be spiritual blessing.

Yes, through your perpetual suffering God will give you "Sure Foundation in faith." This is God's promise, for he said; After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all graces, who calls you to share his eternal glory in union with Christ, will himself perfect you, give firmness, strength and a Sure Foundation." (1 Peter 5: 10)

Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end. He did not give up because of the cross! On the contrary, because of the joy that was waiting for him, he thought nothing of the disgrace of dying on the cross, and he is now seated at the right side of God's throne.

Think of what he went through; how he put up with so much hatred from sinners! So do not let yourselves become discouraged and give up when you undergo sufferings. (Heb 12:2-3)

QUESTION NO-10

IS SUFFERING A CURSE BY GOD?

WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR MAN?

Everyone wants to live a comfortable, trouble free and long life in peace, enjoying all good things on earth. No one likes to be sick, troubled, tormented, persecuted or undergo suffering. As man desires to live a happy and good life, so also God wants that the human race whom he created in his own image should always live a joyful life, enjoying peace & all good things he provided them on earth. Consequently, God blessed mankind in the following manner:

- He said; I will make an eternal covenant with my people. I will never stop doing good thing for them and I will make them fear me with all their heart so that they will never turn away from me. I will take pleasure in doing good things for them and I will establish them in this land permanently. (Jeremiah 32: 40-41)
- Yes, God said; "I will bless a person who put trust in me. He is like a tree growing near a stream and sending out roots to the water. It is not afraid when hot weather comes, because its leaves stay green; it has no worries when there is no rain; it keeps on bearing fruit." (Jeremiah 17:7-8)
- Further, God said; My people will be famous among the nations; Everyone who sees them will know that they are people whom I have blessed. (Isaiah 61:9)
- Out of fullness of God's grace, he has blessed us all, giving one blessing after other, (Jn 1:16) because; blessing is what God promised when he called us. (1 Pet 3:9)

Yes, God wants that everyone should live good life and enjoy all things he created. That is why, God created everything on earth in the first place, before he created man, so that man lacks nothing for good living. Further, God gave man authority over everything he created so that man would rule over all things on earth. (Gen 1:26) **However, God who wants man to live life in all its fulness (Jn 10:10) said; man should obey God's Law so that he will inherit all blessing which he promised. Yes, this is how God wanted man to live. He said;**

- Remember today and never forget; the LORD is God in heaven & on earth. There is no other god. Obey all the laws that I have given you today. All will go well with you and your descendants. You will continue to live in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to be yours forever. (Duet 4:39-40)

- Also, God said; If only they would always honour and obey all my commandments, so that everything will go well with them and their descendants forever. (Duet 5:29)
- Further, God said; People of Israel, be sure that you do everything that the Lord has commanded you. Do not disobey any of my Laws. Obey them all, so that everything will go well with you and you will continue to live in the land that you are about to occupy." (Duet5:32-33)
- God promises blessings to those who obey his commandments faithfully as we read in Duet 10:12-22, 28:1-14 & Lev 26:3-13.

When Jesus came, he said: "I have come in order that you may have life, life in all its fulness". (Jn 10:10) However, he said our blessings will depend upon obedience to the word of God. Yes, when a women spoke to him and said; "How happy is the women who bore you and nursed you." But Jesus answered, "Rather how blessed are those who hear the word of God & obey it". (Lk 11:27-28) Regarding obedience, he summed up giving two great commandments, saying:

- 1. Love your Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment of all. (Mt 22:37 & Ex 20:1-5) And,
- 2. Love your neighbour as you love yourself. (Mt 22:39)

Man disobeyed the First Commandment; "Love your God with all your heart, with all your soul & with all your mind".

Instead of obeying God's commandment, people went against God's will and did evil. Yes, instead of worshiping the Creator himself, people worship things which was created by the Creator, such as; sun, moon, stars, mountains, trees, human beings, animals, reptiles, and birds. (Rom 1:21-23) Also they make idols which look like man out of metal, stone, wood & worship them. (Is 44: 9-20, Jer 10:3-9)

Further, they have gone away from the sacred commandment given to them. Instead of depending on God's plan for them for 'propriety & good future', as God spoke through Jeremiah, where he said; "I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity & not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for", (Jer 29:11) they study moments of stars & heavenly bodies to predict future. (Is 47:13-17) They depend of Astrology & Zodiac for wellbeing & prosperity and indulge in 'idol worship'. People turn away from God to worship creation instead of the Creator. And they honour their worldly affairs, engagements, entertainments, pleasures, wealth, material possession above God and thus live against the first Commandment. Consequently, they are living against God's will for them. They worship & glorify worldly things instead of Almighty God.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT IDOL WORSHIP?

There is lot of misunderstanding among believers about 'Idol Worship'. It is important to have clear knowledge on this important quest. There is a common understanding that the "Roman Catholic Church indulges in idol worship" because in their Churches there is a Cross with statue of Jesus hanging on it. Apart from the cross, there are statues of Jesus, Mother Mary, St Joseph and other Saints. Since the believers in RC Church pray before these statues, people have common notion that the RC Church is indulging in 'Idol Worship'. *There is lot of misunderstanding among worshippers in other sect of Christians! They say; "No one has seen Yahweh. So, we can worship Yahweh only in Spirit" and not by making statues & pray before them.*

It is true that in the Old Testament God warned people that; 'you have not seen God' and so, "Do not make idols or set up statues, stone pillars, or carved stones to worship. I am the LORD your God". (Leviticus 19:4 & 26:1, Duet 4:15-20 & 5:8-9 and Exodus 20:4) God continued saying; "All those who make idols are worthless & the gods they prise so highly are useless. Those who worship these gods are blind & ignorant—and they will be disgraced. It does no good to make a metal image to worship as a god! Everyone who worships it will be humiliated. The people who make idols are human beings and nothing more. Let them come and stand trial—they will be terrified and will suffer disgrace". (Isaiah 44:9-20) Yes, according to Christ's words, believers are called to worship God in Truth & Spirit. (Jn 4:24)

However, in the New Testament God revealed to mankind his only son Jesus, (Jn 3:16) his mother, Virgin Mary (Lk 1:35) who is 'Mother of God' (Lk 1:39-45) and Christ's guardian father, St Joseph. (Lk 1:27) And Jesus said; I am in the Father & the Father is in me, (Jn 14:11) and I am the way, truth and life. No one can go to the Father without me. (Jn 14:6) Thus, God the Father had revealed himself to the world in the image of Jesus. Therefore, the statues placed in the Roman Catholic Churches are only a replica of Father in Jesus, Jesus Christ, Mary, Joseph & saints who were revealed to mankind already. (Heb 10:26 & Rev 19:14) Believers in RC Church per say, do not regard the statues as God. They worship Father through Jesus & Christ in mind, in spirit & they pray to Mary, Joseph & Saints in their mind, in spirit. The truth is; believers in RC Church worship the Father, Jesus in Spirit. They do not worship the statues.

The statues in RC Churches are only symbolic expressions which remind believers that; "Presence of Father in Jesus, Jesus Christ, his Parents & Saints are always available to them in Spirit". (1 Cor 5:3 & Col 2:5) The symbolic representation of Father, Christ, Mary, Joseph & saints in the form of statues play major role in the

life of Non-Christians & Christians who do not have deep knowledge on Scriptures and people living with shallow faith! More importantly the statue of Jesus hanging on the cross tell people of other faith and non-believers that; God sent his only Son Jesus from heaven who lived as human being, expressed love by forgiving sins and sacrificed his own life to redeem mankind from the slavery of sin. Further, the statues of Mary, Joseph and saints motivates people to pray like them & live a holy life like them. The Roman Catholics do not pray to the statues, but they worship the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in spirit.

Yes, faithful people in RC Church do not consider the statues as God or worship these statues as God. The statues in the RC Churches only remind believers on life of Jesus, and his parents & saints, "who once lived to witness Christ". Also, the statues of saints remind the intercession of Jesus & Saints for believers to God the Father in heaven. (Rom 8:34) The believers in RC Church do not consider the statues as God by itself. They Worship Christ in mind & offer true sacrifice in spirit (Rom 12:1-2) as it was thought by Jesus on the day of the Lord's Supper. The RC Church celebrates Holy Mass every day in commemoration of the Lord's Supper. (Lk 22:19-20) (to eat Christ's body & drink his blood as commanded by him) In the Holy Mass, the R C Church remind believers that Jesus died for their sins & it celebrates his resurrection as a symbol of victory over death.

For such people who are living in wrong notion, it is clarified that; these statues in RC Churches are only a replica of Jesus, his Father in haven, his earthly parents & saints who once lived on earth. These statues orient people's mind in prayer towards Father in heaven & Jesus Christ in spirit and it helps them to worship in spirit.

The Crucified statue of Jesus is a symbolic expression to the people that they also should sacrifice their life for others, which is true love and the very essence of Christ's teaching. These statues also represent the parents of Jesus and saints who once lived a holy life so that people can emulate them. Further, these statues help people who are shallow in faith to worship the Lord in truth & spirit, because they are not deep into spiritual life. These statues help such people to orient their mind to Jesus Christ and to concentrate in their worship. Yes, the Statues in the RC Church only lead common people, who do not know Scriptures, yet believe in God to worship God truly.

THEN WHAT IS IDOL WORSHIP?

About the greatness & power of word of God King Solomon said: "Pay attention my son. Listen to my words. Never let them get away from you. Remember them and keep them in your heart. They will give life and health to anyone who understands them". (Prov 4:20-22) Further, he said; No medicine or ointment cured them.

They were restored to health by your Word, O Lord the Word which heals all humanity. And he continued to say; It is your word, O Lord, which maintains those who put their trust in you. (Wis 16:12 and 26)

About the power in God's Life-giving Words, Jesus Christ said:

- *Man do not live by bread alone, but by every word that is spoken by God. (Mt 4:4)*
- *The Word (Jesus Christ) was the source of life and this life brought light to the mankind. (Jn 1:4)*
- *Just as the father is himself the source of life, in the same way he has made his son Jesus who is Word of God (Rev 19:13) to be the source of life. (Jn 5:26)*
- *The living Father sent me, and because of him I live. In the same way whoever eats me will live because of me." (Jn 6:57)*
- *"What gives life is God's Spirit; the words I have spoken bring God's life-giving Spirit." Yes, God's words bring life giving Spirit in our soul and body. (Jn 6:63)*

These words of God reiterate that; we live by words spoken by God. And God says; we are supposed to honour God by giving first him place in our life, to honour him above all, as we read below:

- *King Solomon said; we have to give first place to God in our life by placing him above everything and worship him before sunrise every day, between 3 & 6 AM and obey him. (Wis 6:12-21)*
- *Sirach said; If you fear God, you will accept correction. He will bless those who get up early in the morning & pray. (Sir 34:14)*
- *God has commanded mankind that: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves. Worship no God but me. Do not make for your self-images/idols of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water & worship it. Do not bow down to any idols or worship it, because I am the Lord your God. I tolerate no rivals. (Ex 20:2-5, Deu 10:8-9, Lev 26:1)*

Now someone will say, God said; 'do not make an idol of any image in heaven or on the earth, or in under the earth or in water & bow down before it'. But in RC Church why believers are worshipping idols? Yes, this question is valid and correct!

What we need to understand is; in the days of Moses, God had not revealed Jesus Christ, his mother Mary and his guardian Father Joseph to the world. Since people have not seen God the Father nor his Son Jesus Christ and his parents Joseph and Mary, God warned them not to make a statue of any heavenly being or anything on earth or under the earth or in the water and bow down before it and worship it. However, when Moses had gone to Mount Sinai to receive Ten Commandments, people made statue of golden

bull, bowed down before it and worshiped it, in spite of having seen how God the Father delivered them from slavery by performing great miracles through Moses. Further, God revealed his presence to them by moving with them in the form of a pillar of cloud during the day & in the form of a pillar of light at night in the desert for forty years.

WHY JESUS CHRIST IS TO BE WORSHIPPED?

Jesus said; I am in the father and the father is in me, (Jn 14:11) and you cannot go to father except through me. (Jn 14:6) **Believers must know the great 'Spiritual truth' that; Jesus Christ is the "Word of God",** (Rev 19:13) **who existed before creation.** (Jn 1:1-2) **It was through Jesus Christ; God made all things. Not one thing in all creation was made without him.** (Jn 1:3 & Col 1:15-18) And, it was the Holy Spirit who was with God the Father and the Son-Jesus, who moved over the water before the world took its shape. (Gen 1: 1-2)

The Scriptures says; "Jesus is the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end. He reflects the brightness of God's glory. He is the exact likeness of God's own being. And Jesus is sustaining the universe by the power of his word". (Heb 1:2-3) **To show his great love for the fallen mankind, to redeem them from sin Jesus suffered and died as criminal on the cross. God raised him from the dead and now he sits at right hand side of God in heaven as the Supreme Power.** (Mk 16:19 & Rom 8:34) **This happened according to God's Eternal Plan, which is; "to redeem the fallen mankind through Christ and to bring all living beings in heaven and on earth as one family with Jesus as head".** (Eph 1:7-11) **All authority has been given to Jesus in heaven and on earth by his Father.** (Mt 28:18) **So, Jesus reins as the source of life,** (Jn1:4) **the ultimate power** (Ps 62:11) **who rules the world with Mercy and Love.** (Lam 3: 22-24 and 2 Tim 4:1)

This discourse amplifies the truth that:

- *Jesus and his Father are one. And so, Jesus was also present in Father when he delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.*
- *It is Jesus who redeemed the world from the power of sin through sufferings, death & resurrection and sat at the right-hand side of his Father in heaven to rule the universe and hence Jesus is the Supreme Spiritual Ruler and Authority. (Col 2:10)*
- *Therefore, Jesus must be worshipped as God by all mankind.*

So, if any one gives first place to anything of this world above "Jesus & his Words", or, if he considers anything of this world as his source of life without which he cannot live, and honours it above

Jesus Christ who is the Supreme Ruler & Authority of the spiritual world, (Col2:10) then he indulges in idol worship & thus commits sin.

For example; if we honour human relations, money, wealth, comforts, food, our desires, ego, self-respect, our status, pride, entertainments, physical pleasures above Jesus and regard them above Christ, it becomes idol worship. If anything of this world takes precedence over Jesus & our worship, then it becomes idol worship.

- Yes, if we live with a false belief that without certain worldly things we cannot live, such as; liquor, drugs, lust, money, wealth, power, status or cling on to anything of this world hold firmly and therefore give them first place/more importance to them above Jesus, and if such worldly thing take precedence over our worship", then it is idol worship.
- Similarly, if we place trust on idols made by man, heavenly bodies, living beings on earth, astrology, palmistry, zodiac signs, fortune telling, horoscope, omen, witchcraft, black & magic etc., and depend on them with false faith that, those thing will bring good health & good fortune, than, trusting in God's plan for us, (Jer 29:11) then we indulge in idol worship.(Isaiah 44:9-28, Isaiah 46:11-13 & Isaiah 47:5-15)

To put it in simple words:

If we place anything of thing of this world above Jesus, with a belief that they will give us good life and good health& future and therefore think that we cannot live without them and hence, if we honour those things above Christ, then, God calls it as idol worship. It is a sin against 1^s& 2nd Commandment of Ten Commandments. (Ex 20:1-5)

TRUTH ABOUT STATUES THAT ARE IN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

After birth of Jesus, his Mother Mary-Mother of God & his guardian Father Joseph have been revealed to the world and people have seen them. The RC Church keeps replica of their images in all Churches to reveal the world; 'How the redeemer of this world looks like'? & "How is parents look like"? So that, they will have conviction in mind to accept them & worship Christ, and take help of Mary to whom God the father has given authority to crush head of the Satan, (Gen 3:16-20) to protect people from the powers of darkness as it is explained below. Yes, God the Father has given Mary authority to crush head of the Satan. Thus, Mary became the guardian for the Church who protects believers from snares of Satan.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT MOTHER MARY?

The RC Church honour Mother Mary as Mother of God and as Mother for the Church, because; while Jesus was hanging on the cross, he said to his mother looking at his disciples "here is your son." Then he said to his disciples "She is your mother." From that time onward the disciples took her home and lived with her. (Jn19:26-27)

Jesus Christ himself gave his mother 'Mary' as the mother for the Apostles who were the 'First Ministers' in the Ministry established by Jesus. The truth is; Jesus gave his mother as the guardian for the Church which was to be raised by his apostles in years to come. He did so in order to protect the Church & its believers from the powers of darkness, for Jesus already knew that the Satan is looking for ways and means to destroy the 'Ministry' that was established by him on the day of the Lord's Supper. (Mt 26:17-30) More so, the Satan is roaming around (1 Pet 5:8) to destroy faith of believers in Jesus Christ and in the "Ministry of Forgiveness"- Sacrament of Confession, which was instituted by Jesus Christ after resurrection. (Jn20:21-23)

However, the Satan has been successful in deceiving believers in the Churches other than RC Church to not to believe in the Sacrament of Confession. And hence, the Ministry of Forgiveness of sins thorough the Sacrament of Confession in not accepted and practiced by other denominations of Christians except Roman Catholic Apostolic Church.

IS MOTHER MARY A GUARDIAN FOR THE CHURCH?

Jesus gave his mother Mary as the guardian for the Church, because; 'Mary is the woman whom God the Father spoke about in the beginning when the Satan deceived Adam & Eve. Yes, God said; "I will make you and a Woman hate each other; there will be enmity between her offspring and your offspring. You will try to bite her heel; but she will crush your head". (Gen 3:15) (according to the original version of Bible. But this verse in Bible has been changed over a period to downplay the importance of Mary in protecting the Church)

According to God's eternal plan Mary was chosen as mother of Jesus. Therefore, God the Father gave Mary the authority to crush head of the Satan. Mary was given such authority because she herself was conceived & born without original sin as per God's eternal plan. That's why she is called 'Immaculate Mary'. This is the reason why Roman Catholic Apostolic Church portrays Mary as its Guardian.

Because Mary stands as guardian and protects the Church, the Roman Catholic Church remains as one Church till today without breaking up, "standing tall" since the first Church was established by the disciples of Jesus Christ two thousand years ago. (Acts 2:14-42)

This is how the Promise given by Jesus to Peter is fulfilled. Jesus said; Peter, you are a rock; I will build my Church on you. Death will have no power over it. This promise is fulfilled through Mary who was given as mother to the disciples on the cross by Jesus. She stands a guardian protecting the Church established by the disciples from Satan. (Mt 16:18) Consequently, the Roman Catholic Church continues to remain firm as "One Church" throughout the world following same values and order in worship. Yes, Mother Mary protects the RC Church in honour of her son's promise given to Peter.

Mary protects and intercedes for the Church: In a manner how a mother hen protects the chicks under her wings from the eyes of eagles, Mother Mary protects the RC Church and her faithful children under the shadow of her wings from the snares of the Satan. That's why believers in the Roman Catholic Church pray to mother Mary for her protection & her intercession to God the Father through Rosary. ***Yes, Mother Mary intercedes to the Father & Jesus for them to show mercy on sinners of the world and to give time for their repentance.***

Mankind Disobeyed the 2nd Commandment which is;

"Love one another as you love yourself"

God warning to people says; Because people refuse to keep in mind knowledge about true God, their mind is in darkness. God has given them over to corrupted minds, so they do things that they should not do. They are filled with all kind of wickedness, evil, greed & vice; they are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, deceit and malice. They gossip & speak evil of one another; they are hateful to God, insolent, proud & boastful; they think more ways to do evil. They disobey parents; they have no conscience; they do not keep their promises, and they show no kindness to others. (Rom 1:18-32)

This is the fate of people who refuse to acknowledge true God. That is why the world is full of sufferings & miseries. Yes, all over the world we see terrorism; hatred, enmity, revenge, riots, war, greed, wickedness, immorality, incest, sexual crimes, sexual abuse of women & children. People burn with desire for same sex partners instead of expressing true love for a partner of opposite sex. People commit crimes & encourage others to do the same. So, atrocities are on the rise. People of this world refuse to accept the spirit of Love from true God and thus they are not able to live in true love and love others as God commanded; ***'Love one another as you love yourself'.***

The truth that we should understand:

By disobeying God's commandments mankind lost blessings which were promised to them in obedience. (Duet 28:1-13)

Consequently, in disobedience they have increased their sufferings by sinful actions. The truth is, God says; be sure that you do everything that the Lord God has commanded you. Do not disobey any of his laws. Obey them all, so that everything goes well with you and that you will continue to live in this land that you are occupying. (Duet 5:32-33) If we obey God, he will give joy, peace & rest and restore all blessing we lost in double measure. (Is 61:7 & Zech 9:12)

ARE WE ARE DECEIVED BY THE SATAN TO DISOBEY GOD?

The Satan blinds people's mind for truth. Yes, truth about true God is hidden from mankind. The Satan deceive people & blind their mind for truth. So, they worship things that are created, instead of worshipping Living God-the Creator. (Jer 10:3-16, Is 44:9-20, Is 47:11-15) And blind people give importance to worldly possessions, their needs, desires, entertainments, material things & honour them above God. (Col 3:5) If you honour worldly things above God, you indulge idolatry, which is a sin against 1st & 2nd Commandments of Ten Commandments. This sin will destroy your joy, peace, rest, spiritual and material blessing God has for you according to his plan.

God said; I have known you even before you were conceived in your mother's womb. (Jer 1:4) Further, he said; I alone know the plans I have for you. The plan to bring prosperity and not disaster. Plans to bring about good future you hope for". (Jer 29:11) Therefore, God has planned a good life, propriety and good future for all people on earth even before they are conceived in mother's womb. Yes, in his plan God has already planned everything good & glorious for us. But we lose our blessings because the Satan deceives our mind and makes us to commit sin. We lose our blessings because the nature of sin is destruction. (Sir 19:4) Sin destroys our blessings.

Yes, sin destroys every blessing & brings death in humanity. (Rom 5:12) About the Satan who is deceiving our mind on knowledge about true God, Saint Paul said; People do not believe in true God-Jesus Christ because, their minds have been kept in dark by the evil god of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light shining on them, the light that comes from the Good News about glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. (2 Cor 4:4) Thus, people turn away from true worship (Rom 12:1-2) to live in darkness. But God says; "Wake-up sleeper, raise from death, Christ will shine on you. Anything that is clearly revealed becomes light; or it is light that clearly reveals everything. (Eph 5:14) Yes, Jesus Christ is the Light of the world (Jn 28:12) for he said; "When I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (Mt 9:5) And whoever follows me will never walk in darkness. If you obey Jesus Christ, you will walk in the light.

The present-day people have gone totally away from basic teachings of Christ which are as follows:

Teaching on Love - Jesus said;

- *"I came in search of love and not for sacrifice." (Mt 9:13)*
- *"Love one another as I have loved you. (Jn 13:34)*
- *"Let love make you serve one another. (Gal 5:13)*
- *"No one has seen God. But if we love one another, God lives in union with us. His love is made perfect in us. (1 Jn 4:12)*

Teaching on Forgiveness- Jesus said;

- *"Forgive one another as I have forgiven you. (Col 3:13)*
- *"When you forgive, I will also forgive." (2 Cor 2:10)*
- *"If you forgive, your heavenly Father will forgive your sins". (Mt 6:15)*
- *"Forgive seven times of seventy." (Means forgive endlessly) (Mt 18:21-22)*

Teaching on Faith- Jesus said;

- *"If you believe it will happen to you as you believe." (Mt 8:13)*
- *"If your faith is not enduring you will not endure." (Is 7:9)*
- *"Believe in Christ, you & your family will be saved". (Acts 16:32)*
- *"Unless you receive the Good News with faith, it will not do anything good to you" (Heb 4:2-6)*
- *"If you believe, you will see God's glory." (Jn 11:40)*
- ***Finally, he said; Believe in God and believe in me. (Jn 14:1)***

Teaching on Repentance- Jesus said;

- *"Repent and turn away from your sins; the Kingdom of God is at hand." (Mt 3:2)*
- *"Let your heart show your sorrow, tearing your cloths is not enough. Come back to Lord your God. He is kind and full of mercy; he is patient and keeps his promise; he is always ready to forgive and not punish". (Joel 2:13)*
- *To those who repent & turn away from sins, God promises; I will give you back what you have lost in years when swarms of locusts ate your crops. It was I who sent this army against you. Now you will have plenty to eat & be satisfied. You will praise your God who has done wonderful thing for you. (Joel 2:25-26)*

Teaching on Accepting God's will: *Jesus accepted 'Will of his Father to die on cross'. (Mt 26:39) Also, his disciples accepted God's will to die as Christ's witnesses. We are also called to follow Christ*

by accepting the situations which are beyond our control as will of the Father so that we enjoy peace in everything we do. (Rom 5:2-5)

Dear believers in Christ, we have understood, God's will for man is: A) Man should honour God above all things and glorify his spirit in his body. B) Man should not worship anything other than the living God, the Creator of all things. C) Finally, man should live in love with one another and love God above all things. Worldly people are enduring great suffering because they refuse to accept & practice teachings of Jesus. If they obey Christ, they will experience peace, rest and inherit blessings that God has promised for obedient people.

IS SUFFERINGS A CURSE BY GOD?

People desire that they should enjoy every pleasure on earth. They do not want to compromise any comfort/pleasure. The present comfort level & man's mind set has reached to a stage where people do not want to endure even a small pain or discomfort. If they are afflicted with sickness, or if they do not progress in profession /business, or if they do not fare well in life as they desire, or if they suffer any loss / if they encounter suffering, they say it is God's curse.

Now the question is;

- "Does God curse man whom he created in his own image?
- "Will God curse man whom he created and loves with everlasting love"? (Gen 1:27 & Jer 31:3 respectively)

Never! Never! God does not curse mankind whom created in his own image, loves them with everlasting love & redeemed them from slavery of sin through sacrificial death of his only son Jesus. (Jn 3:16)

But mankind looks at sufferings as God's curse because; they are blind for blessings which God promised for obedient people. They disobey God's Law and thus invite sufferings upon themselves. It is spiritual blindness which makes mankind to live in this apathy and hence they are groping in darkness. (Is 59:10-13) Yes, God does not curse Man, because blessings are what God promised when he called us, when he created us. (1Pet 3:9) In his blessings God has promised every one; 'good health, good future and prosperity', for he said;

- *I alone know the plans I have for you. The plans to bring prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for." (Jer 29:11)*
- *I will make an eternal Covenant with them, I will never stop doing good thing for them and I will make them fear me with all their heart, so that they will never turn away from me. I will take pleasure in doing good things for them and I will establish the permanently in this land. (Jeremiah 32:40-42)*
- *My son, pay attention to what I say. Listen to my*

- words. Never let them get away from you. Remember them & keep them in your heart. They will give life & health to anyone who understands them. Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts. Never say anything that isn't true. Have nothing to do with lies and misleading words. Look straight ahead with honest confidence; don't hang your head in shame. Plan carefully what you do and whatever you do will turn out right. Avoid evil, walk straight ahead. Don't go one step off the right way. (Prove 4: 20-27)*
- *We should not forget the blessings God pronounced upon Adam & Eve, through whom the whole mankind is blessed. God pronounced blessings upon them saying; "Have many children, so that your children will live all over the world and bring it under their control." (Genesis 1:27-28) By saying so, God blessed the human race with good health, wealth and prosperity for them to live good life and rule the world.*

These promises hold good for every child born of a woman. However, these promises are subject one condition. God warns that we should obey the Ten Commandments he gave to Moses so that we inherit his blessings for thousand generations. **But if we displease God by turning away from him to worship idols and live against his commandments, then we invite anger of God upon ourselves and thus we inherit punishment up to the fourth generation. (Ex 20:5-6)**

Yes, God promises blessings for obedient people as below;

1. Blessings promised in obedience: *In the books Deuteronomy & Leviticus God has spoken at length about blessings that we inherit in obedience to his commandments. (Duet 7:12-24 & 28:1-14, Lev 26:3-13) God also warns that; if we disobey his commandments, we will lose his blessings and meet dire consequences as given below.*

2. Consequences of disobedience *(Duet 28:15-68 & Lev 26:14 - 46). The Bible quotes given here give understanding on how people lose God's blessings and invite misery and there by live in deceases, pain and sufferings by their disobedience. You are advised to read these chapters to understand the consequences of disobedience. Yes, God does not curse any man or woman. However, according to God's Law, if only we obey his laws and live according to them, we inherit blessing which God has promised. If we disobey God's Laws, we invite destruction, decease, pain and sufferings upon ourselves. And thus, mankind lives in miseries & distress. Yes, it is purely our choice!*

Once again God warns Man: He says; I have now given you a choice between a blessing & a curse. (Duet 30:1) Today I am giving you a choice between good & evil, between life & death. If you

obey my commands which I give you today, if you love me & obey me and keep all my laws, then you will prosper and become a nation. I will bless you in the land that you are about to occupy. But if you disobey and refuse to listen to me and worship other gods, you will be destroyed. You will not live long on the land across Jordan that you are about to occupy. I am now giving you a choice between life and death, between God's blessing and God's curse. I call heaven & earth to witness the choice you make. Choose life! (Duet 30 :15-19)

NOW, WHAT DID MAN DO? DID HE OBEY GOD?

Man chose to disobey God: We read in the Scriptures that, right from the beginning of human race, people chose to disobey God in many ways. By disobeying God's Laws, they have invited sufferings upon themselves. Therefore, people have no right to accuse God that he has cursed them, for, they always had choice to inherit God's blessing by obeying him & prosper according to his plan. (Jer 29:11)

Someone may say; I have never committed any crime or grave sin, then; 'Why my family is crippled'? (Or) 'Why my children's lives are destroyed'? (Or) 'Why my family members are going through chronic sickness'? (Or) 'Why my family is going through perpetual sufferings'? 'What could be the reason'? *To people who are innocent of any crime or grievous sin and yet go through perpetual sufferings, the answer is; "They may be enduring such sufferings because of grievous sins which may have been committed by their forefathers," for God said; "If you disobey me, you inherit my anger up to third or fourth generation. But to those who love me & obey my laws, I show my love for thousands of generations. (Ex 20 :5-6) If our forefathers have committed grievous sins or heinous crimes, those sins may not affect them, but it will affect their descendants up to third or fourth generations as God has spoken. This is the explanation that we can discern from Scripture for unexplained sufferings of innocent people.*

DO WE INVITE CURSE UPON OURSELVES?

Yes, we invite curse upon ourselves when we hurt some very badly. Many times, people behave cruelly and display in-human behaviour thereby they harm others, destroy their life & future which makes the victim to curse his offender. Such person (the victim) who is hurt in body and wounded in soul, if he pronounces a curse upon the offender, or if he calls upon God to take revenge on his offender, his prayer will be heard by God in heaven. And whatever he has prayed or whatever curse the victim has pronounced in distress/anger, it will affect his offender's life and this curse will affect the offender's family for generations. This is how without insight/spiritual understanding on what God said about hurting & wounding others, people offend others and invite curse of their victims on themselves.

Now let us know what God has spoken about such incidences:

God said; My son, do not prevent a poor from making a living, or keep them waiting in their need. Never give a hungry person a cause for resentment or anger. Do not add to the troubles of someone who is already desperate. If he is in need, do not put off giving to him.

Don't refuse to help a beggar who is in distress. Don't turn your back on a poor person or give him a chance to curse you. If he becomes so bitter that he does curse you, his Creator will hear his prayer. (Sir 4:1-6) And his curse will affect your life, because God who hears voice of the poor and the distressed will answer him or do justice for his suffering and answer his prayer. And so, whatever curse the poor man pronounces on you will become true. **Thus, by depriving help to the poor, people invite curse upon themselves. This curse will affect them & their family up to third or fourth generations.**

Also, people invite God's anger upon themselves by killing innocent children in mother's womb. (Abortion) It has become a very common practice in modern society. Couples do this crime to suit their convenience. They choose time for the child to be born instead of waiting upon the Lord to give children at the time he chooses. (Ecc 3:2) So, they abort foetus to suit their convenience & pleasures. It is unfortunate they forget that; every child is a blessing from God. (Ps 127:3) Further, people indulge in secret rituals & worship pagan /Satan and offer their own defenceless children as sacrifice in the ritual. Thus, they invite God's curse & their children's curse upon themselves. (Jer 32:35,7: 31, Ps 106:37-38, Ezkl 20:31, 2 Kgs 21:6)

Now, let us understand what God says about this:

- I the Lord command you to do what is right and just; Protect a person who is being cheated from the one who is cheating him. (By aborting a foetus, parents cheat an unborn child of its blessed life on earth. And by offering their defenceless children as sacrifice in rituals parents cheat their innocent children). **Do not ill-treat or oppress foreigners, orphans or widows; and do not kill innocent people (unborn children) in the holy place. (in the mother's womb) (Jer 22:3)**
- In Hinnom Valley they have built an altar called Topheth, so that they can sacrifice their sons and daughters in the fire. I did not command them to do this—it did not even enter my mind. (Jer 7: 31)
- Do not hand over any of your children to be used (to be sacrificed) in worship of the god Molech, because that would bring disgrace on the name of God, the LORD. (Lev 18:21)
- The people of this city have made me angry and furious from the day it was built. I have decided to destroy it because of

all the evil that has been done by the people of Judah and Jerusalem, together with their kings & leaders, their priests and prophets. They turned their backs on me; though I kept on teaching them, they would not listen & learn. They even placed their disgusting idols in the Temple built for my worship, and they have defiled it. They have built altars to Baal in Hinnom Valley, to sacrifice their sons and daughters to the god Molech. I did not command them to do this, and it did not even enter my mind that they would do such a thing and make the people of Judah sin. (Jer 32:31-35)

- *If you do not obey me, then I swear to you that this place (our dwelling house) will fall in ruins. (Our life & blessings will be destroyed) I the Lord has spoken. (Jer 22:5)*

The Lord is coming from the heavenly dwelling place to punish people for their sins. *The murders that they have secretly committed (abortions & offering children as sacrifice in secret rituals) will be revealed. The earth will no longer hide those who have been killed.” (Is 26:21) The blood /soul of Children who have been aborted and sacrificed in the rituals will cry to the Lord for revenge for their death.*

The Lord says; “I will no longer remain silent about the wickedness of the godless people; I will no longer tolerate it. They have murdered innocent people and the blood they have shed cries out to me for revenge & are constantly pleading for vengeance. Let there be no doubt says the Lord. I will hear the plea of all people who have been murdered. (Children who have been aborted/sacrificed) I will take vengeance for what has been done to them. (2 Esd 15:7-9) Here, the Lord clearly warns that curse of the children who were aborted (or) sacrificed in secret rituals will come upon their parents.

ARE WE TO BLAME OURSELVES FOR OUR SUFFERINGS?

From the above discourse we understand that we displease the Lord in many ways by our wicked actions and become the subjects for his Laws. This is how we invite sufferings upon ourselves by our unholy actions and conscious misdeeds. By doing such wickedly act (disobeying his commandments & teachings) we invite troubles which are the rewards for evil actions according to God’s Law. We are solely responsible for our wicked actions because the Soul which God placed in us is continuously warning us ‘not to indulge in sin and to avoid wicked actions’. Yes, our soul is constantly fighting against our flesh to not to indulge in sin. (1 Pet 2:11) *But we indulge in sin and do evil because of our selfish desires, pride, ego, enmity, greed, hate feeling, cruel attitude, inhumane behaviour, wickedness, unfaithfulness, and lack of self-control. It is our sinful-self that drives us to sin in spite of knowing the consequences of sin. (Rom 1:31-32)*

Sometimes we indulge in such wickedly actions without knowing its after-effects. That's why God says; "My people are dying for lack of knowledge." (Hos 4:6) We lose blessings what God has promised us and invite sufferings upon ourselves by our wicked actions. Then we blame God that he has cursed us and hence we are sufferings. Only people who do not know Scriptures speak in this manner. We will lose our blessings if we are ignorant of God's Laws.

How wrong and foolish we are to blame God for our ignorance and misdeeds? Our God is a God of love. He loves us with everlasting love. (Jer 31:3) His mercies for us come like morning dew and like a sun which comes every day. His mercy for us never fails. (Lam 3:22-23) His mercy for us is as great as his majesty. (Sir 2:18) His mercies flow for us like river that never goes dry. (2 Esd 2:32) Mountains may depart, hills may be moved, but his love for us will never depart from us. (Is 54:10) God's mercy for us endures for ever. (Ex 34:6 & Ps 118:1) Yes, God does not curse his children because we are made in his own image. But God has placed an option before every one; which is "to choose between his blessing & curse".

God has placed Good & Evil and Life & Death before us. We have freedom to choose. If we choose to disobey God's Laws and do evil, we invite curse upon ourselves. Because, that's the way God's Law works. Yes, if we choose obey God, we inherit his blessings that are promised. But if we choose to go against God's Law and do evil, we invite curse upon ourselves. Yes, we are the one to blame ourselves for our sufferings. We are the one to blame for our miseries. We cannot blame God!

Dear Brother/ Sister are you going through unexplained sufferings?

This is what the Lord says to you;

When we suffer, we should sit alone in silent patience; We should bow in submission, for there may still be hope. Though beaten and insulted, we should accept it all. The Lord is merciful and will not reject us forever. He may bring us sorrow, but his love for us is sure and strong. He takes no pleasure in causing us grief or pain. The Lord knows when our spirits are crushed in prison; He knows when we are denied the rights, he gave us; When justice is perverted in court, he knows. (Lamentation 3:28-36)

QUESTION NO-11

HOW DOES GOD LOOK AT HUMAN SUFFERING?

DID GOD PROMISE BLESSINGS WHEN HE CALLED US?

(1 Peter 3:9)

God created everything on earth for man to enjoy them and to live in love & peace. Yes, God pronounce blessings upon Adam & Eve saying; have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of all living creatures. (Gen 1:28) Out of the fullness of his grace, God blessed mankind, giving one blessing after another. (Jn 1:16) However, God willed that human beings should remain holy in everything (Lev 19:1-2 & 1 Pet 1:15) and glorify God's Spirit in their body. (1 Cor 6:19-20) And God gave 'Ten Commandments' and 'his Laws' for mankind to obey them, so that they will inherit his blessings to live a prosperous life. (Duet 28:1-14) Since God created man in his own image, (Gen1:27) he gave his own wisdom (Prov 2:6) and freedom (2 Cor 3:17 & Gal 5:1) to mankind, so that they can live by their free will. However, God said; I am placing my blessing & curse before you. Good & evil and Life & death before you. Chose whatever you want. Heaven and earth will be the witness for what you chose. Your life will be determined by what you choose. (Duet 30:1,15& 19)

DID MAN DISREGARDED GOD'S COMMANDMENTS?

Human beings chose to reject God's commandments, did evil and preferred to live in sin. Yes, Jesus said; 'the light has come into the world, but people love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil. (Jn3:18-19) Knowing that God's Laws brings life in them, deliberately they disobeyed his laws. Thus, they have invited troubles, sickness & curses on themselves. (Please read books: Sirach, Proverbs & James to understand truth about sin which was explained in Chapter-10 of this book under the headings; "Is suffering a curse by God"? And "Do we invite curse upon ourselves"?)

By rejecting God's Commandments man chose to live in sin! By doing evil people invite the Satan in their body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 3:16) Once the Satan enters the body, he makes them captive/refugees for sin and abuse their body to commit sin repeatedly. Thus, people commit sin again & again. God said; "tell them that what you have done is a sign of what will happen to them. They will be refugees and captives. The prince (Satan) who is

ruling them (Gal 3:22) will shoulder their pack in the dark & escape through a hole that they dig for him in the wall. (Zech 2:5) He will cover their eyes and not see where he is going. (Ezkl 12:11-12) The truth on the Satan entering human body by breaching the wall of fire which is bringing around them was explained in Question-5; 'What is the Spiritual truth about sin'? Yes, if we sin the Satan will enslave us.

The destructive power of sin will destroy our body, for Jesus said; the Satan comes in order to steal, kill and destroy. (Jn 10:10) Sin weighs upon our soul. (Wis 9:15) It destroys our body to bring death. (Prov 5:1-11) Sin of Adam brought death into the world and those who sin will die, (Rom 5:12) because, according to God's Laws, wage of sin is death. (Rom 6:23) **However, when Man was created, God did not intend he should die, for God created man in his likeness to live for ever. Yes, God created man so that he may live forever. It was the jealousy of the Satan which brought death in human body".**

King Solomon spoke about this spiritual truth. He said; "Do not bring on your own death by sinful actions. God did not invent death. When living creatures die, it gives him no pleasure. He created everything so that it might continue to exist, and everything he created is wholesome and good. Ungodly people have brought death on themselves by the things they have said and done. They yearn for death as if it were a lover. They have gone into partnership with death and it is just what they deserve. (Wis 1:12-14,16) When God created us, he did not intend for us to die; he made us like himself. It was the Devil's jealousy that brought death into the world. Those who belong to the Devil are the ones who will die. (Wisdom 2:23-24)

The Satan continues to destroy man's happiness, his freedom in Spirit, his relation with others & his blessings, which are; spiritual gifts (1Cor12:4-11) & material wealth. (Jer27:5) He sows fruits of evil spirit in man, namely; greed, hate, sadness, depression, enmity, impatience, cruelty, wickedness, unfaithfulness, pride, sinful desires, lust, jealousy, vengeance, revenge & lack of self-control. Also, he is destroying man's spiritual life by deceiving him to worship things that are created instead of the Creator. He deceives man to disobey God and destroys his blessings (Jn 10:10) and brings miseries upon man. (Duet 28:15-64) Hence, Jesus warned believers four times saying; be on guard. Do not let anyone deceive you. (Mk 13 :5, 9, 23 & 35)

The Satan continues to deceive people by keeping their mind in darkness. *They do not believe, because their minds have been kept in the dark by the evil god of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light shining on them, the light that comes from the Good News about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. (2*

Cor 4:4) *So, people do not believe in truth that; God's words bring blessings in obedience. (Duet 28:1-14) Instead, they do evil and live in sin, and thus they invite sufferings & miseries upon themselves. They are blind for what God has spoken about inheriting blessings in obedience. (Duet 7:12-24 & Lev 26:3-13) Also, they are blind for blessing that are promised in true worship. (Rom 12:1-2) Therefore, they live in wrong understanding, that; their sufferings & miseries are result of God's curse. Yet, they continue to do evil and live in sin, instead of returning to God in repentance so that he can restore their confidence & lost blessings. (Joel 2:12-28 & Jon 3:1-10) The Satan deceives people and keeps their mind in darkness. Because they are blind for truth, they live in sin and grope in darkness. (Is 59: 10-13)*

"HOW DOES GOD LOOKS AT HUMAN SUFFERING?"

IS OUR SUFFERING A MERCIFUL DISCIPLINING?

Solomon said we are disciplined through sufferings. He says; God's immortal Spirit is in every one of them and he gently corrects those who sin against him. He reminds them of what they are doing, and warn them about it, so that they may abandon their evil ways and put their trust in God. (Wis 12:1-2) Yes, God corrects us through sufferings, as Job said; "God corrects man by sending sickness and filling his body with pain," (Job 33:15) and God teaches man through sufferings and uses his distress to open his eyes." (Job 36:15) **Yes, our sufferings become merciful disciplining to make us perfect, for St Paul said; 'Jesus was made perfect through his sufferings'. (Heb2:10)**

God uses our sufferings for cleansing our soul & for salvation. Believers are always troubled with following two questions in mind;

- **'Why there is suffering'? And,**
- **'Why I alone should suffer in this world?'**

As Christians it is very important for us to know the biblical answer for these questions so that our mind will be at peace and soul will be at rest! The truth is; Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned. (Rom 5:12) The Scripture says; 'the whole world is under the power of sin'. (Gal 3:22) So, everyone on the earth has sinned & fallen short of glory of God. (Rom 3:23) Therefore, to redeem the fallen mankind, Jesus Christ being the Son of God took the form of a man, lived a humble life, suffered, shed blood and died like a criminal on the cross. **God offered his own son as sacrifice for the sins of human race, because; "according to God's Law, there is no forgiveness without bloodshed," (Heb 9:22) and "there is no Salvation without sacrifice". (Heb 9:28)**

This reveal; 'It is only through human sufferings sins will be forgiven & Salvation can be attained. According God's will, Jesus suffered & shed blood for forgiveness of sins, (Mt 26:28) and offered himself as a sacrifice for Salvation of mankind and died on the cross by taking sins of all people upon himself. (1 Pet 2:24) Thus, he gave freedom from slavery of sin. But after death of Jesus Christ, mankind did not stop sinning. They continued commit sin and it is much worse in the present days. So, more sufferings are needed for forgiveness of sins and salvation. Hence, St Paul said; "By means of our physical sufferings, we are helping to complete what still remains of Christ's sufferings on behalf his body, the Church." (Col 1:24) It means; through our sufferings, we are taking part in sufferings of Christ for salvation of people who are still living in sin. **Dear believer, are you suffering perpetually, even though you are righteous? Through your undeserved sufferings, you are taking part in the process of purification of sins of sinners & their salvation. This is how God looks at your suffering, for he has chosen you to do his will. (Matthew 6:10)**

DO WE SUFFER FOR THE SALVATION OF MANKIND?

In God's will and Wisdom, sins of mankind are to be forgiven only through human sufferings. That's why God sent his only Son Jesus, so that; he lives an ordinary human life and get rejected by mankind, so as to undergo all kind of physical suffering that no man has ever endured on earth and be offered as sacrificed on the cross like a criminal for forgiveness of sins and salvation for mankind. The life of Jesus reveals the depth of God's love for mankind. (John 3:16)

Since suffering is the only way for salvation, Jesus said; (Mt 16:24) "If anyone wants to follow me (receive Salvation) he should reject himself and pick up his cross (accept & endure his sufferings) then should follow me". (to remain united with him - Jn 15:1-5) **Yes, God wants to use our undeserved sufferings for salvation of mankind. Consequently, in our undeserved perpetual sufferings God uses us as his instrument of salvation for salvation of mankind. (2 Tim 2:21)**

That's why God said; 'Keep on working with fear & trembling to complete the work of salvation, because God is always at work in you to make you willing and able to obey his purpose'. (Phil 2:12-13) Paul conveys; we are sufferings for our own salvation & salvation of mankind. Thus, God reveals that we are blessed in our sufferings.

WILL GLORY FOLLOW OUR SUFFERING?

After his crucifixion and death, Jesus was glorified by God the Father by resurrecting him from death, and gave him the honour to sit on his right-hand side in heaven. This honour & glory was given to Jesus Christ not because he was the only Son of God. This honour

& glory was given to Christ because he surrendered his will to fulfil the will of his Father in heaven. (Mt 26:39) Yes, Jesus willingly took up sufferings upon himself (Phil 2:6-11) and offered him to be to be crucified like a criminal on the cross in spite of being the Son of God. (Is 53:2-9) Jesus Christ who is the righteous one and 'incarnation of holiness', in obedience to his Father's will took sins of whole mankind upon himself on the cross to bring salvation to mankind. (1 Pet 2:24)

If Jesus the righteous one, as Son of God had to undergo great suffering for his own glory, how much more sufferings should we being sinners, will have to undergo? That's why Jesus said; 'No slave is greater than the master. If they persecute me, they will persecute you too. It means; if Jesus had to go thorough suffering (Heb 2:18) we as his disciples will also go through great suffering. (Jn15:20-21)

Dear believers, our Christian life will be full of tribulations & sufferings. Because, the evil spirits are roaming around the world to deceive us in our faith in Christ, so that we may not repent for our sins and receive God's forgiveness (Jn 20:21-23) and consequently, lose eternal life promised by Jesus which is full of glory. (Jn 11:25 & Rom 6:23) That is why Jesus says; 'be united with me in your trials because I have won over the world'. (Jn 16:33) If we are always united with Jesus through his words (Jn 15:1-5) we can walk over tribulations / sufferings, like how Jesus walked on water & overcame power of the enemy and entered in to glorious eternal life. (Rev 2:7)

Similarly, your sufferings will lead us to glory for, Jesus said; "I am telling you the truth: you will cry and weep (in your sufferings), but the world will be glad; you will be sad because of your trials & tribulations. Your sadness will turn in to gladness. (You will rejoice in eternal life) (Jn 16:20) **Consequently, glory will follow your suffering.**

DO WE SHARE GOD'S GLORY IN OUR SUFFERING?

St Paul says; "I consider that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. (Rom 8:18) That's why he said; 'What no one ever saw or heard, what no one has even thought could happen, is the very thing God prepared for those who love him'. (1 Cor 2:9) St Paul speaks about the eternal happiness in union with Christ, which God had prepared for those people who do his will and endure sufferings.

What God has kept for those people who do his will is revealed by St Paul. He said; "Those whom God set apart, he called. And those he called he put right with himself, (it means; we are united to Christ in our sufferings) and he shared his glory with them". (Rom 8:30) God shared his glory with the suffering children in earthly life

and in eternal life. *Our undeserved sufferings will not go unrewarded. God will reward every person according to what he has done. Some people will keep on doing well, and seek glory, honour and immortal life. To them God will give eternal life". (Rom 2:6-7) Dear believer, sharing God's glory does not mean we will be glorified only in our eternal life, after death. God will glorify his children in many ways on the earth in their physical life and spiritual life as they witness him. **We understand from Scriptures that God shared his glory with people by giving them "Spiritual Gifts" in earthly life as given below:***

- Joseph one of twelve sons of Jacob was given gift of understanding to interpret King's dream. (Gen 41: 1-36)
- Daniel was given gift of understanding to interpret the King's dream. (Dan 2: 24 - 48)
- Zachariah was given gift of prophecy. He prophesied about Jesus, on how he will save people from their sins. (Lk 1:67-80)
- King Solomon was given Wisdom & understanding on spiritual truths that no other person ever had on earth. (2 Chr 1:1-12)
- Paul was given gift of understanding. He revealed; Christ is the key that opens hidden treasures of God's wisdom. (Col 2:2-3)
- Paul was given special grace to endure sufferings. (2 Cor 12:9)
- The Apostles were given gift of knowledge to preach powerfully, performing signs & wonders and ability to speak & understand heavenly language. (Acts 2:1-13)
- St John was given gift of heavenly vision on the happenings that will take place during the end of days. (Rev 1:9-20)
- *God will give his chosen children other gifts; which he thinks is appropriate. (1 Pet 4:10 -11) Yes, people who are subjected to undeserved sufferings will share God's glory in their earthly life.*

GOD SAYS; OUR SUFFERINGS WILL BRING GLORY

Suffering brings tremendous eternal glory: God says; he wants to share his glory with human beings as he did with Jesus Christ. God shared his glory with Jesus by raising him from death and gave him the right to sit by his right-hand side in heaven. (Eph 1:20 & Col 3:1) Thus, God raised Jesus to the highest place that; at the name of Jesus all beings in heaven and on earth and in the world below will fall on the knees and openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:9-11) Yes, glory will follow sufferings.

God assures glory to people who suffer unjustly. He said; *'this temporary trouble that we suffer will bring us tremendous and eternal glory much greater than the trouble. For we fix our attention not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen will last only for a fraction of time but what cannot be seen*

will last forever. (2 Cor 4:17-18) *The sufferings which we endure for a brief time will bring tremendous glory in earthly life & eternal life.*

God will bless us with heavenly wisdom which will open our mind to understand Scriptures. (Lk 24:40-45) *And he will give us insight to understand the following spiritual truths:*

- *Truth About Jesus, his ministry and the power & authority that he has given to human beings. (Is 59:21, Lk 10:19 & Mt 18:18)*
- *Truth on God's forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of Confession. (Jn 20:21-23, Mt 16:18,18:18)*
- *Truth on the eternal life which Jesus has promised. (Jn 11:25)*
- *God's plan for us, which will be revealed in faith. (1 Tim 1:4)*
- *Power & Richness that dwells in God's words. (Col 3:16)*
- *Fruits of the Holy Spirit to live righteous life. (Gal 5:22)*
- *Gifts of the Holy Spirit to do his ministry. (1 Cor 12:7-11)*

In the eternal life, God will bless us with glory by presenting a reward; "the White Robe." (Rev 2:7) *God will raise us to rule with him in the heavenly world for ever, for he said;*

- *He protects those who are righteous; he allows them to rule like kings and lets them honoured like kings forever. (Job 36:7)*
- *In our union with Christ Jesus, he raised us up with him to rule with him in the heavenly world. (Eph 2:6)*
- *The desire for Wisdom can prepare you to rule a kingdom. So then, you that rule the nations, if you value your thrones and symbols of authority, honour Wisdom so that you may rule forever. (Wis 6:20-21)*
- *We will meet Christ face to face, live with him and rule with him for ever. (Rev 22: 1-5)*

According to God's Eternal Plan, we will be united with heavenly beings as one family for eternity with Christ as head. (Eph 1:7-10) *This is how our sufferings will bring tremendous glory in fulfilment of God's promise for eternal life. (John 11:25-26)*

WILL OUR SUFFERINGS PRODUCE ENDURANCE?

Endurance means; "grace to tolerate sufferings" and still continue our mission in doing God's will in the path of salvation with conviction and courage. St Paul was given this great gift. Yes, when he was suffering greatly out of physical ailment, Jesus Christ filled Paul with abundance of grace/ power to endure the suffering for the sake of the Church. (2 Cor 12:7-9) Paul was enriched with abundance of grace to complete the mission for which God prepared him. His mission was to spread the Gospel in many countries. (Acts Chapters 14-28) The greatest example for endurance is Jesus, who endured tremendous sufferings for the sake of salvation. (Is 53:4-9)

About enduring sufferings for righteous cause God said; *In those days when God's light was shown on you, you suffered many things, yet you were not defeated by those troubles. You were sometimes publicly insulted, ill-treated and at other times you were even ready to join those who were being treated this way. You shared sufferings of prisoners and when all your belongings were seized, you endured them gladly, for you know that you still possessed some things much better, which will last forever. Do not lose your courage in sufferings, because it brings with it great reward. (Heb 10:32-36)*

WILL GOD'S HAND BE UPON US IN OUR SUFFERING?

We need to be patient in order to do God's will and receive all that he has promised. "That is why Jesus said; "I am telling you the truth. You will be crying and weeping but the world will be glad. You will be sad, but your sadness will be turned into joy." (Jn 16:20) Yes, dear believer, you may lose your freedom, wealth and precious earthly possessions because of trials, tribulations and persecutions. It is already happening to believers who are trying to reach Christ to the ends of the earth. And it is bound to increase more & more at the end of days when the awful hour begins. (Mt 24:15-28 & Mk 13:14-23) But it is very, very important for us to remain with Jesus through his words to receive conviction and courage to continue the mission.

God says, in your troubles, tribulations & suffering; "you should be glad and joyful always, pray at all times and be thankful in all circumstances, for this is what is God's will for you in union with Jesus." (1Thes 5:16-18) Because you are sharing the suffering of Jesus, you are being used as an instrument of salvation for the whole world'. God says; "because you are you are sharing Christ's suffering (Col 1:24) the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God will rest upon you. He says; do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering, as though something unusual were happening to you. Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed. **Happy are you if you are insulted because you are Christ's followers; this means that the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is resting on you.** If you suffer, it must not be because you are a murderer or a thief or a criminal or a meddler in other people's affairs. However, if you suffer because you are a Christian, don't be ashamed of it, but thank God that you bear Christ's name. (1Pet 4:12-16) It will increase your hope in Salvation.

However, when we suffer, God assures of his help, for he said:

- Just as we have share in Christ's suffering, we also have share in God's great help'. (2 Cor 1:5)
- That's why God says; "I will never leave you nor forsake you". (Heb 13:5)

- *Further he says; "Can a women forget the child she bore and not love the child? Even if a mother should forget the child, I will never forget you. My Child, I can never forget you! I have written your name on the palms of my hand. (Is 49:15-16)*
- *When you go through the deepest darkness, in the valley of death my shepherd rod and staff will protect you. (Ps 23:4)*
- *Even mountains and hills may crumble, but my love (presence) will never depart from you. (Is 54:10)*
- *And finally, God assures; I have given you my teachings and I will protect with my right hand. (Is 51:16)*

This is how you will experience God's presence and his hand upon you to protect, when you endure undeserved sufferings. For God says; "I stretched out the heavens and laid the earth's foundation; I say to you Jerusalem, "You are my people! I have given you my teachings, & I will protect you with my hand." (Isaiah 56:19)

WILL SUFFERINGS EMPOWER US TO RULE OVER OUR WEAKNESSES?

Jesus says; during tribulations we should not turn away from the truth what we have learnt from the scriptures. (Jn 6:61)

Because, "if we continue to endure with Christ, we will also rule with him." (2Tim 2:12) It means; in our suffering if we remain with Christ, God will fill us grace to rule over our pain & sufferings in the same manner how Jesus endured suffering on the cross (Is 53:4-6) and won victory over sin. (Col 2:15) This endurance is a great blessing which will empower us to continue to do will of the Lord in spite of all kind of hardships which we will encounter in the work of salvation.

We have been chosen specially and called for this work in salvation as Jesus said; "You did not choose me. I choose you and have appointed you to go and bear much fruit that endures." (John 15:16)

Therefore, St Paul said; "keep on running till the work of salvation is complete. (Phil3:12-14) When we run further & further in the path of salvation, our struggle will get harder & harder. But God will not abandon us because of his promises. For, he promised:

- *I will not leave you like orphans. (Jn 4:18)*
- *I will ask the father, and he will give you another helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit who reveals the truth about God. (Jn 14:16)*
- *The helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you. (Jn 14:26)*
- *Remember, I will be with you to protect you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done all that I have promised you." (Gen 28:15)*

- *Jesus promised; "obey everything that I have commanded you. I will be with you always, to the end of ages." (Mt 28:20)*
- *Finally, Jesus says; 'Even though I am absent in body, I am with you in Spirit'. (Col 2:5) And wherever the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom from all things. (2 Cor 3:17 & Gal 5:1)*

With God's power we will be able to rule over our hardship, trials & tribulations. It is very important that in trials & tribulations we should not lose faith in Christ who has promised victory. Because this battle belongs to the Lord. (1 Sam 17:47) You will win victory by the Lord's Spirit, for he said; You will succeed, not by military might or by your own strength, but by my spirit. Obstacles as great as mountains will disappear before you. (Zech 4:6-7) Yes, we win victory over our struggle through faith! Every child of God is able to defeat the world and win victory over the world/struggles by means of faith. Who can defeat the world? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Because we believe that Christ is Son of God, we will win victory over the world/our struggles. (1Jn 5:4-5)

This victory is what God spoke in the book Wisdom of Solomon that; the desire for Wisdom can prepare you to rule a kingdom. (Kingdom refers to the struggles that we go through in fight against the power of sin) So, you that who rule the nations, if you value your thrones (if we to Keep your body free from sin) and honour symbols of authority, (honour the anointment of the Holy Spirit you received in various Sacraments) honour Wisdom (honour Christ by obeying his words) so that you may rule forever. (You will rule over your tribulations/struggles that you encounter against sin) (Wis 6:20-21)

Yes, God will fill us with 'Power & Grace' to rule over trials, tribulations & struggles in our spiritual life. 'For he says; Men of Israel, listen! Today you are going into battle. Do not be afraid of your enemies or lose courage or panic. The LORD your God is going with you, and he will give you victory. (Deuteronomy 20:3-4) No weapon will be able to hurt you; you will have an answer for all who accuse you. I will defend my servants and give them victory. (Isaiah 54:17) *Therefore, you will rule over sufferings, trials and tribulations because God will protect the righteous and allow them to rule like kings and lets them to be honoured forever. (Job 36:7 & 2 Tim 2:12)*

WILL YOU HEAR GOD'S VOICE IN YOUR SUFFERINGS?

In your suffering, trials and tribulations God will not leave you alone. For he said I will not leave you as orphans. (Jn 14:18) He will continue to speak to you, if you remain united with him reading his words. For Jesus said; "Remain united with me, and I will

remain united with you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it can do so only if it remains in the vine. In the same way, you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me. (Jn 15:4-5) If you remain united with Christ, you will hear him speaking to you, guiding you through his life-giving words, (Jn 6:63 & 68) as Isaiah said; *"The Lord will make you go through hard times, but he himself will be there to teach you, and you will not have to search for him anymore. If you wander off the road to the right or to the left, you will hear his voice behind you saying; "Here is the road. Follow it." (Is 30:20-21)*

Further our God promised; "I will lead my blind people (we are blind for his light & power) through the roads that they have never travelled (the roads of tribulations & sufferings). I will turn their darkness into light and make rough country roads smooth before them. (God will make our suffering light and comfort us) These are my promises and I will keep them without fail". (Isaiah 42:16) This is a great blessing where God comes to guide us in our difficult times and opens our eyes to see the light of Christ shining on us (Eph 5:14) to fulfil his promise; "I am the light of the world". (John 8:12) *Yes, words of Jesus will be the light to our path & it will guide our feet in the troubled road that we are travelling in spiritual life. (Ps 119:105)*

Dear believer, if you are alive for God's life-giving words, (Jn 6:63) surely you will hear his voice guiding you. Every day, if you sit in worship before sunrise, between 3 & 6 Am (Wis 6:12-21) and read Word of God-Bible, you will experience the presence of Jesus Christ in your worship. Firstly, he will give peace of mind in your problems. Secondly, he will be in all your thoughts and guide your feet. (Wis 6:15-16) *If you trust him, he will not let you down & you will not be disappointed. (Rom 10:11)* His voice will guide you and teach you on how to overcome your sufferings? For, he is the greatest teacher of all. (Job 36:22) His teachings come from the heavenly throne. (Mic 4:2) You will hear his voice in tribulations/sufferings to guide you. When Hagar was in distress, alone in the desert with her son, she heard voice of God which guided her to build a nation. (Gen21:9-21)

WILL GOD COUNSEL YOU IN YOUR SUFFERINGS?

In spiritual life we have many doubts, wrong notions, and false beliefs about Christian faith. But if God has chosen us to go through sufferings, our life will change and we will walk closely with Jesus. He will guide us in the light of the Lord (Sir 50:28-29) in our sufferings as we read in Is 35:1-10 and Prov 8:1-36. (You are

advised to read these Chapters to understand how God guides his chosen children) If we are confused about certain issues in spiritual life, if we are misguided by the wrong religious practices which people popularly follow, then, Jesus who is the greatest counsellor (Is 9:6) and greatest teacher of all (Mt 7:29) will come to us as the light in our darkness to guide us in the path which pleases him. Because he said; "When I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (Jn 9:5)

He himself will call us through various ways. In the night while sleeping God will call us & give a message through his words like how he spoke to King Solomon, (2 Cro 7:11-20) and Joseph. (Mt 1: 18-21) Or, God will speak through various signs in our body. He will call us and give a message. He will give us the right word of God for the right occasion, (Pro 15:23) to counsel and clear our doubts on those issues that are bothering us, so that we may walk in the right path & not stumble. (Prov 3:23) Yes, Jesus will counsel us, for the Bible says; "As for you, Christ has poured his Spirit on you. As long as the Spirit remains in you, you do not need anyone to teach you. For his Spirit teaches everything & what he teaches is true, not false. Obey the Spirit's teaching, then, remain in union with Christ. (1 John 2:27)

Dear believer, if you are a person going through deep sufferings in your personal and spiritual life, do not lose hope. Continue to remain in fasting & prayer and wait in patience for the Lord to save you. And it is best to learn this patience. When we suffer, we should sit alone in silent patience; We should bow in submission, for there may still be hope. Though beaten and insulted, we should accept it all. The Lord is merciful and will not reject us forever. He may bring us sorrow, but his love for us is sure and strong. The Lord takes no pleasure in causing us grief or pain. He knows when our spirits are in prison; The Lord knows when we are denied the rights, he gave us; When justice is perverted in court, he knows. The Lord knows when our spirits are crushed. (Lam 3:26-36)

To those who are going through perpetual sufferings, the Lord says; "The sounds of violence will be heard no more; Destruction will not shatter you again". I will Protect & defend you like a wall; You will praise me because I have saved you. No longer will the sun be your light by day, or the moon be your light by night; I, the LORD, will be your eternal light; the light of my glory will shine on you. Your days of grief will come to an end. I, the LORD, will be your eternal light, more lasting than the sun and moon. **Your days of grief will come to an end. For, God will be your eternal light, more lasting than the sun and moon. (Is 60:18-20) He will counsel you and guide you to do what is right, perfect and pleasing to him'. For he is the greatest counsellor of all and lead you by his light. (Is 9:6-7, Psalms 105:119)**

WILL PERPECTUAL SUFFERING TRANSFORM US?

Dear believers we understand that in the Army, a soldier undergoes intensive & difficult trainings in difficult terrains in order to face the enemy. Similarly, in spiritual life we are constantly fighting against our enemy, the Satan, the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities and cosmic powers of the Dark Age. (Eph 6:12) To fight against the Satan, we need to be very strong in our faith & stubborn in spiritual life. As a spiritual warrior we also need intensive training to stand firm in faith and fight against our enemy and stand ground till the end; i.e., till the Day of the Lord.

If we are not firm in faith & stubborn in spiritual life, we will be lost. We will fall in faith and we will be lost for spiritual life. The sufferings which we endure are part of our training to become strong in faith & stubborn in spiritual life. If we are undergoing perpetual suffering/sickness, it may cause us to give up faith and to turn away from God. So, we must lift-up our sufferings to God & offer them to Jesus as a thanksgiving offering for salvation of mankind. (Ps 50:14)

God who sees our hardship, humbleness and disposition of our mind will fill us with abundant grace. (2 Cor 12:9) This grace will give us conviction, confidence, power & strength to endure our sufferings. This grace will transform our heart and mind to surrender ourselves before God and not to turn away from him. Yes, this grace will transform us inwardly to understand God's plan for us and accept his will to do what is right, just & pleasing to God. (Romans 12:1-2)

Such spiritual encounter with God will make us 'as firm as a rock' and 'as hard as a diamond' to withstand our sufferings and tribulations. (Ezek 3:8-9) God will also make us as an iron pillar (Jer 1:18-19) and as a wall of bronze as far as our trials & sufferings are concerned. Our sufferings will fight against us to destroy our faith & hope in Salvation, but they will not win over us. For God, our Creator will be with us to give us victory in all our sufferings. (Jer 15:19-20)

ARE WE OFFERED LIKE SWEET-SMELLING INCENSE BY CHRIST TO GOD THE FATHER?

We understood that our sins are also the cause for our sickness and sufferings, because God words says;

- Some were living in gloom and darkness, prisoners suffering in chains, because they had rebelled against the commands of Almighty God and had rejected his instructions. They were worn out from hard work; they would fall down, and no one would help." (Ps 107 :10-13)
- Further God says; "But if people are bound in chains, suffering

for what they have done, God shows them their sins and their pride. He makes them listen to his warning to turn away from evil. If they obey God and serve him, they live out their lives in peace and prosperity. But if not, they will die in ignorance and cross the stream into the world of the dead. (Job 36:8-12)

- When Jesus healed a paralysed man who was lowered from roof, he said to him; "your sins are forgiven". And the paralysed man was restored to health. (Lk 5:17-26)

Our sins and our forefathers' sins are the cause for all kind of chronic sickness and sufferings, for God said;

- I bring punishment on those who hate me and, on their descendants, down to the third and fourth generation. (Ex 20:5)
- The sins of a wicked men are a trap. He gets caught in to the net of his own sin. He dies because he has no self-control. His utter stupidity will send him to grave. (Prov 5:22-23)
- My son, avoid sin as if it were a snake. If you get near, it will sink its teeth in to your soul like a lion and destroy you. Every (grave sin) lawlessness leaves an incurable wound (sickness/curse) like one left by a double-edged sword." (Sir 21:2-3)

However, some people undergo perpetual suffering in their physical life or spiritual life, though they or their forefathers may not have committed any grievous sin or heinous crime. **Such people are chosen by God to endure sufferings for the salvation of mankind and glorify God in their sufferings.** One such example is Fr Pio who was given the gift 'wounds of Jesus' to suffer for the salvation of mankind and to glorify God. Many innocent people in the world are undergoing such sufferings silently and share the sufferings of Jesus to glorify God. Some people are falsely accused and imprisoned for life time. Some are deceived of their wealth and they live as popper and suffer for life time. Some people are deprived of their legitimate right to live free life and are sold in to slavery and they die as slaves. Some people suffer from incurable illness. All such people share the sufferings of Christ for salvation of mankind & glorify God in their life.

Dear believer, if you are one among such people enduring perpetual undeserved sufferings, offer your sufferings to God as a thanks giving offering. (Rom 12:1) **Because, the Scripture says; God uses us to make knowledge about Christ spread everywhere like sweet fragrance. "Suffering Children are like sweet -smelling incense offered by Christ to God", which spreads among those who are being saved and those who are being lost".** (2 Cor 2:14-15) **In perpetual undeserved suffering we share the uncompleted suffering of Christ for salvation of the Church. (Col 1:24) The suffering children glorify God in their suffering for which they will be rewarded. (1Cor6:19-20)**

WILL OUR SUFFERINGS GIVE SURE FOUNDATION IN FAITH?

Every trial/suffering/tribulation is a blessing, as God said; "My dear friends do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering as though something unusual is happening to you. *Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ's suffering, so that you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed.* Happy are you, if you are insulted because you are Christ's followers. This means that the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God is resting on you." (1 Pet 4: 12-13)

Such sufferings give 'sure foundation' in faith. Our sufferings help us to strengthen our spiritual life, as St Peter said; "But after you have suffered a little while the God of all graces, who calls you to share his glory in union with Christ, will himself perfect you, and give you firmness, strength and a sure foundation." (1 Pet 5:10)

So, let us thank God for all our suffering, pain, brokenness, rejection, loneliness, betrayal, and deceases. For God says; "Be joyful always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances. For this is what is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (Thes 5:16-18) Further he says; Let thanksgiving be your sacrifice to God. (Ps 50:14)

WILL WE BECOME PROUD & CONFIDENT SOLDIERS OF CHRIST THROUGH OUR SUFFERINGS?

Our sufferings will give us insight & wisdom (Sir 6:37) to understand how God is working in us to make us willing and able to obey his own purpose. (Phil 2:13) Yes, God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do. (Eph 2:10) Christ will raise us to a greater maturity level in spiritual life to understand what is God's plan for us, about our salvation, salvation of the world and our call to proclaim good news and stand as witness for Christ! Our sufferings will increase our endurance, faith & hope in Christ and give us 'sure foundation' in spiritual life. This is how God will transform our life to know more about his plan.

When we receive this gift – "Sure Foundation", we will be confident on our call & convinced about the journey for our salvation & for salvation of the Church. At this juncture, we will be transformed to accept any living condition and endure any trial/suffering for the sake of Christ. (2 Cor 4:8-11) In scriptures we read that the Apostles / Missionaries who went to many countries to preach Christ, lived in dangerous conditions. Yet, they were prepared endure suffering & persecution. Yes, the Apostles did not hesitate to be to be persecuted and killed for the sake of witnessing Christ. (Acts 6:8-8:1 & 12:1-25)

Similarly, through our sufferings, God will prepare us to become proud soldiers of Christ, so as to witness Christ to the ends of the earth. We will be inwardly transformed (Rom 12:2) to endure any tribulation, sufferings to spread Good News. Thus, we will be known as 'Proud Warriors of Christ' to fight spiritual war as prophet Isaiah said; "The Lord has called out his proud and confident soldiers to fight a holy war & punish those he is angry with." (Is 13:3)

This is how our undeserved sufferings will elevate us to a greater spiritual status as Proud & Confident Sliders of Christ be used for Salvation of the Church. Is it not a great blessing?

Dear believer, "Are you the one going through fire and flood in your life due to sickness, personal issues, family issues, injustice & spiritual issues". Lift up your body to Jesus and place yourself on the cross with the broken body of Christ as a thanksgiving offering. Surrender your mind, body, your soul & your spirit to Christ and draw Christ's power & grace to remain faithful to him in your trials & suffering. Jesus will fill you with abundance of grace. You will experience power of Christ strengthening you in all your weaknesses.

Yes, when St Paul was going through great painful physical ailment, he prayed to Jesus three times to take away his suffering. Jesus did not take away his suffering. Instead, he filled him with abundance of grace to endure his suffering. Christ said; "My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak." Then Paul said; I am most happy, then, to be proud of my weaknesses in order to feel the protection of Christ's power over me. I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2Cor12:9-10)

Ask the Lord with a thankful heart to fill you with abundance of his grace to endure sufferings. *Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:6-7)* When you receive this grace, the Holy Spirit will take control of everything in you, and fill you with fruits of the Spirit. (Gal 5:22) The fruits of the Spirit; Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Humility and Self-control will guide you and lead you in your thoughts, words and actions which will please the Lord. Then your sufferings will turn in to joy as Jesus said; "I am telling you the truth; you will cry and weep, but the world will be glad; you will be sad, but your sadness will turn in to joy." (John 16:20) **This Joy of the Lord will be your strength to witness Jesus in all suffering & persecution. (Nehemiah 8:10)**

QUESTION NO-12

HOW DO WE SHARE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS?

From the answers to previous questions in this book we have clearly understood; "Why sufferings have come upon mankind"? God willed that; man, who was created in his own image should live enjoying God's love, joy, peace, prosperity and find rest in Word of God. But this world is full of sufferings and miseries. God repeatedly warns that; man has inflicted sickness and sufferings upon himself by what he has said and done. Mankind yawns for death as if it were a lover. They have gone in to partnership with death and it is just what they deserve. (Wisdom 1:16) **Yes, mankind has rejected God's commandments and chose to live in sin/disobedience. (Rom1:21-31)**

But we also see righteous people who fear God, who honour God above all things also go through many sufferings. Their legitimate rights are denied. They are falsely accused, denied justice in the Court. They endure immense suffering because they are honest and stand as witness for truth! At the same time, we also see people who have no reverence to God's commandments, who do not fear God and do all kind of atrocities hold high position in the society. They flourish and prosper. This is the fact of life. Does this mean that God has abandoned good people or God favours people who do evil?

No, never. God will not abandon his people because he has promised:

- *I will never leave you or I will never forsake you. (Heb 13:5)*
- *I will be with you to protect you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not live you until I have done all that I have promised you. (Gen 28:15)*
- *I will go with you and give you victory. (EX 33:14) I will make my splendour pass before you, and in your presence, I will pronounce my sacred name. (Ex 33:19)*
- *Israel, I am with you! I am your God - let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you. Do not be afraid. (Is 41:10)*
- *I stretched out the heaven and laid earth's foundations. I say Jerusalem, "You are my people! I have given you my teachings and I will protect you with my hand". (Isaiah 51:16)*
- **And, Jesus promised; I will be with you till the end of ages.** (Mt 28:18-20) *St Paul said; If God is for us, who can be against us. Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! Who, then, will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God, pleading with him for us! (Romans 8: 31-34)*

ARE WE THE CHOSEN GENERATION?

Righteous people suffer more, because God has chosen them to share Christ's suffering. The reader should not think that the author has no positive attitude towards life to make such statement. Yes, dear believers, the Scriptures give us understanding that; when God' loves a person intimately, he holds him close and subject him for more trials, tribulations & sufferings so that he always remains close to God, (Jn 15:4-5) walks in his light, (Sir 50:28-29) share sufferings of Christ for the sake of Salvation of the Church, (Col 1:24) and understands more about God's power, mercies, forgiving love, and Sacrificial love, there-by glorifies God in his life! (1Cor 6:19-20)

If you read the following Words and meditate on them as God says; meditate on my words, 'Day and Night' (Sir 6:37) you will understand why righteous people suffer in earthly life. God who gave us life says;

- I have chosen you even before I gave you life; and before you were born (before you are conceived in mother's womb) I selected you to be prophet (witnesses) to the nations. (Jer 1:5)
- In his mercy, God has chosen us even before we were born and called us to serve him. (Gal 1:15)
- Even before the world was made, God has already chosen us to be his, through our union with Christ (by believing in Christ and living for him) so that we would be holy without fault before him. (Eph 1:4)
- Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ will be persecuted. Sufferings are sent upon us so that we remain pure and holy (2 Tim 3:12)
- We are often troubled, but not crushed; sometimes in doubt, but never in despair; there are many enemies, but we are never without a friend. (Christ is our friend; Jn 15:14-15) Though badly hurt at times, we are not destroyed. At all times we carry in our mortal bodies the death of Jesus, so that his life also may be seen in our bodies. (2 Cor 4:8-10)
- God teaches men through sufferings and uses distress to open their eyes. (Job36:15) In sufferings God reveals spiritual truths.
- Jesus said; "You did not choose me. I chose you and appointed you to go & bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. (Jn 15:16) You are chosen to witness Christ through sufferings.
- Happy are those who are persecuted, because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them! Happy are you when people insult you, persecute you & tell all kinds of evil lies against you because you are my followers. Be happy & glad, for a great reward is kept for you in heaven. This is how the prophets who lived before you were persecuted. (Mt 5:10-12)

The above words reiterate only one thing. i.e., God wants us to believe in Jesus, live in union with him, obey his words, (Luke 11:27-28) live only for him & do his ministry to bring more & more people into the saving knowledge of Christ. (1 Timothy 2:3-4) God uses sufferings of righteous people to complete the uncompleted suffering of Jesus for salvation of the Church. (Colossians 1:24) Yes, believers, we have been created with a specific purpose. (Isaiah 43:7) It is to serve Christ as his disciples. That is why St Peter said; you are the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light. At one time you were not God's people, but now you are his people; at one time you did not know God's mercy. Now you have received his mercy. (1 Pet 2:9-10)

We become Christ's disciples by sharing his suffering. For Jesus said; 'No slave is greater than his master; if they persecute me, they will persecute you too'. (Jn 15:20) St Paul said; You have been given the privilege of serving Christ by not only in believing in him, but also by suffering for him. (Phil 1:29) By sharing sufferings of Christ you also share in his glory. (Rom 8:28-30 and Col 2:24-27)

Now we will understand how God's will, which is; "Christ's disciples will have share in his sufferings" is fulfilled in our life!

HOW DO RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE SHARE CHRIST'S SUFFERING?

1. When we are denied legitimate right to live, we share the sufferings of Christ. Because, he was denied his right to live by the people whom he loved. They arrested him and condemned him to death unjustly shouting on top of their voice crucify him, crucify him. (John 19:1-16) Similarly, we read in the news media that people are being persecuted, tortured and killed unjustly. They are denied their legitimate right to live and thus, they share the same fate of Christ.

2. When we are denied justice, we share the sufferings of Christ. Yes, all over the world we see people are being subjected to unjust treatment. It may be by deliberate act of Government, (or) it may be done by a particular society to certain people, (or) it may be done at the work place, (or) it may be within family. It is happening because; there is discrimination towards certain group of people by the society. Thus, the victims share sufferings of Christ. Yes, justice was denied to Jesus Christ. He endured the sufferings that should have been ours, the pain that we should have born. Because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. (Is 53:4-5)

3. When we are judged wrongly, we share the sufferings of Christ. Pilate was well aware that Jesus was an innocent man. He was also warned by his wife not to harm Jesus, because God revealed her in a dream that he is innocent. So, Pilate tried his best to free Jesus because; he was not convinced on the accusations brought on Jesus by the Pharisees & Priests. Yet, Pilate wrongly judged & handed over Jesus to be crucified, for, he feared people who were shouting; "If you free Jesus, you are not Emperor's friend! Anyone who claims to be king is a rebel against the Emperor". Hence, out of compulsion Pilate handed over Jesus to the chief priest to be crucified. Thus, Jesus was judged wrongly. (Jn 19:1-16) **We are also at times due to circumstances or compulsions judged by authorities (or) society (or) family members wrongly. Thus, we also share the same fate of Jesus.**

4. When we are insulted, we share the sufferings of Christ. Jesus, the righteous was insulted in many ways. He was blindfolded, slapped and was asked to identify the person who slapped him. (Lk 22:63-65) He was made to wear purple robe, crowned with thorns, and was given a stick in hand as a sign of a King. The soldiers mocked him by kneeling down before him and bowed down to him. Thus, Jesus was insulted as King of Jews. (Mk 15:16-20) When Jesus was hanging on the cross, people mocked at him, insulted him saying; if you are son of God save yourself! (Mk 15:29-30) Jesus endured the insults humbly & did not utter a word in reply. **When we are insulted, mocked, ill-treated for no fault of ours, we also share the sufferings of Jesus.** However, Jesus comforts the person who is enduring such insults saying; the insults hurled on you are fallen on me. (Rom 15:3)

5. When we are falsely accused, we share the sufferings of Christ. The Pharisees & Priests made many false accusations against Jesus. (Lk 23:1-2) In the same manner people are accused of many false accusations with in family, in the society, in organisations and in public life. **Such people share the sufferings of Christ by enduring.**

6. When we are rejected by our loved ones, we share the sufferings of Christ. God showed mercy on the fallen mankind. In order to redeem them, he sent his son Jesus so that everyone who believes in Jesus will not die but have eternal life. (Jn 3:16) Jesus took pity on mankind for they were sheep without a Shepherd. (Mt 9:36 & Mk 6:34) Out of love, Jesus taught them how to live & showed them the true path. (Jn 14:6) He was trying to lead them in the light. (Jn 8:12) But people whom he loved rejected him (Jn 3:18-19) and condemned him to be crucified. (Mk 15:6-15) So, Jesus was deeply hurt and was in anguish in the Garden-Gethsemane when Judas betrayed him by kissing. (Mt 26:36-46) Similarly, in practical life the most trusted people betray us. New born children are rejected by

mothers and they abandon them. Parents betray their children and sell them as slaves or abandon them. Spouse are not faithful to each other & betray their partner in love. They give assurance in marriage to live to gather forever, but betray/reject each other and end up in divorce. Siblings betray each other for the sake of money or property. **Thus, people are rejected in love. All such people share the sufferings of Christ who was rejected & betrayed by the people whom he loved.**

7. When we suffer humiliation, we share the sufferings of Christ. He was humiliated right from the time he was arrested till he died. He was publicly stripped & scourged. He was blindfolded and slapped. He was spat by many people on his face. He was thrown in a dungeon and made to drink gutter water. He was stripped naked, crucified and insulted by people saying; 'if you are Son of God, come down from the cross & save yourself'. Thus, Jesus was humiliated all through his journey of the cross. **In practical life we also go through many such humiliations in the family, society and in public life. When we endure such humiliations, we also share the sufferings of Jesus.**

8. When we suffer physical torment, torture, persecution we share the suffering of Christ. Yes, from the time Christ was arrested till he died on the cross, he was physically tortured, abused, mentally harassed and persecuted. He went through such sufferings that no man on earth has ever undergone! He endured the sufferings patiently. Many time we hear in news that children and adults are physically tortured, abused mentally, harassed in house and in other places. We also hear people are physically tortured and abused in the police station which sometimes leads to custodial death. We also read in news that people who are sold as slaves and children who are in captivity are subjected to such cruel treatment by their employers. Some parents illtreat their own defence less children and abuse them physically & mentally. Soldiers who are taken as prisoners of war are also subjected to such kind of harsh treatment in captivity to extract vital information. We also hear such cruel treatment is meted out to mentally ill people by their own love ones and in the mental hospitals. **All those people who are subjected to cruel treatment share the sufferings of Christ for he was also physically tortured & persecuted.**

9. When we go through anguish, mental agony, physical and spiritual suffering, we also share the sufferings of Christ. Yes, when Jesus was betrayed, when he was accused falsely, when people spoke ill about him, when they insulted him, when they put him to shame, when his rights were denied, he experienced agony, anguish and torment in captivity. Similarly, when we are betrayed, when our legitimate rights are infringed & our rightful belongings are ceased, when we are forced/compelled to do certain things which are against

our faith & liking, we also go through anguish, torment and agony which Christ endured before he was crucified & while he was hanging in the cross. Spiritual people when they do God's will to witness Christ, they also experience spiritual anguish/spiritual suffering like how St Paul experienced spiritual torment when he was preaching Christ. (2 Cor 12:1-10) Further, if we turn away from sin to live a life pleasing God and do the work of salvation the Satan will not allow us to give-up sin and do God's will. He will subject us to physical/ mental /spiritual suffering. Thus, people who endure such agony, anguish, torment, physical & spiritual suffering share the sufferings of Jesus.

10. When we are rejected for doing right and left alone in this world, we lose our courage & strength. In our loneliness we also share the sufferings of Christ. When Jesus gave-up his will to do his father's will, he threw himself face downward on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me! Yet, not of my will, let thy will be done." (Mt 26:39-42) At that moment, Christ was left alone in the valley of death. He lost his courage and strength. However, his father sent an angel - Gabriel, who filled him with power and grace to go through the way of the Cross. (Lk 22:43) In the same manner, when we raise up to witness Christ, the world will reject us, accuse us and bring all kind of false allegations against us. People who witness Christ, in such moments, experience that they are left alone which makes them to lose courage & strength. Thus, in such moments of loneliness they also share the sufferings of Christ. However, the Holy Spirit will not abandon them, for Jesus said; I will not leave you like orphans. (Jn 14:18) The Holy Spirit will come to rescue & help them to do God's will. (Jh14:14-26)

11. When people lose their own life to save other's life out of love, they also share the sufferings of Christ. Jesus Christ gave-up his life out of his free will and offered himself as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins and salvation of the fallen mankind. (Phil 2:6-9) However, in the process of offering himself as sacrifice for Salvation, Jesus had to go through great sufferings that no man has ever gone through on the earth. It is a decision on his own life which is very, very difficult, because no one likes to give up his precious life for others. Yet, the world witnesses people making dearly decision to save life of fellow beings and share the same sufferings as Christ did.

Yes, we see people who are serving the Armed Forces of a country do not hesitate to lay down their life for the sake of their countrymen. Service people who are fighting terror organisations do not hesitate to give up their life in fighting terror and they lay down their life for their countrymen. During the Covid season the world witnessed how the doctors, religious people and social workers laid

their life for the sake of people. All over the world, during flash floods we have witnessed many good people have sacrificed their own life to save life of people who were drowning/getting washed away. We have seen people who are in Fire Service have sacrificed their life to save people who were caught in ghastly fire. We are also aware that good people have lost their life by jumping in water to save life of people who were drowning. And the world thanks people who have pledged their life as ransom to release a group of people who have been taken as hostages and got themselves killed for the sake of others. **All these people who have sacrificed their life for the sake of others, share the sufferings of Jesus Christ which he experienced when he offered his life for forgiveness of sin & salvation of mankind.**

WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE SAY ABOUT OUR SUFFERING?

The Scripture says; when we undergo such sufferings, we should be glad and happy because we are taking part in the suffering of Christ for the salvation of the Church. (Col 1:24)

Sufferings will bring tremendous blessing as we read below:

- *God will bless you for this, if you endure pain of undeserved suffering because you are conscious of God's will". (1 Pet 2:19)*
- *It was to this that God called you, for Christ himself suffered for you & left an example, so that you would follow him. (1Pet2:21)*
- *Sufferings are a blessing because; "God teaches men by sending sickness and filling his body with pain. (Job 33:19)*
- *God teaches men through sufferings and uses his distress to open their eyes. (Job 36:15)*
- *We are made perfect through sufferings". It was only right that God, who creates and preserves all things, should make Jesus perfect through suffering, in order to bring many children to share his glory. (Heb 2:10)*
- *God's immortal Spirit is in every one of us. He gently corrects those who sin against him. He reminds them of what they are doing, and warn them about it, so that they may abandon their evil ways and put their trust God. (Wis 12:1-2)*
- *This small temporary trouble we suffer will bring us tremendous and eternal glory much greater than the trouble". (2 Cor 4:17)*
- *And God gives us a promise that; "I will repay (bless you) twice over what you have suffered". (Zech 9:12)*
- ***When we suffer, we complete the uncompleted sufferings of Christ for forgiveness and salvation, as St Paul said; "I am happy about my sufferings for by means of my physical suffering, I am helping to complete what still remains of Christ's sufferings on behalf of his body, the Church". (Colossians 1:24)***

ARE WE PRIVILEGED TO JOIN CHRIST IN HIS SUFFERING?

My dear believers;

1. Don't you think in your sufferings you are a privileged to join Jesus in his sufferings for salvation of the Church? So, you boast^a of your troubles, for you know; your trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint you, for God has poured out his love into your heart by means of the Holy Spirit who is God's gift to you. (Romans 5:3-5)

2. Is it not a blessing, God has chosen you to share Christ's suffering? Because Jesus said; You did not choose me. I chose you & appointed you to go & bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. So, the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name. (Jn 15:16)

Speak to God about this blessing. If you are still not convinced about the blessing that you will receive through your suffering, here is the ultimate Word of God that you may rejoice in your sufferings.

IS OUR SUFFERING A BLESSING IN DISGUISE?

The word of God says; "Jesus was made perfect through his suffering in order to bring many sons to share His Glory." (Heb 2:10) Yes, dear believers; "We are also made perfect through our sufferings in order to share God's Glory as Scripture says; "And so those whom God set apart, he called; and those he called, he put them right with himself & shared his glory with him. (Romans 8:30)

Now are you convinced that your sufferings are a blessing in disguise? Reflect on this. God will answer your doubts, uphold you by his victorious right hand and give grace to endure your sufferings for salvation of the mankind as God says: My grace is all you need, for my power is the greatest when you are weak. St Paul said; I am most happy, then, to be proud of my sufferings and weakness, in order to feel the protection of Christ's power over me. (2Cor12:9-10)

My dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering, as though something unusual were happening to you. Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed. Happy are you if you are insulted because you are Christ's followers; this means that the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is resting on you. (1 Peter 4:12-14)

QUESTION NO-13

WHAT IS TEMPTATION?

While I am attempting to answer this question, there are some questions that come to my mind, which I have listed below. It is important for us to know what is God's answer for these questions?

The Questions are:

- i) What is temptation?
- ii) Why are we tempted?
- iii) Where from temptation came from. Is it from God or is it from the devil?
- iv) Am I the only person who is going through temptations?
- v) How to deal with temptations?
- vi) **What does God say about temptations?**
- vii) **Is temptation a sin?**
- viii) **Is temptation a curse or blessing?**
- ix) **When will temptations end?**

(The answer for questions (i) to (v) are given in this Chapter. The answer for questions (vi) to (viii) are given in Chapter-14 and the answer for question (ix) is given in Chapter-15)

I - WHAT IS TEMPTATION?

IS TEMPTATION IS A SPIRITUAL WAR?

God the Father said; "Be holy in all things you do just as the heavenly Father who called you is holy. Be holy, because I am Holy". (Lev 19:1) And Jesus said; "No one can see God unless he is holy." (1 Pet 1:15 & Mt 5:8) **If your mind responds to these words positively and if you make attempts to turn away from sin,** the Satan who is ruling this world (Jn 14:30, Gal 3:22 & 1 Jn 5:19) will not allow you to turn away from sinful life, purify yourself from sins and come closer to God. Because, the Satan fears that he will lose control over your soul. Yes, he knows that once you repent & turn away from sins, God will sanctify you & make you an instrument to work for salvation.

About cleansing one-self & offering to God as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1) to be used for good deeds, St Paul said; **"If any one makes himself clean from all those evil things, he will be used for special purposes, because he is dedicated and useful to his master ready to be used for every good deed. (2 Tim 2:21) About good deeds Jesus said; the harvest is plenty but the labourers are a few. (Lk 10:2)**

Jesus has called you for this glorious work; to offer yourself to be used as his instrument in order to harvest many souls. But the Satan who works against the will of God, will not allow you to turn away from sinful ways of living to become an instrument in God's hand and harvest souls. He knows all your weaknesses for sin & your desires for sinful pleasures. So, the Satan will unceasingly bring awkward situations to tempt you, there-by, you will become weak for sinful desires, indulge in sin repeatedly & continue to live in sin as its slave.

Therefore, 'temptation is a spiritual process' in which every one's faithfulness to God is tested. (Jer 17:10) Those who fear God will have nothing to do with sin. They will escape temptations. (Prove 14:26-27 & Jas 1:12-18) But if you are led by passions, you will be trapped by temptations and live as a slave for sin. Yes, the sins of wicked man are a trap. He gets caught in the net of his own sin. He dies because he has no self-control. His utter stupidity will send him to grave. (Prov 5:22-23) *Your sin & wickedness will tear your soul like a bull. You will be left like a dead tree without any leaves or fruits. Evil desires will destroy you, make you a joke of your enemies. (Sir6:2-4) The Lord also permits temptations to see; whether you honour his words and remain faithful to him.* Or, whether you honour the desires of your flesh. (Zech 13:9) It means; God wants to see whether you fear him and resist & reject sin in all its forms! Or, are you yielding for temptations & commit sin by giving some excuses to justify your sins?

Every temptation is a spiritual warfare where we are supposed to prove our loyalty & faithfulness to Jesus Christ. About this spiritual warfare St Paul said; "We are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities and cosmic powers of this dark age who are constantly fighting against us to make us slaves". (Eph 6:12& Gal 4:3)

II- WHY ARE WE TEMPTED?

We know that when we seek employment, we are subjected to certain written tests /oral tests/practical tests. If we pass these tests then we are interviewed. If we are successful in the interview, before we are given an appointment, we are made to undergo training for six or twelve months depending on the job requirement. During training we are subjected to various hard tests for evaluating our performance and capabilities. Then depending our performance, we are positioned in right job. *Similarly, before we are accepted by God as his instrument to do the work in the field of salvation, which is a part of God's plan for everyone, we are also subjected to tests to see whether we stand*

upright in God's eyes. God wants to see whether we remain faithful to him in all circumstances, trials, temptations & tribulations. (Sir2:1-6)

The Bible refers this spiritual process as temptation. Jesus Christ was also tempted in the desert by the devil after fasting for forty days before he commenced his ministry. (Mt 4:1-11) Jesus was tempted in every way that we are, but he did not sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

This is how God tests the heart & mind of people (Jer 17:10, Jer 20:12 & Ps 66:10-12) to see how worthy we are, before we are entrusted with the task to stand as his witness. God says; happy is the person who remains faithful during trials because when he succeeds in passing such tests he will receive the reward - eternal life, 'white robe' which God promised to those who love him. (Jas 1:12-18)

ARE WE STRENGTHEND THROUGH TEMPTATIONS?

Many times, we are unable to resist temptations. We fall and commit sin. Our sins bring more sufferings. So, we need to fight temptations with conviction & determination. When Joshua was to lead the Israelites in the desert, God said to him; you will encounter many trials & tribulations. **And so, God warned him three times and said; "Joshua be determined and confident. Be sure that the book of the Law is always read in your worship. Study it day and night, and make sure that you obey everything written in it"** (Josh 1:1-9) Similarly God warns you and says; "Resist the Devil, he will run away from you". (Jas 4:7) If you resist temptations with fasting & prayer, (like how Jesus fasted for forty days and rejected the Satan when he was tempted in the desert. - Mt 4:1-11) God will bless you with Grace, Power, Wisdom & Knowledge. This Wisdom & Knowledge are the greatest treasures which will reveal many spiritual truths to you.

Yes, this Wisdom is the heavenly Wisdom given to chosen people as St Paul said; Yet, I do proclaim a message of wisdom to those who are spiritually mature. But it is not the wisdom that belongs to this world or to the powers that rule this world—powers that are losing their power. **The wisdom I proclaim is God's secret wisdom, which is hidden from human beings, but which he had already chosen for our glory even before the world was made.** None of the rulers of this world knew this wisdom. If they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as the scripture says, "What no one ever saw or heard, what no one ever thought could happen, is the very thing God prepared for those who love him." But it was to us that God made known his secret by means of his Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, even the hidden depths of God's purposes. (1Cor2:1-10) This wisdom will enrich you with the fruit 'Self-Control.'

This wisdom will teach you the following and strengthen your spiritual life so that you will be able rule over temptations. For God said; The desire for Wisdom can prepare you to rule a kingdom. So then, you that rule the nations, if you value your thrones (if you remain holy in your body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit) and symbols of authority, (preserve the anointment of the Holy Spirit showered upon you in various Church Sacraments) honour Wisdom (honour Jesus by obeying his words - Luke 11:28) so that you may rule forever. (Wis 6:20-21) You can overcome temptations & rule over them for all time.

- This wisdom will enlighten you to understand all satanic tricks by which he lures people to commit sin and enslave them.
- This wisdom will remove all your fears about Satan and enlighten you how to use word of God to rule over all fears. (Wis 17:12)
- This wisdom will give you conviction, courage & spiritual strength (Acts 3:19-20) to resist temptations and reject sin. (Prov 2:16)
- This wisdom will enlighten you on the richness (fruits of the Spirit-Gal 5:22) that dwell in Word of God. (Col 3:16)
- This wisdom will fill you / enrich you in God's words which are powerful weapons against the Satan (Eph 6:17) and help you to use 'Word of God as sword' against sin to fight well. (1 Tim 1:18)
- This wisdom will give power to bind evil spirits (Mt 18:18) and destroy the works of darkness. (Jer 1: 10 & 23:29)
- This wisdom will help you to grow deep in faith which can be used as a shield against the arrows shot by the evil spirits. (Eph 6 :14)
- This wisdom will teach you how to walk on snakes and scorpions and overcome the power of the Satan. (Lk 10:19)
- This wisdom will give you strength & courage to endure sufferings for the sake of witnessing Christ. (2 Cor 6:3-10)
- This wisdom will give you sure foundation in faith. (I Peter 5:10)
- **This sure foundation will give you strength to witness Christ against trials, sufferings & persecution even at the point of death.**

III - TEMPTATION COMES FROM GOD OR EVIL?

From the above we understand; 'The Spirit of Wisdom draws us closer to God'. It gives us sure foundation in faith so that we may endure tribulations and witness Christ. Wisdom enlightens us on the purpose of our existence; which is to glorify God's Spirit in our life. (1 Cor 6:19-20) Wisdom's Spirit reveals God's plan for man (Jer 29:11) and God's Eternal Plan for mankind in which God will unite mankind with heavenly beings at the right time 'as one family, with Christ as head'. (Eph1:7-11) **The Satan who is jealous of the status enjoyed by**

man brought death in him (Wis 2:23-24 & Rom 5:12) so as to destroy God's eternal plan which has glorious future for mankind. (Bar 5:7-9)

Therefore, the Satan tempts human beings to commit sin and live in disobedience to God's Commandments, so that, mankind will lose earthly blessings which God has promised to obedient people, (Duet 28:1-13) and live in wickedness, there-by suffer the miserable fate of sinners and lose heavenly blessing which is 'Eternal life' that was promised by Jesus to obedient people. (Jh11:25-26) **Thus, the Spirit of wisdom gives us discernment on how the Satan tempts people like how he attempted to tempt Jesus in the desert. (Matthew 4:1-11)**

But God does not tempt any one to commit sin. (James 1:13) For God says; *Don't blame the Lord for your sin; the Lord does not cause what he hates. Don't claim that he has misled you; he doesn't need the help of sinners to accomplish his purposes. The Lord hates evil in all its forms, and those who fear the Lord, find nothing attractive in evil. (Sir 15:11-13) Yes, God hates the sight of sin. However, times of testing and trials comes from the Lord, for the scripture says; "It might appear that they have suffered punishment, but they have the confident hope of immortality. Their sufferings were minor compared with the blessings they will receive. God has tested them, like gold in a furnace, and found them worthy to be with him. He has accepted them, just as he accepts the sacrifices which his worshipers burn on the altar."* (Wis 3:4-6) ***Yes, God puts us to test to bring us much closer to him so as to understand his mercies, forgiveness & sacrificial love. Our sufferings are spiritual encounter in which God brings us closer to him so as to enable us to grow in spiritual life & gives sure foundation.***

God cautions us about times of testing as he said: *My son, are you going to serve the Lord, be prepared for times when you will be put to test. Be sincere & determined. Keep calm when trouble comes. Stay with the Lord; never abandon him and you will be prosperous at the end of the days. Accept whatever happens. Even if you suffer humiliation, be patient. Gold is tested in fire and human character is tested in the furnace of humiliation. Trust the Lord and he will help you. Walk straight in his ways and put your hope in him. (Sir 2: 1 - 6)*

The Scriptures says; "At first the Lord will lead you in a difficult path. He will make you so afraid that you will think that you cannot go on. The discipline that God demands will be tormenting. He will put you to test with his requirements until he trusts you completely. Then God will come to you without delay, reveal his secrets and make you happy. But during the period of trials, testing & temptations if you stray, God will abandon you & let you go to your ruin". (Sir 4:17-19)

Dear believers, now are you convinced that temptation comes from the devil and not from God? If any one of you need help to be strong and remain faithful to God during the temptations, he should pray to God. He will make him as an Iron pillar and bronze wall against temptations (Jer 1:18-19) and strengthen him by showering his grace, (2 Cor 12:9) which he gives generously and graciously. (Jas 1:5) But when you pray you should not doubt at all. Whoever doubts are like a wave in the sea that is driven & blown about by the wind. (Jas 1:1-6)

DOES GOD PERMITS TEMPTATIONS TO STRENGTHEN US?

Temptations are the times of testing through which we become strong in faith, in God's words, and in Wisdom. It is a spiritual exercise which enhances our wisdom to understand various ways and means through which the evil spirits are working to deceive mankind! Temptations make us fall in sin & sin weighs upon our soul. (Wis 9:15) Wages of sin is spiritual death. (Rom 6:23) Consequently, by sinning we lose blessings that are promised for obedient people. (Lev 26:3-13) Further, our sins bring sickness & sufferings. (Prov 5:1-23) In our sufferings we call on to the Lord who sees our distress and breaks the chains that bind us. (Nah 1:12-13) David said; "Some were living in gloom and darkness, prisoners suffering in chains, because they had rebelled against the commands of Almighty God and had rejected his instructions. They were worn out from hard work; they would fall down and no one would help them. Then in their troubles/suffering they called to the LORD. HE saved them from their distress. (Ps 107:10-13)

Such suffering will make us wise and we gain wisdom that; sin will destroy our blessings, (Duet 28:15-68) our health, peace, happiness (Prov5:1-11) and steal our reward-eternal life. (Rev 20:10) The suffering caused by our repeated sins will make us wise to reject sin in all its forms. As days pass on, our old sins will not have power over us, because; we understand that sin (thief) enters our life only to steal, kill and destroy our life. (Jn 10:10) This spiritual maturity will make us strong in mind and give spiritual strength (Acts 3:19-20) to exercise self-control in those weak areas which are luring us to sin.

Consequently, our spiritual maturity will transform us as an iron pillar and bronze wall against sin. (Jer 1:18-19) Jesus said; our old sins will return and fight against us to make us fall, which he calls as 'the Return of the Evil spirits. (Lk 11:24-26) But they 'our old sins-evil spirits' will not have power over us to defeat us, because God says; 'I will make you like a solid bronze wall as far as they (Our old sins) are concerned. They will come back and fight against you, but they will not defeat you. I will be with you to protect you and keep

you safe. I will rescue you from the power of the wicked and violent men. I, the Lord, have spoken. (Jer 15:19-21) Yes, God will make us as a solid bronze wall against all kind of sins and give victory over our sinful-self. (Col 2:9-10) Thus, God will bring an inward transformation in our heart and mind (Rom 12:2) and consequently cleanse our whole being which is called as circumcision of heart. (Col 2:11& Wis 12:1-2)

Such kind of spiritual experience will give us sure foundation.

(1 Pet 5:10) However, by enduring temptations and trials patiently (it may be someone provoking us with insults, wounding words, physical torture (or) chronic sickness / torment (or) satanic decease - satanic sickness like the one which St Paul endured - 2 Cor 12:9-11), we take part in sufferings of Christ, (Col 1:24) as Paul said; **"In everything we do we show that we are God's servants by patiently enduring troubles, hardships & difficulties and share sufferings of Christ"**. (2 Cor 6: 1-4)

Now we understand that through temptations God strengthens our foundation in faith.

Because every time we fall, we repent and confess sin (Jn20:20-23) and receive God's forgiveness. Such spiritual experience enriches us our faith, because by forgiving our sins God renews our life by his Spirit, (2 Cor 4:16) and we become a new being by the power of unending love of Christ. (Jer 30:3) Temptations & tribulations are perfectly designed in God's plan for us. We understand this truth from life of Job. It was God who permitted the Satan to test Job's faithfulness. (Job 1:8-12) Job went through fire and flood. But he endured trials & tribulations and accepted his sufferings from hands of God. His suffering strengthened his faith & he endured them with conviction that God will not disappoint him. (Rom 10:11) Also, we read Jesus was tempted in the desert by the Satan. (Mt 4:1-11) **It was God the Father who permitted the Satan to tempt Jesus who replied the Satan only through word of God and chased him. This was to reveal the truth that; if you have faith in Word of God and use them as armour of God to fight the Satan (Eph 6:10-18) he will flee from you.** The following Words reveal that it is the Lord who makes us go through times of testing. Jer 9:7, Jer 17:10, Psalms 66:10-12, and Zac 13:9.

IV- AM I THE ONLY PERSON UNDERGOING TREMPATIONS, TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS?

When we undergo times of temptations, trials and tribulations we ask God; "Why should I alone suffer like this when the world is enjoying good time? Lord, won't you take away this suffering"? Dear believer, in such times if you read scriptures, you will find answer to these questions. **The answer which the scripture gives will strengthen you in faith and give firmness in spiritual life. Yes, the Scripture says:**

- **Jesus said:** You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so, the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name. (Jn 15:16) So all of us are called to serve the Lord/witness Jesus Christ in individual ways, as we are called!
- **God said; My son, if you are going to serve God, be prepared for times when you will be put to test.** Be sincere & determined. Keep calm when trouble comes. Stay with God never abandon him. You will be prosperous at the end of your days. Accept whatever happens to you. Even if you suffer humiliation, be patient. Gold is tested by fire & human character is tested in the furnace of humiliation. Trust in God and he will help you. Walk straight in his ways and put your hope in him. (Sir 2:1-6)
- **Further the Lord says;** Think back to the ancient generations and consider this: has the Lord ever disappointed anyone who put his hope in him? Has the Lord ever abandoned anyone who held him in constant reverence? Has the Lord ever ignored anyone who prayed to him? The Lord is kind and merciful; he forgives our sins and keeps us safe in time of trouble. But those who lose their nerve are doomed—all those sinners who try to have it both ways! (Sir 2:10-12)
- **St Peter said;** My dear friends do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering as though something unusual were happening to you. Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ's suffering. So that you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed. Happy are you if you are insulted because you are Christ's followers. This means that the glorious Spirit, of Spirit of God is resting upon you. (1 Pet 4:12-14)
- **Further Jesus said;** if you want to be my disciples, reject yourself, pick up your cross & follow me. (Lk 9:23) Ask yourself, are you still willing to seek the Lord above everything and serve him against all your sufferings? **Yes, dear Believers, are you willing to bear suffering for the sake of witnessing Jesus?**

Yes, God said; "Every person who wants to live a good life & do good deeds in union with Christ will be persecuted". (2 Tim 3:12) *This does not mean that we will be persecuted and sacrificed like Jesus. Persecution will be in different ways, as given below:*

- i) Denial of Justice.
- ii) Denial of legitimate civil rights to live a free life.
- iii) Chronic Sickness.
- iv) Satanic sickness.
- v) Living with people whom you are not able to accept.
- vi) False accusations against you with false evidences.

- vii) *Rejection by your loved ones.*
- viii) *Rejection by your relatives & society.*
- ix) *Ill treatment by your own relatives/loved ones.*
- x) *Living with a person who has died for his conscience.*
- xi) *Living with insults.*
- xii) *Denial of right to practice faith of your choice.*
- xiii) *Being a believer practicing Christian faith & living with Spouse who does not believe in Christ & Spiritual life.*
- xvi) *Perpetual sufferings due to political / military atrocities & harassment.*
- xv) *Every other unjust suffering we may encounter in spiritual life and in physical life.*

So, it is very, very clear that every believer whom the Lord has chosen is being put to test! *Remember what Jesus said; You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures.* And so, the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name. (Jn 15:16) God makes us to undergo trials & tribulations to give endurance and bless us with *Sure Foundation in faith as explained in pervious paras.* *St Peter said; "After you have suffered a little while the God of all graces, who calls you to share his eternal glory in union with Christ, will himself perfect you and give you firmness, strength & sure foundation". (1 Pet 5:10)*

Temptations, trials and tribulations does not come only to common people. Even Priests, Pastors, Nuns, Lay Preachers, Leaders in the Church & Elders in the Congregation go through trials, temptations & tribulations. When they endure times of testing, they grow in faith, gain conviction, confidence & become determined to do the work of salvation in order to complete God's plan for them, as St Paul said; Keep on working with fear and trembling to complete your work in the field of salvation, for God is always at work in you to make you willing and able to obey his own purpose. (Phil2:12-13)

Instead of living in dejection due to tribulations & sufferings, if you accept them in right mind as; "I am taking part in uncompleted sufferings of Christ", & "it is God's will for me," and my sufferings are used by God for my own salvation and for the salvation of the Church, (Col 1:24) and offer the sufferings to Christ as thanks giving sacrifice, (Rom 12:1) then, your suffering will be turned in to joy. (Jn 16:20) **For God said; If you share Christ's suffering, you will also share his glory.** (Rom 8:17) Therefore, be joyful in your trials, sufferings, and temptations, as God says; 'Be joyful always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ'. (1 Thes 5:16-19) Yes, you need such deep conviction is spiritual life!

V - HOW TO DEAL WITH TEMPTATIONS?

It is very important to remember that Jesus himself was put test. Before we get to know how to deal with temptations, we must know that Jesus lived in the same natural human form as we do. He was also put to every kind of test & subjected to all temptations that we experience in the present world. However, the Scriptures says; 'Jesus remained faithful to his Father during all temptations and in all circumstances. St Paul said; **"We have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin"**. (Heb 4:15) Yes, Jesus was tempted by the Satan in every way that we are! God the Father permitted such trials upon Jesus to demonstrate his holiness. During trial & temptations Jesus kept Satan far away from him by giving reply through Word of God. **Finally, Jesus rejected the Satan saying; "Get away Satan" the scripture says "Worship the Lord your God and serve only him"**. (Mt 4: 1-11) And the Satan left him.

DO WE DECIDE TO REJECT SATAN?

Now it is very, very important for us to observe keenly, to learn; 'how Jesus handled his temptations'?

- **Firstly:** It was the decision of Jesus "not to give up or yield for any temptations" which helped him to win over evil.
- **Secondly:** For every temptation the Satan put across, Jesus answered them all only with Word of God' for which the Satan had no answer!

So, when you are tempted; Are you determined in mind to reject the Satan and all his works? If you are not determined and confident about it, then, the Satan will have upper hand over you! If you are determined to reject the Satan, God will fill you with spiritual strength, (Acts 3:19-20) for every temptation is a war against the evil spirits. (Eph 6:12) Because you are precious in God's eyes, (Is 43:4) and your body is temple of the Holy Spirit, God will be faithful to his promise; "I will never abandon as orphans (Jn 14:18) nor shall I forsake you." (Heb 13:5) Yes, God will not leave you alone in this battle, for; this battle belongs to the Lord. (1Sam 17:17) Even if you become weak for temptations and fall in sin, God says; I will fill you with my grace and strengthen you in spirit, (Rom 5:20 & 2 Cor 12:9) and I will fight for you by my Spirit & give you victory. (Zech 4:6-7)

Dear brother / sister, what we need to understand about the golden rule in the Kingdom of God is: "God has given freedom to everyone to Choose life". God has created us in his own image and

has given us 'Wisdom and Freedom' to make choice between God's Blessing & curse, good & evil, and life & death. (Duet 30:1,15 & 19) Also, God gave us Ten commandments, his teachings/laws and above all, he has given us wisdom to understand the consequences of our decisions, so that we make right choice/decision to choose between good & evil and life & death. Yes, dear believer, when you go through temptations how do you exercise your choice/decision? The answer for this question is known only to you & God! Speak to God about it.

God promises to protect us & fight for us, if we decide to reject temptations: At times of temptations if we fast & pray, if we read Bible and fight temptations with word of God, and use the armours that God has given us to fight temptations, (Eph 6:10-18) then we will experience the Spirit of God strengthening against the evil spirits as God said; "Now I will make you as stubborn & as tough as they are. I will make you as firm as a rock & as hard as a diamond; don't be afraid of evil spirits." (Ezek 3:8-9) Further he said; No weapon will be able to hurt you; you will have an answer for all who accuse you. I will defend my servants & give them victory. (Is 54:17) Whatever temptation may be, if you decide not to give-in, you will surely find help from above, for we have a helper the Holy Spirit. (John 14:16)

But if you choose to yield for temptations, commit sin, God only feels sad about it. For the Scriptures says; How painful it is to the Lord when one of his people die in sin. (Ps 116:15) Yes, when we commit sin, our soul dies for God's presence and if we continue to live in sin, our sins will destroy our body & soul. (Prov 5:1-11 & Rev 20:10) If we sin, we lose God's presence. But God patiently waits for us to repent & return to him. Yes, he said 'All day long I held my hands to welcome a disobedient & rebellious people'. (Rom 10:21) If we repent & reject temptations and decide to fight them, then God is there to help and to deliver us from the awful situations.

Our ever-loving God (Jer 31:3) promises to fight for us and deliver us from temptations. For his promises says;

- *The Lord goes out like a warrior; he is ready and eager to battle. He gives a war cry, a battle shout; he shows his power against his enemies. (Is 42:13)*
- *I alone am the LORD, the only one who can save you. I predicted what would happen, and then I came to your aid. No foreign god has ever done this; you are my witnesses. I am God and always will be. No one can escape from my power; no one can change what I do." (Is 43:12)*
- *No weapon will be able to hurt you; you will have an answer for*

all who accuse you. I will defend my servants and give them victory" (Is 54:17)

- *They (temptations) will return and fight against you. But they will not defeat you, for I will make you like a bronze wall against them. And I will be with you to give victory. (Jer 15:19-20)*
- *The sounds of violence will be heard no more; Destruction will not shatter you again. I will protect & defend you like a wall; You will praise me, for I have saved you. No longer will the sun be your light by day or the moon be your light by night; I, the Lord will be your eternal light; The light of my glory will shine on you. Your days of grief will come to an end. I will be your eternal light, more lasting than the sun & moon. (Is 60:18-20)*
- *When you pass through the sea trouble, I the Lord will strike the waves." (Zech 10:11) Yes, when temptations surround us, the Lord himself will burn around us as wall of fire and protect us from the snares of the evil one. (Zech 2:5)*
- *He (Satan) will not shoot a single arrow against it (us). No soldiers (no evil spirit) with shields will come near the city (near God's people), and no siege-mounds will be built around it (Satan cannot hold God's people as prisoners). He will go back by the road by which he came, without entering the city. I the Lord have spoken. I will defend the city (God's people) to protect it, for the sake of my own honour and because of the promise I made to my servant David. (Is 37:33-35)*
- *God's words will burn around us like fire and it will burn-up all evil things which have enslaved us. And his words will act as hammer and break all stronghold of evil bondages which is causing us to fall in sin repeatedly. (Jer 23:29)*

Yes, God will fight for us and deliver us from temptations.

ARE WE TEMPTED MORE WHEN WE COME CLOSER TO GOD?

A believer has choice to decide; either fight temptations with help of the Holy Spirit, (Jn 14:16) (Or) to yield for temptations and live in sin. When we walk close with Jesus, the Satan will tempt us more & more. And more so, if we surrender our life to serve the Lord, the Satan will make our life miserable. About this the Lord said;

- *My son if you are going to serve the Lord, be prepared for times when you will be put to test. Be sincere & determined. Keep calm when trouble comes, stay with the Lord, and never abandon him. You will be prosperous at the end of your days. Accept whatever happens to you, even if you happen to suffer humiliation. Trust God and he will help you to walk straight in his ways and put your hope on him. (Sir 2:1-6)*

- *At first, Wisdom will lead you along difficult paths. She will make you so afraid that you will think you cannot go on. The discipline she demands will be tormenting. She will put you to the test with her requirements until she trusts you completely. Then she will come to you with no delay, reveal her secrets to you, and make you happy. But if you go astray, she will abandon you and let you go to your own ruin. (Sir 4:17-19)*
- *In your temptations if you fast and pray, God will fill you with grace to resist and reject it. The Satan will run from you for God said; Resist the Satan, he will run away from you. (Jas 4:7)*

God is near to us during our trials & temptations: Sometimes we encounter situations which are against us; insulting, humiliating & damaging. We encounter situations where we lose our belongings, even our loved ones. And there will be situations which are beyond our control, where we will have no say or our voice will not be heard. In such situations the Lord says; "It is I, who test my People to purify them as Gold & Silver is purified in the furnace". (Psalms 66:10-12)

But the Lord who puts us to such vigorous tests does not leave alone. He said; I will not leave you like orphans. (Jn 14:18) I will ask the Father and he will send you a helper the Holy Spirit, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive him, because it cannot see him or know him. But you know him, because he remains with you and is in you. (Jn 14:16-17) And God also tells us how we should behave when we go through tribulations and temptations. To a person who is going through such situations, the Lord says;

- *When you suffer, you should sit alone in silent patience. You should bow in submission, for there may still be hope. Though beaten and insulted you should accept it all. The Lord is merciful and will not reject you forever. He may bring you some sorrow, but his love for you is sure and strong. He takes no pleasure in causing you pain". (Lam 3:28-33)*
- *Further, God says; "Do not be afraid-I am with you! I am you God let nothing terrify you. I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and keep you safe". (Is 41:10) This is how our God will be with us in all our times of testing and tribulations.*

WILL GOD PROVIDE A WAY OUT IN OUR TEMPTATIONS, TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS?

The Lord says "I know your strength & weakness." (Sir 2:1-6) I also know your tears. (Ps 56:8) I know how strong/weak you are in faith to endure trials & tribulations. In difficult times when you are lost, not knowing what to do, God promises to deliver you as he says:

Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm. He will give you strength to endure it and he will also provide a way out. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Yes, God assures that he is not going to test you beyond your strength/ability to remain firm. And promises that he will provide you a way out to deliver you from your trials & tribulations. But during your temptation, trials & tribulations, and also when you go through spiritual suffering, what God wants you to do is; 'You should be united with him through his life-giving words, (Jn 15:1-2) continue your intense prayer, fasting and must meditate on his words to gain insight & understanding'.(Sir 6:37) It is very important that however big your problem/ suffering may be, never abandon the Lord, for God says; "I will never leave you, nor will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

Further, God says; think back to the ancient generations and consider this: (Sirach 2:10-11)

- Has the Lord ever disappointed anyone who put his hope in him?
- Has the Lord ever abandoned anyone who held him in constant reverence?
- Has the Lord ever ignored anyone who prayed to him?
- The Lord is kind and merciful; he forgives our sins and keeps us safe in time of trouble.

Yes, God wants that you should not turn away from him to solve your problems/sufferings through worldly ways. Yes, you should not try to solve your problems outside God's promises. It means, if you try to find solution to your problems by resorting to palmistry, astrology, consulting spirits of the dead and witchcraft or black magic, you are turning away from the Lord. By doing so, you sin against the 1st & 2nd Commandments of Ten Commandments. God said; there shall be no God for you other than me. (Ex 20: 4-5)

This is how God warns those who turn away from him in times of tribulations: God condemns those who turn away from him to find solutions for problems through sinful ways, as we read below:

- *God hates witchcraft & black magic: God hated people who lived in unholy land long ago because they did terrible things and practiced magic, conducted unholy worship. (Wisdom 12:3-4)*
- *God's warning for fortune tellers & astrologers: He said, I will make fools out of fortune tellers & frustrate the predictions of astrologers. The words of the wise I refute & show that their wisdom is foolishness. (Is44:25) I will destroy the magic charms you use & leave you without any fortune tellers. (Micha 5:12)*

- *God warns those who consult spirit of the dead for messages to solve problems:* He said; 'But people will tell you to ask for messages from fortune tellers & medium who chirp and mutter. "They will say after all people should ask for messages from the spirits & consult the dead-on behalf of living. But you are to tell them; listen to what the Lord is teaching you. Do not listen to mediums. What they tell will do no good to you". (Is 8:19-20)
- *God's warning to people who consult spirit of the dead:* Do not go for advice to people who consult the spirits of the dead. If you do, you will be ritually unclean. I am your God. (Lev 19:31)
- *God's warning to those who offer human sacrifice to solve their problems:* When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, don't follow the disgusting practices of the nations that are there. Don't sacrifice your children in the fires on your altars; and don't let your people practice divination or look for omens or use spells or charms, and don't let them consult the spirits of the dead. God hates people who do these disgusting things. That is why he is driving those nations out of the land as you advance. Be completely faithful to God." (Duet 18:9-14, 2Kgs 21:6, 2 Kgs 23:10, 2 Chr 28:1-3, 2 Chr 33:6, Ps 106:37-38)

WILL GOD LEAD US BY HIS SPIRIT IN OUR DISTRESS?

The above discourse gives us clear understanding that; when we go through trials & tribulations and fire & flood in life, only answer is to turn to the Lord with pure heart, give up sins and change the way we live in humble submission to his words. For, God who created us, who provides us all good thing and cares for us says;

- *Israel, why then do you complain that the LORD doesn't know your troubles or care if you suffer injustice? Don't you know? Haven't you heard? The LORD is the everlasting God; he created all the world. He never grows tired or weary. No one understands his thoughts. He strengthens those who are weak and tired. Even those who are young grow weak; young people can fall exhausted. **But those who trust in the LORD for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak.** (Is 40:27-31)*
- *Further, God says; Do not be afraid—I am with you. I am your God—let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you. "Those who are angry with you will know the shame of defeat. Those who fight against you will die and will disappear from the earth. I am the LORD your*

God; I am the one who strengthen you and tell you, 'Do not be afraid; I will help you.' The LORD says, "Small and weak as you are, Israel, don't be afraid; I will help you. I, the holy God of Israel, am the one who saves you. (Is 41:10-14)

- *And God assures; "I will lead my blind people by roads that they have never travelled. I will turn their darkness into light and make the rough country road smooth before them. These are my promises and I will keep them without fail". (Is 42:16) And "I will make a road for you in wilderness and give you streams of water". (Is 43:18)*
- ***In our distress, Jesus says; "Come to me all who are heavily burdened, I will give you rest". (Math 11:28) And, when you pass through the sea of trouble; I the Lord, your God will strike the waves." (Zech 10:11)***

In our distress, we must repose trust in the Lord and remain faithful to him. We should not displease God by turning away to pagan/ satanic worship, or worship heavenly bodies/living creatures or repose in astrology/palmistry or turn to any other sinful worship. **We can achieve such resolute firmness in faith only by worshipping Jesus every day before sunrise, between three o'clock & six o'clock.** (Wis 6:12-21) At this time, the presence of Jesus Christ is very awesome. He will give you peace in all situations. (Wisdom 6:15) He will remain with you in all your thoughts and guide all your actions. (Wisdom 6:16) Further, he will enrich you with abundance of grace (2 Cor 12:9) which will empower you to face all trials and tribulations (Phil 4:13) with courage, conviction and determination. (Josh 1:1-9)

Yes, it is very, very important for Christians to seek Christ before sunrise so as to receive his power to face our daily challenges in the physical life and more importantly in the spiritual life. With out his presence and guidance, we will be lost for temptations. He said I am the real vine and my Father is the gardener. He breaks off every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will be clean & bear more fruit. **Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it can do so only if it remains in the vine. In the same way you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me.** I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me. (Jn 15:1-5)

If you want to win over your temptations, trials & tribulations, you must sit at the feet of Jesus before sunrise, read his words & seek his help. Also, you should take help of Mother Mary by meditating

Rosary. She is Mother of God and she will lead you to Jesus. She is the woman whom the Satan fears. She will shield you from the power sin, protect you against evil traps and keep you safe from the Satan.

It is important to learn how God guides people in distress.

Isaiah said; *"The Lord will make you go through a difficult path. But he himself will be there to teach you, and you will not have to search him anymore. If you wander off the road to the right or to the left, you will hear his voice from behind you saying; "Here is the road. Follow it". (Is 30:20-21) God who guides us says; Trust in God with all your heart. Do not rely on your understanding. Remember God in everything you do & he will guide you in the right path. (Prov3:5-6)*

This means; we must allow God to work in us in our distress, and wait upon him to act and deliver us. King David said:

"So we will not be afraid even if the earth is shaken & the mountain falls into ocean depth, even if the seas roar and rage and hills are shaken by violence. There is a river that brings joy to the city of God, from the sacred house of the Most High. God is in that city and it will never get destroyed; at early dawn he will come to its aid. Nations are terrified, Kingdoms are shaken; God thunders & the earth dissolves. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. (Psalms 46:2-7) This is how Lord our God will act & protect us in our distress.

We are called to put our faith into action: *If we say we believe in God's words, but continue to do things that pleases our mind, instead of pleasing God in times of distress as we read above, we disobey God's words and deceive ourselves. By doing such things we resist God's power to work in us to deliver us from temptations. Faith does not mean only believing in God's words. Faith means, we put in to practice what we believe. God said; "Do not deceive yourselves just by listening to my words, instead, put my words into practice. Whoever listens to words and does not put it into practice is like a man who looks in a mirror and sees himself as he is". (Jas 1:22-23)*

Dear believers, as Christians we are bound to go through fire & flood in our life, for Jesus said; *'There will be troubles for you in this world. But remain united with me. I have won over the world.'* (Jn 16:33) **The only way we can overcome troubles is to believe in God's words, obey them and practice what we believe.** *God said; Put my words to test to see my power working in you. (Phil 4:9 & 1 Thes 5:21) When you put your faith in to practice, God's words will work in you and you will experience God's power working to deliver you from troubles; for God is at work in you who believe. (1 Thes 2:13)*

Remain faithful to God during trials and temptations: The Lord calls us to remain faithful to him in trials because, when we succeed in passing such tests, we will receive his reward which is: 'A life that God has promised to those who love him'. *God calls for a resolute firmness in our faith in all trials because; we have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin. (Heb 4:15) And he can now help those who are tempted, because he himself was tempted & suffered. (Heb 2:18)* Yes, you must follow the example of Christ. He remained faithful to his Father to do his will, in spite of knowing that he will be tortured, tormented, humiliated & crucified. But Jesus did not turn away from his Father. Hence, Jesus was glorified as King of kings and Lord of lords. (1Tim 6:15 & Rev 17:14)

The 'Richness' in Christ's Message will help us to fight: Dear believers, remain with Word of God at all times. (Jn 15:1-5) St Paul said; Christ's message (his words) in all its richness must live in our hearts, (Col 3:16) to fight trials & temptations, for his words brings God's life-giving Spirit in us to strengthen our weak body to fight the Satan. *Richness in Christ's Message refers to in-filling of the Holy Spirit with all its fruits (Gal 5:22) & Gifts of the Spirit. (1Cor12:7-11)*

If you are filled with fruits of the Holy Spirit, you will receive courage, conviction & confidence to fight Satan for; With Christ you can do all things. (Phil 4:13) Without him you can do nothing." (Jn 15:5) If you are filled with Christ's message with all its richness, his words, which is a double-edged sword, will deliver you from all temptations & trials. (Heb 4:12) That is why St Paul said; "We have to use Christ's Words as powerful weapons in order to fight well." (1 Tim 1:18) *There is Power in words of Jesus. His words act as fire and burns all evil infliction in us and it acts a hammer to break rocks (strongholds of evil) in to pieces. (Jer 23:29) Yes, Christ's Words will break all evil powers & give victory in our trials & temptations. There is Power in the Name 'Jesus', and there is Victory in the Name 'Jesus'.*

Fight trials, temptations & tribulations with Word of God; for, this battle belongs to the Lord. And he will give you victory by his Spirit.

QUESTION NO -14

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT TEMPTATION?

Dear believers, we are called by name to do the work of salvation: God who called us said; "Do not be afraid—I will save you. I have called you by name—you are mine. When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, you will not be burned; the hard trials that come will not hurt you. (Is 43:1-2) God's words are very clear and definite. He says; "Fear not" I am with you to protect and save you. When you pass through deep waters-trials & temptations, I will be with you. Your temptations & trials will not defeat you, neither will your temptations will burn you. The times of testing/temptations will not cause you harm, because I am with you!

It is very important, we as believers in Christ should know that; "There is no forgiveness of sins without bloodshed". (Heb 9:22) And "There is no salvation without sacrifice". (Heb 9:28) That is why Jesus shed his precious blood for forgiveness of sins & offered himself as a Sacrifice on the cross for Salvation of the fallen mankind! Now Jesus has called us to follow him. It was to this that God called you, for Jesus himself suffered for you & left you an example, so that you would follow in his steps". (1 Pet 2:21) Further, he said; "The nature of Christ should be formed in every one of us to receive salvation". (Gal 4:19-20 & Col 3:8-10) This gives us discernment that; to receive salvation we must follow Jesus. And if we follow Jesus, we are bound to go through temptations & tribulations, for Jesus said; No servant is greater than his Master. If they persecute the master, they will persecute the disciples too. (Jn 15:20) We understand, "our Christian life will be full of temptations, because Jesus himself was tempted by the Satan in the desert before he commenced Ministry". (Mt 4:1-11)

Temptations are stepping stones in the ladder of salvation: We are created with a specific purpose and a definite plan. God has devised individual plan for everyone us. (Jer 29:11) In this plan, he guides us and leads us in the path of Salvation. Firstly, our own Salvation. Secondly; in the course of his plan, he uses us as his instrument to lead others to Salvation, as Paul said; Those who make themselves clean from all those evil things, will be used for special purposes, because they are dedicated and useful to their Master, ready to be used for every good deed. (2 Tim 2:21) Yes, we have to save ourselves from the power of sin. And we must offer ourselves to be used as instruments in the work of salvation for salvation of

mankind, as St Paul said: He made us what we are, and in our union with Jesus, he has created us for a life of good deeds (For Salvation of mankind) which he has already prepared for us to do". (Eph 2:10)

ARE TEMPTATIONS A SPIRITUAL TRAINING TO STRENGTHEN US IN SPIRITUAL LIFE?

Living in flesh and blood will not enlighten us on God's Love

To make it much clear, let me put it in much simpler manner. If you live life without God's Spirit according to the standards of this world in flesh & blood, how will you come to know "How wonderful & glorious is Christ's love"? & "How Christ suffered to redeem you from the slavery of sin? Rather, shall I ask you the following questions?

If you live this life in flesh and blood;

- How will you come to know the length & breath, hight & depth of Christ's love? (Eph 3:17-19)
- How will you understand Christ's everlasting love? (Jer 31:3)
- How will you experience Christ's forgiving love? (Jn 3:16)
- How will you realise Christ's sacrificial love? (Heb 9:23-28)

Temptations are unique experience:

That is why, God gives the unique experience by putting us to test. Yes, God tests our faithfulness to him in times of temptations. That's why we go through temptations which are moments of trials & tribulations. **We are put to test like how gold & silver is tested in fire, (Wis 3:4, 1Pet 1:6-7) and hence, we go through fire & flood. (Ps 66:10-12)** God who test our faith us says that; Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise. He will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at time you are put to the test, he will give you strength to endure it & provide you with a way out. (1Cor 10:13)

God puts us to test!

The Scriptures says; 'The Lord does not tempt any one.' (Jas 1:13) However we read in the book-Job; God permitted the Satan to test Job to see Job's faithfulness to God in his trials/temptations & tribulations. (Job 1:1-12 & Job 2:1-10) The Scriptures says; Job remained faithful to God in all his temptations & tribulations and therefore, God blessed Job twice of what he suffered during his tribulations at the later part of his life, because God accepted Job as righteous. (Job 42:7-16) **How faithful are we in times of temptations?**

If you fall for temptation and commit sin, it will bring death:

Happy are those who remain faithful under trials, because; when they succeed in passing such tests, they will receive their reward the life which God has promised to those who love him. If we are tested by temptations, we must not say, this temptation comes from God. For, God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. We fall for temptations & commit sin because we are weak for sinful desires. Also, we are not firm in God's words which can be used as weapons against temptations like how Jesus used Word of God to chase the Satan when he tempted Jesus in the desert. (Mt 4:1-11) We are tempted when we are drawn away and trapped by our own evil desires. **Then our evil desires conceive and give birth to sin & when sin is full-grown, it brings death in soul.** (James 1:12-14)

Sin binds our soul with invisible chain:

If we give-in for temptations and commit sin, we lose God's presence in us. And our sins bind us with invisible chains which causes distress. (Wis 17:17) In distress we call on to the Lord who sets us free from the invisible chains, as King David said; 'Some were living in gloom and darkness, prisoners suffering in chains, because they had rebelled against the commands of Almighty God and had rejected his instructions. They were worn out from hard work; they would fall down & no one would help. Then in their trouble they called to the LORD, and he saved them from their distress. (Ps 107:10 - 13)

We experience God's forgiving love:

So, we understand; if we give-in for temptations & commit sin, we suffer its consequence. If we sin, our soul dies for God & thus, we lose God's presence in soul & body, because wage for sin is death. (Rom 6:23) In distress we cry to God who saves us from distress and comforts us. (Is 40:1-2) He renews our spirit, (2 Cor 4:16) & gives new life in his Spirit. (Zeph 3:17) Our sins are forgiven by God, if we truly repent for them & confess them in the Sacrament of Confession which Jesus instituted after resurrection. (Jn 20 21-23)

Every time we commit sin and confess them, we experience the forgiving love of Jesus. Over a period of time, this experience will make us to understand; how as believers in Jesus we are privileged realise the length, breath, hight & depth of Christ's love. (Eph 3:17-19) Through this continued experience, we understand

God's everlasting love, (Jer 31:3) his forgiving love (Rom 8:1) and gain knowledge on the Sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. (Heb 9:11-26)

Sacrificial love of Jesus reveals God's will for us:

This Knowledge on 'forgiving Love & sacrificial Love' of Jesus will enable us to understand God's will for us, which is; "We are called to witness Jesus by following his ways". In this path we are supposed to reject ourselves, carry our cross and follow Jesus. (Lk 9:23) Our cross is the sufferings that we are enduring in daily life for our own salvation and for salvation of mankind. That is why Jesus said; the world will make you suffer and persecute you. (Jn 16:33) Further he said; 'Slaves are not greater than their master.' If people persecuted me, they will persecute you too; if they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours too. (Jn 15:20) Therefore, we are bound to suffer for our salvation. Our sufferings are used by God for our salvation, (2 Cor 1:6) and for salvation of the Church. (Col 1:24)

How do you gain conviction in Salvation?

If we are chosen to work in the field of salvation, in fact all of us are chosen for this work, [for Jesus said; "You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures, (Jn15:16)] then we need conviction, confidence, endurance and power to fight against trials/temptations.

- How will we receive conviction in Salvation?
- How will you receive confidence in spiritual life?
- How will you receive endurance to face trials & tribulations?
- **How will you receive power to fight trials & temptations?**

Temptation is a process of purification:

Unless you encounter temptations and times of tribulations, you will not be convinced on Salvation. Without this conviction, you cannot gain sure foundation. Without sure foundation (1Pet5:10) you will not have endurance to face trials & tribulations. And without endurance, you will not have power to fight the evil spirits which are constantly fighting against us (Eph 6:12) to destroy our eternal life; for the thief comes to only to steal, kill & destroy our soul. (Jn10:10) God says; 'I search the minds and test the hearts of people'. (Jer 17:10) It is I, who put you to test before you are chosen to do my work. (1 Thes 2:4) **David said; You have put us to the test God, as silver is purified by fire; You let us fall into a trap and placed heavy burdens on us. You let our enemies trample us; we went through fire & flood. Now you have brought us to a place of safety.** (Ps 66:10-12)

God turns temptations in to blessings:

Yes, God says; I will test the third that survives and will purify them as silver is purified by fire. I will test them as gold is tested. Then they will pray to me, and I will answer them. I will tell them that they are my people, and they will confess that I am their God. (Zech 13:9) King Solomon said; When they were being tested, even though it was a merciful discipline, they learned how wicked people were tortured when you judged them in anger. You tested your people as parents test their children to warn them. But you judged their enemies like a stern king and condemned them. They suffered, whether they were near your people or far from them. Their sorrow was doubled; they groaned as they looked back on what had happened. When they learned that their punishment had been of benefit to your people, they realized that it was your work, Lord. (Wis 11:9-13) **Yes, the Lord sends hardship on people to test them so that in the end he could bless them with good things. (Deuteronomy 8:16)**

Temptations & sufferings will bring us nearer to God!

From the above discourse we understand that; God teaches men through sufferings and uses distress to open their eyes. (Job 36:15) Yes, God opens our eyes to understand the secret on; how our sufferings are used by God to enlighten us on the truth that; 'sufferings bring us nearer to God'. And in this nearness, he makes us to understand; 'human sufferings are needed for forgiveness of sins of mankind' and 'by means of our physical sufferings we are helping to complete what still remains of Christ's sufferings on behalf of his body, the church'. (Col 1:24) **Yes, 'through sufferings we take part in the uncompleted sufferings of Christ for salvation of mankind'.**

If we endure such sufferings for the glory of God, God will give spiritual maturity to do his work for salvation. Therefore, he said; My son, if you are going to serve God, be prepared for times when you will be put to test. Be sincere and determined. Keep calm when troubles come. Stay with God never abandon him. You will be prosperous at end of days. Accept whatever happens to you. Even if you suffer humiliation, be patient. Gold is tested by fire. Human character is tested in the furnace of humiliation. Trust in God, he will help you. Walk straight in his path, put your hope in him. (Sir2:1-6)

Temptations are designed as part of God's plan for us:

In Army, the soldiers are put to hard trials in different terrains to increase their fighting capabilities & endurance. Similarly, God trains his children by exposing them to temptations & trials to

enhance their endurance to fight the evil. When they are in distress, God shows them the right path, (Is30 :20-21) fills them with grace to endure sufferings, (2 Cor 12:9) and gives them wisdom & insight. Through trials & temptations God trains them to become warriors of Jesus, (Is 13:3) and as instruments in his hand for good deeds. (2 Tim 2:21) Through temptations, God transforms us as a diamond & a rock against evil spirits (Ezek 3:8-9) and gives sure foundation to work for salvation. *Thus, God fulfils his plan for us, as he said; I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity, not disaster, the plans to bring about the future you hope for. (Jer 29:11)*

In this struggle God will fight for us!

However, in this struggle God will not abandon us. When we are tempted & put to test, when we go through fire & flood, God will not leave us alone to fight this spiritual war, for this battle belongs to God. (2 Chr 20:15) And Jesus said I will not leave you like orphans. (Jn 14:18) I will ask the Father to send you a helper the Holy Spirit who will stay with you forever. (Jn 14:16) He is the deliverer who will rescue you from your oppressions. (Is 19:20) **Yes, God will fight by his Spirit & give us victory over temptations, for he has promised:**

- *I will go out into battle, determined to defeat your enemies & use creation itself as a weapon to defend you. (Wis 5:17)*
- *I will never leave you nor abandon you, in your struggle. (Heb 13:5)*
- *Jerusalem, you are my people and I have given you my teaching and I protect you with my hand. (Is 51:16)*
- *I will raise my mighty arm to bring terrible punishment upon them (our enemies) and I will save you. (Ex 6:6)"*
- *The Egyptians (Satan) will know that I am the Lord when I raise my hand against them and bring the Israelites out of their country. (Ex 7:5)*
- *Out of his everlasting love, God affirms his care for us. He said; "Jerusalem I can never forget you. I have written your name on the palm of my hand. (Is 49:16)*

At times when we go through temptations, tribulations & trials the Lord promises to protect us. He says; "Do not be afraid. Stand your ground. You will see what the Lord will do to save you. He says; I will fight for you & there is no need for you to do anything". (Ex 14:13-14) Further he assures; "I the Lord will go ahead of you like a raging fire. I will defeat your enemies as you advance, so that you will drive them out and destroy them quickly. (Deuteronomy 9:3)

In temptations & times of testing, be still before the Lord:

God is telling you to be still before him in all adversities: God tells us; *'we should be still before him & remain silent to know; how his power delivers us from the awful time & situations'*? For he said; *"Be still and know that I am the Lord"*. (Ps 46:10) He says; *'I know the troubles that you are enduring. I am in control of every situation'*. (Heb 12:7) Yes, the Lord knows when our spirits are crushed in prison. He knows when we are denied the rights he gave us. When justice is perverted in court, he knows. (Lam 3:34-36) Therefore, *"When we suffer, we should sit alone in silence, patience. We should bow down in submission for there may still be hope. Though beaten and insulted we should accept it all. The Lord is merciful and will not reject us. He may bring us sorrow, but his love for us is sure & strong. He takes no pleasure in causing us grief or suffering"*. (Lam 3:28-33)

God is aware of your sufferings & distress:

God knows everything happening in and around us. All good and bad things happen with a purpose. (Prov 16:4) If bad things have happened, God tells us to be still before him and meditate on his words, (Sir 6:37) so that he will give understanding on; why such a thing has happened? For, everything comes from God; success & failure, poverty & wealth, life & death, wisdom, understanding & knowledge, good time & bad time, all comes from God. (Sir 11:14-15 & Ecc 7:13-15) And God does not withhold anything good for righteous people. (Ps 84:11) In all things God does everything good for those who love him. (Romans 8:28) This understanding will give us wisdom to change our ways. May be; we are wrong in our thinking! (Or) Our actions are wrong, which has displeased God! And so, God is warning us through sufferings to change the way we live.

Wait upon the Lord in your distress:

Therefore, it is wise to reflect on our life and change those things which the Lord reminds us in this silence. It is very important that when we go through suffering, we must remain silent before the Lord and wait upon him to reveal us the cause for such sufferings. *For, he says; 'Be patient and wait for the LORD to act; don't be worried about those who prosper or those who succeed in their evil plans. (Ps 37:7)* And, in response, King David said; *But I trust in you, O LORD; and you, O Lord my God, will answer me. (Ps 38:15)* Surely the Lord will answer our prayers and guide us in his light. (Ps 119:105) *For, he says; 'call to me, I will answer and tell you marvellous thing that you never know'. (Jer 33:3)* Yes, if you ask it will be given to you, because; *Jesus Christ is our answer. (Mt 7:7)*

In your distress, God will provide a way out:

Our God says; it is I your Lord, who has put you in such situations, so that you may learn more about my love, my power, my strength and above all, I will reveal where you have faulted, so that you stand corrected & live a life pleading God. (Eph 5:10 & 17) When the situations go beyond your strength to remain firm, God will provide you a way out, as St Paul says; *'Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise. He will not allow you to be tested beyond our power to remain firm. At the time you are put to test, he will give you strength to endure it & also provide you a way out'*. (1 Cor 10:13)

The Spirit of God will deliver you:

So, let us remain firm & be confident in times of temptations and trials. Let us be silent & wait upon the Lord, (Ps 37:7) for he is in control of all situations. He says; *My thoughts, are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways and thoughts above yours.* "(Is 55:8-9) So, God will not abandon us, but act quickly to destroy our enemies to save us, (Is 37:33-37) and provide a way out in trials and temptations. (1 Cor 10:13) God **promises to deliver us from temptations and trials. He will strengthen us in our weaknesses which causes us to yield for temptations and give victory, for he says;**

- *Look up at the heavens, look at the earth. The heavens will disappear like smoke, earth will wear out like old clothing. All its people will die like flies. But the deliverance I bring will last forever. My victory will be final. (Is_51:6)*
- *Listen to me, you that know what is right, who have my teachings fixed in your heart. Do not be afraid when people taunt you and insult you. They will vanish like moth eaten cloth. But the deliverance I bring will last forever. My victory will endure for all time" (Is 51:7)*
- *You will succeed, not by military might or by your own strength, but by my spirit. Obstacles as great as mountains will disappear before you. (Zech 4:6-7)*

Never be worried at times of tribulation/temptations. Because, it is only through such difficult times we will be drawn closer to God so as to understand the length, breath, height & depth of his love, (Eph 3:17-19) and experience his power to deliver us from that awful situation. When we are tempted/tested we should be still before him, get deep in prayer by fasting, reading Bible & by indulging in Praise and Worship before sunrise. God will not disappoint us! (Rom10:11)

IS TEMPTATION A SIN?

Many times, when we go through temptations, we grope in darkness; not knowing what to do, how to handle the situation, how to counter the problem & overcome the grave situation? (Is 59:10-13) In this process, we undergo a lot of pressures & tensions and at times we get confused, because, we are not determined & confident to reject temptation, as God spoke with Joshua. (Josh1:1-9) **We lack knowledge on how to use right Word of God for different situations. (Prove 15:23) We do not use God's Words as powerful sword (Eph 6:17) in order to fight against temptations. (1 Tim 1:18) Also we are not aware on how to shield ourselves with faith, and use the Armours that God has given us to fight temptations. (Eph 6:13-17) Therefore, we waver in our thoughts, and the Satan uses our wavering mind to his advantage & leads us in sin. Thus, we yield for sin.** In this spiritual battle (Eph 6:12) God says `surrender the situation to me, for; "This Battle belongs to me! And I will fight for you". (Wis 5:7 & Num 23:22)

If we do not lift our temptation to Jesus in prayer (Eph 6:18) and take his help by fasting and praying, (Mk 9:29) but handle the temptation by ourselves with limited wisdom & strength, we will fail miserably. Because Jesus said; Remain united to me and I will remain united to you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; (you cannot fight temptations by yourself) it can do so only if it remains in the vine. (You can fight temptation, if you are united with Jesus) In the same way you cannot bear fruit (win temptations) unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me & I in them, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me. (Jn15:4-5) Yes, we will win temptation, if we are united with Jesus.

When we go through the times of temptation, which God calls as; 'times of testing', we have two options: Either, we yield for temptations, commit sin and lose God's presence and blessings which are promised for obedient people. (Duet 28:1-13) (Or) We take help of the Holy Spirit and fight temptations, because; "There is nothing which is impossible for God. (Mt 19:26 & Lk 1:37) The best way to handle the situation is to fast & pray and lift your temptation to Jesus.

It is wise for us to sit at the feet of Jesus every day, early in the morning between 3 to 6 AM. (Wis 6:12-21) Yes, if you are awake to encounter Jesus who visits our bed room every day to bless those who are awake to worship him before sunrise, he will give you wisdom on how handle temptations and overcome them. He will bless you with 'his grace' to overcome your weaknesses. (2 Cor 12:9) With his grace you will be able to resist temptations/reject sin. (Prov 2:16)

Yes, you can resist the Devil with help of God and he will flee from you (Jas 4:7) *But if you have fallen for temptation, you know that we have sinned. When you go through moments of temptation, is it sin for you? Shall we see what the Scriptures says about this?*

After Jesus completed forty days of fasting, he was also tempted by the Satan in the desert. But Jesus Christ did not commit sin. (Mt 4:1-11) St Paul said; "We have a high priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin." (Heb 4:15) And "Now he can help those who are tempted, because he himself was tempted and suffered". (Heb 2:18) **From temptations of Jesus, we understand 'mere temptation by itself does not become sin'.**

The moments of temptations are times of "Conflict in man": When we go through moments of temptations, there is conflict with in us which pulls us in two directions. The Holy Spirit (Power) draws us towards doing good by avoiding sin. And the other is; our flesh (weaknesses) which draws us to yield for temptation and commit sin.

St Paul calls this dilemma as conflict in man. He said; 'I do not understand what I do; for I do not do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate. Since what I do is what I do not want to do, I am not really the one who does this thing; rather it is the sin that lives in me-that is my human nature. For, even though the desire to do good is there in me, I am not able to do it; I do not do good what I want to do. Instead. I do the evil that I do not want to do. If I do what I do not want to do, this means that I am no longer the one who does it, instead, it is the sin that lives in me. (Romans 7:14-25)

This is the conflict in human mind. There is always a dilemma in our mind, whether to yield for sin or not. This is a moment of temptation. And temptation does not become sin by itself!

THEN, WHEN DOES TEMPTATION BECOME SIN?

FOR A TEMPTATION TO BECOME SIN, IT SHOULD FULFILL THREE STAGES (or) THREE ASPECTS OF SIN AS GIVEN BELOW:

1. We should desire to for sin-temptation. (Spiritual aspect of sin)
2. We should decide to commit sin. (It is mental aspect of sin)
3. We should commit sin physically. (It is the physical aspect of sin)

If we yield for temptations, physically commit sin & derive pleasure out of the act, then it is sin. Let us examine the following situation:

Spiritual aspect of sin: Here a believer is tempted by the Satan by planting a sinful thought in his mind: say, may be a sinful relation.

Mental aspect of sin: This person is drawn on to two sides. He may get various ideas. If the person remains determined & confident, meditates on God's words by fasting/prayer & resists temptation by

deciding not to yield for sin, then there is no sin in that sinful thought planted in his mind by the Satan. But if this person ponders over the thought, allows it to grow in him & derives pleasures out those sinful thoughts (in modern world they call it sexual fantasy) then, he has already committed sin in mind. For Jesus said; "If is a person has looked at another man's wife with lustful eyes and has desired her, he has already committed sin - adultery in his mind". (Mt 5 :27-28)

Physical aspect of sin: If this person has decided to commit and indulges in the sin physically, he has sinned against God, (Ex 20:14) against his own brother, (Heb 13:4) and against his own body. (1Cor 6:18) **The question is; Are we rejecting temptations instantly to avoid sin? (Or) Are we contemplating on temptations and yielding for sin?**

This discourse helps us to discern that:

- *A sinful thought planted in mind by the Satan (or) a mere temptation, (or) a desire to commit sin, is not sin by itself.*
- *But a deliberate intention to derive pleasure out of that sinful thought is a sin by itself. It is a sin against God. (Mt 5:28)*
- *If we indulge in the act of sin physically, then;*
 - *It is a sin against our own body.* (For God said Avoid immorality. Any other sin a man commits does not affect his body; but the man who is guilty of sexual immorality sins against his own body. (1 Cor 6:18)
 - *It is sin against your brother.* (God wants you to be holy & completely free from sexual immorality. Each one of you should know how to live with wife in a holy and honourable way, not with a lustful desire, like the heathen who do not know God. In this matter, none of you should do wrong to other Christians or take advantage of them. The Lord will punish those who do that. God did not call us to live in immorality, but in holiness. (1 Thes 3:3-8 & Heb 13:4)
 - *It is a sin against God.* (For, the seventh Commandment of the Lord says; "Do not commit adultery". (Ex 20:14)

A clear understanding about Sin: *St James explains the three stages in sin. He said; "A person is tempted (it is spiritual aspect of sin) then he is drawn away and trapped by his own evil desire (which is mental aspect of sin). Then this evil desire conceives & gives birth to sin, and sin when it is full grown gives birth to death. (The person indulges in sin, which is the physical aspect of sin)" (James 1:14-15)*

Now let us understand about people who are forced in to sin: What happens to a woman who is gang raped, or a man who is sexually abused by women at gunpoint as it happens in foreign

countries? Also, men and women who have been abducted, kept in confinement and sexually abused? Children who are in captivity and are being sexually abused? Is there a sin in this abusive act for those victims? 'No'. As far as those victims are concerned, when such an encounter takes place against their will, there is no sin in this act. Similarly, if a person at home is sexually abused by loved ones, (may be their father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, relatives, their friends and have been threatened by them of dire consequences if they reveal it to others) there is no sin as far as the victim is concerned.

But the victim has to set himself / herself free as early as possible at the first available opportunity he/she gets. Because the word of God says; a slave has to set himself/herself free whenever he /she gets an opportunity. (1 Cor 7:21) Instead, if the person who has been subjected to sexual abuse in captivity enjoys pleasure out of the abusive sexual act and feels comfortable in the slavery and does not to want to set himself/herself free from slavery in spite of opportunities he/she had, then it becomes sin for him/her.

IS TEMPTATION A CURSE OR BLESSING?

People abandon true faith to enjoy the desires of their heart. People want to live trouble-free comfortable/luxurious life. So, they work hard to ensure their life and their family is made comfortable. People go to any extent to earn lot of money to live luxurious life. **We see to earn more money some people even abandon true faith.** *St Paul said; "Time will come when people will not listen to sound doctrine, but follow their heart desires and will collect for themselves more & more teachers who will tell them what they are itching to hear. They will turn away from listening to truth and give attention to legends". (2 Tim 4:3-4) Yes, people will be driven to this situation if they lose in-sight on God's words, for Jesus said "There will be pain & suffering for you. Some will abandon true faith. But if you remain with me, you will find victory, for I have won this world. (John 16:33)*

In temptations God gives wisdom and leads us: Through every temptation/suffering God blesses man with new revelations/wisdom, for his words says; *"God fills our body with pain & suffering, and in our distress, he opens the eyes of wisdom".(Job 36:15)* Yes, my dear believers, every suffering, every temptation, every tribulation, every rejection, every pain, every brokenness and every awful situation in life teaches us something new & makes us strong with-in ourselves and it brings us closer to God, provided we do not abandon our faith.

If you remain faithful to Christ, he will give you understanding on the height, depth, length & breath of his love, (Eph 3:17-19) his

power, (Ps 62:11) his mercy, (Sir 2:18) his protection, (Is 51:16) his plan, (Jer 29:11) and his ways. (Is 55:8-9) *Isaiah said; "The Lord will make you go through hard times, but he himself will be there to teach you. You will not have to search for him anymore. If you wander off the road to the right or to the left, you will hear his voice behind saying: "Here is the road. Follow it" (Is 30:20-21). You will experience such wonderful encounter with the Lord if you are sincere in your worship and obey him, for his words says; "God is at work in those who believe". (1 Thes 2:13) Yes, through temptations you will come closer to Christ & taste his love. (Ps 34:8) Therefore, every temptation will turn out to be a blessing, if you do not abandon faith.*

DOES GOD ELEVATE US TO HIGHTER LEVEL IN SPIRITUAL LIFE THROUGH TEMPTATIONS?

During the course of temptations & tribulations, if we have tasted; how good the Lord is, (Ps 34:8) how broad & long and how high & deep Christ's love is? (Eph 3:17-19) how Christ's word works in us if we believe? (Wis 16:12 & Heb 4:12) how Christ's love restores us in brokenness? (Is 41:10) how Christ counsels us in distress? (Is 9:6 & 1 Jn 2:27) how Christ protects us in awful situations? (Ps 23:4) how Christ leads us when we are lost? (Is 42:16) how Christ give peace/rest when we are disturbed? (Jn 14:27& Jn 11:28) how Christ strengthens us in our weakness? (Is 40:29-30) how Christ enlightens us when we are confused? (Is 60:19) how Christ heals our broken spirit? (Ps 34:18) how Christ heals our broken heart? (Ps 147:3) how Christ gives victory in our battle? (Zech4:6-7) **then, such experiences will help us to grow deep in faith & gain sure foundation. (1Pet 5:10)**

St Paul said; who can separate us from love of God? *Neither death nor life, neither angels nor heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world below nor the world above-there nothing in all creations who can separate us from love of God! (Rom 8:35-38) If we overcome temptations with God's help, he will elevate us to a higher level in spiritual life. We will enter into different areas in spiritualism, which will be revealed to us. As we gain sure foundation, God will give us heavenly wisdom, (1Cor 2:6-10) & reveal glorious secret. (Col 1:27) God will bless us, fill us with fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) and gifts of the Spirit. (1 Cor 12:8-11)*

WHAT ARE THE SPIRITUAL ROADS WE NEVER TRAVELLED?

God said; "I will lead my blind people through the roads that they have never travelled. I will turn their darkness into light and make their rough country road smooth before them. These are my promises. I will keep them without fail." (Is 42:16) *It is very, very*

important for every believer to know this promise of the Lord and understand the spiritual meaning, for him to grow in spiritual life and encounter Christ personally! The meaning of this promise is; if we remain with him in all our suffering, with a mind frame that; "We are sharing the sufferings of Christ for salvation of human race", as we read in Col 1:24, God will bless us with more and more spiritual gifts.

In this road of uncertainty, filled with sufferings if you remain faithful to God and endure temptations & tribulations by meditating on Christ's life giving words (Jn 6:63) and do not astray in faith by reposing trust in any other spiritual powers / worldly powers to solve your problems, (such as: consulting evil spirit, spirits of the dead, mediums, astrology, palmistry, black magic, occult / pagan worship or any other sinful worship) **then, God will bless you with fruits of the Holy Spirit, which are; Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Humility & Self-Control. (Gal5: 22)**

Further, God will bless us with Gifts of the Holy Spirit which are: Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, Faith, Gift of Healing, Power to perform miracles, Prophecy, Gift of tongues, Gift to distinguish between spirits & Gift to interpret tongues. (1 Cor 12:7-11) These are the roads in which God leads believers who are subjected to Tests, Temptations & Sufferings, as God says: " He sent hardship on you to test you, so that in the end he could bless you with good things. Remember it is your Lord who gives power to become rich in fruits of the Spirit, gifts of the Spirit and in Word of God, for he is faithful to the covenant which he made with your ancestors. (Duet 8:16-18)

The following are the promises that God gives to those who go through temptations / Sufferings and win over them:

- *God will bless you for this, if you endure the pain of undeserved suffering, because you are conscious of his will. For what credit is there, if you endure beatings you deserve for having done wrong. But if you endure suffering even when you have done right, God will bless you for it." (1 Peter 2:19-20)*
- *Do not pay back evil with evil or cursing with a curse, instead payback with blessing. Because blessing is what God promised to give you when he called you". (1 Peter 3:9)*

WILL GOD USE US AS HIS POWERFULL INSTRUMENT?

When a person is tempted, undergoes tribulations and suffering, he must reflect on his life and meditate on Word of God. Such good practice will draw him closer to God. Meditation on God's Words will give him insight and wisdom. (Sirach 6:37) This wisdom

will fill him with abundance of God's grace (2Cor12:9) which will help him to endure trials & tribulations and resist temptations & reject sin! In such spiritual life God will bless him with what he has kept for him. He will be made perfect in eyes of God, for; "Jesus himself was made perfect in eyes of God through his sufferings." (Heb 2:10) **When a person reaches this stage in spiritual life, God will use him for his work in salvation, as he said; "If any one makes himself free from all those evil things (from sinful-self) he will be used for special purposes, because he is dedicated and useful to the Master, ready to be used for every good deed-to work for salvation. (2 Tim 2:21-22)**

Temptations & tribulations which we go through will produce endurance which in turn will produce hope in salvation. This hope will not disappoint us. Paul said; We also boast of our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, & his approval creates hope. (in salvation) This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love in our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us. (Romans 5:3-5)

Further, the sufferings we endure in temptations & trials will transform us as an iron pillar and bronze wall against the powers of darkness. (Jer 1:18-19) The evils spirits (our old sins & sinful habits) from which we were delivered will return and fight against us, as spoken by Jesus. He said; the evil spirits (sins we which we gave-up by repenting) will return to take control and enslave us again. (Lk 11:24-26) But they will not defeat us, because, God will transform us as an iron pillar & bronze wall against them. They will fight against us. They cannot defeat us because God will be with us to give victory.

God will make you like a solid bronze wall against temptations for he said; "If you return, I will take you back. You will be my servant again. Instead of talking nonsense, if you proclaim a worthwhile message, you will be my prophet again. Then people will come back to you. You will not need to go to them. They will fight against you, (sins which we gave-up) but they will not defeat you. I will be with you to protect you & keep you safe. I will rescue you from the power of wicked & violent people. I, the LORD, have spoken." (Jer15:19-21)

God will transform us and make us as firm as a rock and as hard as a diamond against temptations & sin (Ezek 3:8-9) Thus, we will mature in spiritual life to reject temptations and receive sure foundation. God will bless us with fruits & gifts of the Spirit. Then he will use us as his powerful instrument to harvest souls and bring salvation to many through us. We will become a powerful instrument in hands of God to be used in the work of Salvation. (2 Timothy 2:21)

IN TEMPTATIONS DOES GOD TRAINS US AS WARRIORS?

Dear believer, the discourse on all aspects of temptations is summed-up here, for you to understand; "How temptations that you encounter every day which makes you to fall in sin will change your life? Temptations are unique experience in which God tests our faithfulness to him. (Jer 17:10) God Knows that we are weak for sin, (Mt 26:41) yet, he tests us to purify us through many sufferings that sins bring upon us. (Wis 12:1-2, Job 36:15) *We fall in sin repeatedly and confess them again & again. Through forgiveness of sins which we receive in confession (Jn 20:21-23) God reveals his everlasting love (Jer31:3) & gives understanding on his forgiving love, (Rom 8:1) there-by, we come to know of Christ's Sacrificial love. (Heb 9:23-28)*

In temptations we fall in sin and through forgiveness of sins God brings us close to him and reveals how we are blessed to know the wholesomeness of Christ's love. (Eph 3:17-19) In this nearness, Christ leads us in the roads that we have never travelled, (Is 42:16) and makes us to walk on snakes & scorpions. (Our weaknesses & desires) (Lk 10:19) *Thus, Christ enables us to walk in the valley of death (Ps 23:4) and gives victory over our temptations. (Is 51:6-8) Such experience reveals; the sufferings caused by temptations & sins are used by God for our own salvation and for salvation of mankind". (Col1:24) These spiritual experiences will give understanding that; temptations are designed as part of God's plan for us and through temptations God is training us as warriors. For, David said; he trains me for war & uses me as Bow against enemy. (Ps 18:34 & 144:1-2)*

Temptations are purification process through which God cleanses us from all sins, (Wis 12:1-2) fill us with Fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) and blesses us with Gifts of the Spirit, (1 Cor 12:8-11) and gives Sure Foundation in faith & spiritual life. (1 Pet 5:10) *There-by, God prepares us as a soldier to fight a holy war, as Isaiah said; "THE LORD has called out his proud & confident soldiers to fight a holy war to punish those he is angry with." (Is 13:3) Consequently, we understand 'all our temptations will turn out to be a great blessing if we are conscious of God's plans & God's will for us! (Romans 8 :28)*

If you offer yourself to God, he will make you as firm as a Rock and as hard as a Diamond against temptations. (Ezek 3:8-9)

If you are determined and confident to turn away from sin, God will transform you as an Iron Pillar and as a bronze wall against temptations. You will overcome temptations. (Jer 1:18-19)

QUESTION NO – 15

WHEN WILL TEMPTATIONS END?

IS TEMPTATION A SPIRITUAL WAR?

We understood from the discourse at 'Answer to Question No: 13' that; "Temptation is a Spiritual Warfare" in which, we are fighting against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. (Eph 6:12) These are the ruling spirits of the universe, wandering like a roaring lion to devour God's children. (1 Pet 5:8) These evil spirits lure the children of God, deceive them to live in wicked ways, enslave them as slaves of sins and rule them. (Gal 4:3) **Yes, in spiritual life we are constantly fighting war against the powers of darkness. They tempt us, deceive us and trap us in sin. Our mind gets deceived by temptations & drives our body to indulge in sin.** That is why St Peter said; Do not give in to bodily passions, which are always at war against the soul. (1 Pet 2:11) Yes, if we give-in for bodily passions, we will commit sin! And sin will bring death in soul for, the wage for sin is death. (Rom 6:23)

ARE WE MADE CAPTIVES AND REFUGEES?

Jesus said, I am telling you the truth; those who sin are slaves of sin. (Jn 8:34) God spoke through Ezekiel and said; **Tell people that; 'what they have done is a sign of what will happen to them!' They will be refugees/captives.** The Satan who is ruling the world will shoulder his pack on them in the dark & escape through a hole that they dig for him in the wall. Yes, when we are tempted and commit sin, we invite the Satan in our life by digging hole in the wall of fire burning around us. (Zech 2:5) Once he enters, he will cover our eyes. We cannot see where he is going. (Ezkl 12:11-12) Then, we become 'Captives & Refugees' of the Satan who is ruling the world. (Jn 14:30) If we commit sin, the Satan will shoulder the burden of sin on us and escape. (Wis 9:15) **Solomon explained this truth. He said People are captured by the same inevitable fate (sin) and are bound in darkness (as captives and refugees) by the same invisible chains. (Wisd17:17)**

Therefore, if people sin, they will live in bondage of darkness. Their eyes will be blinded by the Satan (2 Cor 4:4) to see the light of Christ shining on them. (Is 60:19 & Jn 9:5) By remaining in darkness of sin, people crave more & more for sinful pleasures. They reject sound doctrine, but will follow the desires of their heart & collect for

themselves more & more teachers who will tell them what they are itching to hear. (2 Tim 4:3) As captives & refugees of sin, they go in to house of people who are already burdened by guilt of their sin and driven by all kind of desires and burden them with more sins, so that those people can never repent & gain Kingdom of God. (2Tim 3:1-8)

DO WE CHOSE TO DO EVIL & LOSE ETERNAL LIFE?

In this manner the Satan is desperately trying to gather more & more souls before he himself is destroyed finally. When Jesus comes, he will kill him with the breath from his mouth & destroy him with his dazzling presence. (2 Thes 2:8) Sinful people will lose eternal life (Jn 11:25) if they do not repent and confess their sins and receive absolution for their sins before they die. (Mt 3:2) Such awful thing is happening to mankind because, children of God use their freedom wrongly. **They choose to do evil instead of good. (Ezkl 18:21-24) Yes, God said; Ungodly people have brought death upon themselves by what they have said and done. They desire for death instead of life. They yearn for death as if it were a lover. They have gone into partnership with death and it is just what they deserve. (Wis 1:16) They reject God's blessings by choosing to live in sin. (Duet30:1-19)**

DO WE CONSCIOUSLY DISOBEY GOD IN TEMPTATIONS?

We are deceived in temptation: **Dear believers in Christ, we have complete freedom to choose between good & evil and life & death.** Our life will depend on what we choose. God's blessing & curse are placed before us. Good & evil are placed before us. And Life & death are placed before us. Never the less, the fact remains that; we are weak for sin (Mt 26:41) because the seed of sin was sowed in our body by the Satan when Adam & Eve committed sin. St Paul said; sin lives in us. (Rom7:17-20) This seed of sin is the influence of Satan that works to deceive us through our weaknesses and desires for sin.

Since we are weak in body, we lose ourselves in sin. Because; 'We do not honour God by giving him the first place in life', for God said; search for the Kingdom of God above all things, rest all will be added unto you", (Mt 6:33) and 'We do not worship Jesus Christ before sunrise', for he has promised to give grace/power to keep the Satan under the feet to those who worship him in the early morning between 3 & 6 AM. (Wis 6:12-21) Further, to gain spiritual power to resist temptations and reject sin, we must observe fasting regularly on all Fridays and on the days as the Lord directs us. (Ezra 7:21-23) Yes, without fasting/prayer we will fall in temptations. (Mt 17:14-20)

People lose-in for temptations and live in sin; because, they know God but they do not give the honour that belongs to him, nor do they thank him. (Rom 1:21) Instead of worshipping Immortal God, they worship images that are made to look like mortal man, birds, animals and reptiles. (Rom 1:23) They worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever. (Rom 1:25) Yes, people refuse to keep true knowledge of God in mind. (Rom 1:28) They know God's Law says that; "people who live in this way deserve death". Yet, not only they continue to do these very things, but they even approve of others who do them. (Rom 1:32) **This is how man have consciously chosen to disobey God's Law, live in sin & have invited death.**

DOES TEMPTATIONS BECOME A BLESSING?

Temptations becomes a blessing to those who fear of God.

Though people of the world fail to overcome temptations and fall in sin due to inherent weakness in flesh, temptations turn out to be a blessing for people of Spirit who fear God. People who fear God will never act like coward, because they will have nothing to fear. People who fear the Lord are fortunate because they will know where to look for help when they go through temptations. (Sirach34:14-15)

People who fear the Lord take temptations as opportunities to grow deep in faith & build up strong spiritual life, because; they know that temptations are spiritual war against evil spirits. (Eph 6:12) So, they use "Armour of God" to fight temptations. (Eph 6:13-19) And they encounter 'power in Word of God' to deliver them from temptations, because; the Message of Christ (word of God) is like a fire (that burns-up all evil influences) and it acts as a hammer that breaks rocks (strongholds of evil bondages) in to pieces. (Jer 23:29)

Such experience in deliverance & encounter with Word of God will draw them much closer to the Lord and help them to make their foundation strong in spiritual life. (1 Pet 5:10) This spiritual truth was explained in the earlier Chapters. (The Answers to Questions No-13 & 14) **In these chapters, we have deliberated on how our temptations will turn out as blessings for us, under the sub-headings given below:**

- Through temptations we understand the sacrificial love of Jesus.
- In temptations we experience God's power to deliver us.
- In temptations we understand the power & richness in God's words which purifies us.
- In temptations we are blessed with conviction on salvation.

- In temptations God leads us by his Spirit in the roads that we have never travelled before.
- In temptations God raises us to higher level in spiritual life.
- In temptations we are blessed with Sure Foundation in faith.
- In temptations we become Warriors of Christ.

IS THERE NO END FOR TEMPTATIONS?

St Paul says the 'Mark of God's ownership' is upon us. (Eph 4:30) The mark of God's ownership is received by us when we receive Sacraments of the R C Church, such as; Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, Consecration as Priest/Nun & Anointment of the sick. In all these Sacraments, we are anointed by the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit in us prompts us to resist temptations and reject sin at all cost. But our body in which the seed of sin was planted by the Satan desires to indulge in sin. Consequently, always there is a fight in our soul between the Holy Spirit & evil spirit-our sinful-self, either to live righteous life, (or) to yield for temptations.

That is why God said; Our bodily passions are always at war with our soul. (1 Pet 2:11) This truth was explained as "Conflict in Man," in Chapter-4. (Rom 7:14-20) *Consequently we understand; 'as long we live, this conflict between the Holy Spirit & evil spirits (our soul & body) will continue'. This Spiritual War-our Temptations will continue in us as long we live, till last breath. Temptation has no end. Yes, temptations will continue till we die.* But Jesus has not left us like orphans. (Jn 14:18) He said; when I go, I will ask the Father to send you a helper, the Holy Spirit, who will remain with you forever to teach you everything on how to overcome temptations. (Jn 14:26)

THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES US HOW TO FIGHT TEMPTATION

The Holy Spirit revealed St Paul on how to guard one-self from the evil spirits, fight against temptations and win the reward 'Eternal life'. *To guard one-self against evil's temptations, God has given us Armours, which are very powerful weapons against the evil spirits. The scripture advocates that; we must use God's Armours effectively to protect ourselves against evil's temptations. Therefore, it is important for us to know how to use God's Armours? Else, we will be lost for its power. It is as good as; knowing God's Armours, yet losing oneself for temptations! In simple language; it is like having a gun and not knowing how to use it when a lion attacks you. Regarding such people, God said; My people do not honour me or acknowledge my power. They are dying for lack knowledge. (Hos4:6)*

WHAT ARE THE ARMOURS WE HAVE TO FIGHT TEMPTATION?

St Paul has given an account on the Armours that God has given us in Eph 6:14-17. Now let us try to understand how to use them?

Armour-1: Wear Truth as waist belt: The Bible refers to Jesus as truth. (Jn 8:32) It means; we are called to remain united with Jesus at all times (Jn 15:1-5) by reading his life-giving words, (Jn 6:63) and meditating on them (Sir 6:37) in order to gain insight and wisdom, so as to strengthen our spiritual life. The power & richness that dwells in Christ's words (Col 3:16) will not allow us to fall prey for fear which the Satan is spreading among mankind. Because, fear is the greatest weapon the Satan is using against mankind so that, we may not dare to enter into the unknown areas in spiritual life and gain power which God has promised mankind. **These are the spiritual powers which we must use against the Satan to win over temptation.**

- I make a covenant with you. **I have given you my power** and my teachings to be yours forever, and from now on you are to obey me and teach your children and your descendants to obey me for all time to come (Is 59:21)
- **I have given you authority** to walk on snakes & scorpions and overcome the power of the enemy. And the Satan cannot harm you. (Lk10:19)
- **What you prohibit (set loose) on earth** will be prohibited (set lose) in heaven, and what you permit (build) on earth will be permitted (built) in heaven. So, in Christ's power belongs to us!

Because the Satan spreads fear, people do not practice faith especially in Christ's teachings on spiritual powers in casting out evil spirits / exorcism & other spiritual gifts that he promised, which are to be used against the evil spirits. Jesus said: "Do not fear. I will save you. When you pass through deep water, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, you will not be burnt. The hard trials that come will not hurt you. Do not fear—I am with you. (Is 43:1-5) If we are united with Jesus, use the authority he has given us against the evil spirits, we can resist temptations & reject sin and win victory. Who can defeat the world? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. (1 Jn 5:5)

Armour-2: Wear Righteousness as breast plate: If we please God by reposing resolute faith in his words, we become righteous. (Rom 4:24) Abraham was considered righteous, because he pleased God by trusting in his promise for a descendant at a very old age.

(Rom 4:13) We please God by reposing faith in him, in situations which are beyond human reasoning, and thus become righteous in his eyes. David wrote on how to please God in Ps 15:1-5. Ezekiel also has written 'who is righteous' before God in Ezek 18:5-9. And, Prophet Isaiah has spoken on righteousness in his book- Is 58:1-12.

Readers are advised to read the passages referred above to understand righteous life. Those who repose resolute faith in God and act according to his words without reasoning, without doubt, they are as righteous, because they please God in their actions. Such people will realise God's power working in them to protect them from temptations. God will guard their spiritual blessings and material belongings against evil. (Is 27:2-4 & 31:4-15) Our righteousness will shield us from all evil attack like how a breastplate of a soldier protect vital organs in his body from the enemy's arrow in war. (Isaiah51:17)

About protection from temptations, God said: Put around you the cloak of God's righteousness. Place on your head the crown of the glory of the Eternal God. He will show your splendour to every nation on earth. Forever God will say to you: Your security comes from your righteousness & your splendour from your devotion to me. **(Bar 5:4)**

Armour-3: Being ready at all times to announce Good News is our shoes: It means; We as believers in Christ are supposed to be enriched in God's words, his commandments and teachings of Christ, and practice them with faith (Jas 1:22-25) to experience God's power to work in us. (1Thes2:13) We are called to be filled with fruits of the Spirit; Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Humility and Self-control (Gal 5:22) so that, we can exercise control over all our weaknesses and sinful desires through which the Satan is tempting us to fall in sin. Also, we must be filled in gifts of the Holy Spirit which will help us to announce Good News effectively, (1Cor 12:7-11, Eph 5:18) to complete the work in salvation. (Phil 2:12-13)

Jesus said, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea & Samaria and to the ends of the earth. (Acts1:8) If we obey Jesus and practice our faith, in order to proclaim Jesus to the world, we will experience presence of the Holy Spirit burning around us as a wall of fire to protect us from all evil's temptations because, God has promised; the sounds of violence will be heard no more, destruction will not shatter you again. I will protect and defend you like a wall. (Is 60:18) **Yes, God has promised that; he himself will be a wall of fire around his children to protect them and that he will live in them in all his glory. (Zach 2:5) And he says; I will save those who love me and protect those who acknowledge me as LORD". (Ps 91:14)**

We will experience presence of Jesus in us and around us always, for he promised; "I will be with you us always, till end of ages. (Math 28:20& Heb 13:5) *If we practice our faith in this manner, Christ will help us to walk on snakes & scorpions and overcome the power of the enemy. He cannot harm us. (Luke 10:19) Yes, our faith in Good News and our obedience in giving Gospel to the world will become our shoes. Therefore, we will walk on snakes (weaknesses and desires for sin) and scorpions. (temptations & attractions that lures to commit sin) (Lk 10:19) There will be no weapon of the devil which can be used against us to make us fall in sin. (Is 54:17) When we pass through fire, we will not be burnt. It means, temptations and sinful attractions of the world cannot make us fall in sin. (Is 43:2)*

Armour- 4: Use Faith as a shield against all arrows shot by the Evil One: Faith is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. (Gal 5:22) Faith is given to people who desire God's presence in them by reading Bible Day & Night and meditate on it. (Sir 6:37) Yes, Faith comes by reading/hearing Word of God. (Rom 10:17) To have faith is to be sure of things we hope for, to be certain of things that we cannot see. (Heb 11:1) We please God by reposing faith in him. (Rom 4:24)

By practicing faith, we accept all promises that the Lord has given to shield us, protect us and to deliver us from the powers of darkness. While practicing faith, we are supposed to remind God on his promises, day & night every day. (Is 62:6-7) We also have to claim the Lord's faithfulness to his promises, for "our Lord is faithful for all his promises." (Ps 147:13 & 2 Tim 2:13) St Paul said; we must claim promises of God in the Name of Jesus, because Jesus is God's 'Yes' for fulfilment of the Lord's promises. (2 Cor 1:20)

God's promises will be a shield for us against all the burning arrows that are being shot by the Evil One, because "the Lord is faithful to all his promises". He will strengthen us & keep us safe from the evil one (2 Thes 3:3) for, he has promised to protect us by his victorious right hand. (Is 51:16) As we progress in the spiritual journey, the arrows that are shot by the evil one cannot harm us because, our Lord will hide us from the evil one. The evil spirits will hear our voice but they cannot see us. (Wis 18:1) **Jeremiah said; the evil spirits envied the good fortune of God's people who were not suffering because the Lord hid them in his presence. (Jer 36:26) This is how God's promises will shield us in struggles against temptations.**

Armour-5: Wear Salvation as helmet: The LORD is our Salvation. (Jer 23:6) King David & Prophet Jonah said; "Salvation comes from our Lord". (Ps 62:7 & Jonah 2:9) The scriptures say; "Salvation is to

be found through Jesus alone. In all the world, there is no one else other than Jesus, whom God has given who can save us." (Acts 4:12) We receive Salvation only through Jesus, because he said; I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me. (Jn 14:6) The Scriptures reiterates that; Jesus is Supreme over every ruler and authority. (Col 2:10) We faithful believers are the body of the Church. And Christ is the Head of the body-the Church. (Col 1:18) But often it happens; when we go through temptations, we tend to give-up our faithfulness to the Lord, there-by we lose attention on Salvation. Consequently, we give-up our fight to resist temptations & reject sin and thus we indulge in sin. Such awful thing happens because; "we have not seen the reward 'The White Robe' (Rev 6:9-11) promised to us in eternal life by Jesus." (Jn 11:25-26)

The reward is waiting for us in 'eternal life'. However, we feel living holy life on the earth by rejecting temptations will yield nothing. Hence our mind says; "why should I give-up worldly pleasures & suffer by living a holy life"? So, "let me also live worldly life by enjoying sinful pleasures like people of this world to whom salvation makes no sense!" Also, we have not seen the glory of God which he will reveal to us in eternal life. (2 Cor 3:18) Because we have not seen joy of heavenly world which will be revealed to us in eternal life, we lose encouragement to live holy life by enduring temptations & tribulations. Consequently, this hopeless situation makes us to lose focus on salvation. Thus, we give-in for temptations and commit sin. Jesus said the gate to Salvation is narrow and the way that leads to it is hard. Only few people will enter in it. (Mt 7:14)

Further, Jesus said; "I am telling you the truth. You will cry and weep, but the world will be glad, but your sadness will be turned into joy. (Jn16:20) He says; attaining salvation is very, very difficult, but it is not impossible. For all things are possible with Jesus. (Lk 18:27) After attaining salvation, you will be immensely joyful. St Paul said, I consider that what we suffer in present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18)

So, do not lose focus on salvation when you are tempted and endure tribulations. Rather, with faith & hope in Salvation, you should fight this holy war (Is 13:3) against the Satan by wearing the armour "Salvation" as your helmet. Do not worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts & minds safe in union with Jesus. (Phil 4:6-7) Such resolute firmness will encourage you to fight

till the end to win victory. Jesus says; "If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the Churches! "To those who win the victory I will give the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life that grows in the Garden of God. (Rev 2:7) Therefore, put on your helmet- 'Salvation'! When the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the Satan, and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground. (Eph 6 :13)

Armour-6: Use 'Word of God' as your sword to fight evil spirits: God says; "In the beginning 'Word' existed. The Word was with God and the Word was also God. (Jn 1:1) St Paul said; "The whole universe is sustained by the power of his Word". (Heb 1:3) By the power that dwells in his Words, Jesus performed many miracles. He sent forth his word and healed the sick, (Mt 8:5-13 & Ps 107:20) raised the dead to life (Jn 11:38-44) and drove out demons. (Lk 8:26-39) Jesus said; his living Words (Heb 4:12) brings God's life-giving Spirits in our body. (Jn 6:63) King Solomon said; Wisdom-is the Spirit of God and Word of God. It is the breath of God's Power, pure and radiant, stream of glory from Almighty. It is reflection of eternal light, a perfect mirror of God's activity and goodness. It has infinite possibilities. It reaches every part of the world & sets things in useful order for it has power over everything. (Wisdom 7:24-8:9)

All these words reiterate only one thing. "That, the Word of God has power over everything". Prophet Jeremiah said; "Word of God is a fire and a hammer which breaks rocks in to pieces." (Jer 23:29) St Paul said; Word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through to where soul and spirit (evil spirit) meet and deliver our soul from its captivity." (Hebrews 4: 12)

Because we are fighting for our own salvation & salvation of mankind, (Col 1:24) must be enrich ourselves in God's Words, to use it as sword against the Satan. If you do, he will flee from you for Satan can't stand before God's words. When Jesus was tempted in the desert, he replied to Satan for all temptations with Word of God. And Satan had no answer; hence he left Jesus alone. (Mt 4:1-11) Dear believers, we should be thorough in Word of God, so that we can use the right choice of words for the right occasion against Satan. (Prov 15:23) Therefore, it is very important that we are filled with Word of God and use it as a powerful sword in our fight against Satan, as St Paul said; 'use those words in order to fight well'. (1Tim 1:18)

Armour No - 7: Prayer: You should pray at all times, asking for God's help. Importantly, you must pray at the time chosen by God. Pray in the early morning before sun rise; between 3 & 6 AM to encounter Jesus Christ. (Wis 6:12-21, Sir 4:11-19 & 32:14) Because,

Jesus walks past our bed every day before sunrises to see who is awake to worship him, so that he can give them spiritual strength & guide them to walk in light of the Lord. (Ps 119:105 & Sir 50:28-29)

- **If you worship Jesus before sunrise every day & pray, Jesus will counsel you in your trials & tribulations,** as St John said; "As for you, Christ has poured his Spirit on you. As long as his Spirit remains in you, you do not need any one to teach you. For his Spirit teaches you everything. What he teaches you is true and not false. Obey the Spirit's teachings and then, remain in union with Christ." (1 John 2:27)
- **In prayer, if Jesus counsels & guides you to do certain thing, do not hesitate to do them.** Because God says; "Do not restrain the Holy Spirit; do not despise the inspired messages. (Jer 42:6) Put all things to test and keep what is good and avoid all kind of evil." (1 Thessalonians 5: 19-22)
- **If you worship Christ before sunrise and pray,** he will be with you in every thought (Wis 6:16) and bless you in all that you do. (Duet 28:8 & Ps 132:16)
- **If you worship Christ's before sunrise, the Spirit of Wisdom will give you advice and encourage you in times of trouble and grief.** (Wis 8:9) He will bless all your plans and you will be successful, (Prov 16:3) because; you will be doing what is pleasing to the Lord. (Ps 15:1-5, Eph 5:10 & 17)
- **Pray at 3 PM which is the hour of grace & mercy. (Acts 3:1)** If you do, then Jesus will fill you with his grace & mercy, for it is the time at which he died. Death of Christ on cross is power to believers. (1Cor 1:18) You will receive his mercy; for it is the hour of mercy at which he died for mankind to reveal his mercy.
- **It you pray at 3 PM (Acts 10:30-31) Jesus will enrich you with grace (2 Cor 12:9) & mercy. (Eph 2:4-5)** You will become strong to face all temptations. (Phil 4:13) And his grace will transform you to reject sin and glorify God. (Rom 12:1-2 & 1 Cor 6:19-20)
- **If you repent & pray with humbleness, (Is 57:15) God will hear your in heaven & answer you before you finish praying. (Is 65:24)**

In the Garden Gethsemane, when the disciples could not stay awake & pray, Jesus said to them "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Keep watch & pray that you will not fall into temptation." (Mk 14:38)

BE UNITED WITH CHRIST THROUGH HIS WORDS

In spiritual life you must to be clever & cautious to protect your freedom from temptations and sin. It is easy if you are united with Jesus at all times, through his words and take his help

by indulging in fasting and prayer. For Jesus said; "whoever does not remain united with me is thrown out like a branch and it dries up; such branches are gathered and thrown in fire". "You can do nothing on your own". Everything is possible for you, if you are united with me. (Jn 15:4-6) St Paul said; I can do all things with Christ who strengthens me. (Phil 4:13) Yes, without Christ you will be destroyed, because the devil is looking for opportunities to steal your blessings, kill your living soul and destroy your body and eternal life. (Jn 10:10)

You should enrich yourself with God's Words & use right Words for right occasion (Prov 15:23) and destroy temptations as Jesus Christ did when the devil tempted him in the desert. (Mt 4:1-11) If you resist the Satan with Word of God, he will run from you. James said; "Resist the devil he will run away from you". (James 4:7)

St Paul said; "The weapons we use are not worldly weapons, but God's powerful weapons, (God's Words) which we use to destroy strongholds. (Evil bondages, sinful habits & relations) We destroy every false argument; we pull down proud obstacles (Temptations and trials) that are raised against us. We take every thought captive and make it to obey Christ. (By surrendering our will) (2 Cor10:4-5)

The wise way to overcome temptations is; "Remain united with Jesus through his words at all times", and "take protection of Mother Mary through Rosary." Because, Mary was given as Mother to the Church by Jesus on the cross. (Jn 19:25-27) She is the Guardian for Church who keeps Satan under her feet. Because, when he deceived Adam & Eve, God the Father cursed him, saying "A woman will crush your head". Mary will shield you from the burning arrows of the devil.

WILL TEMPTATIONS COME TO AN END? IT WILL NEVER END-DO NOT GIVEUP FIGHTING!

Dear believers, as long you live, until your last breath, temptations will continue to lure you and make you fall in sin. Because, your enemy, the Devil, is roaming around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Pet 5:8) That is why, Jesus warned us four times. He said; we should be always on guard against evil tricks so that we do not lose ourselves for temptations. (Mk 13:5, 9, 23 & 35) St John said: "He that who is in me (Jesus) is greater than the one (Satan) who is in this world". (1 Jn 4:4) Therefore, when we stand in the Name of Jesus, the Name above all names, (Phil 2:9 & Acts 4:12) the Name to which power is given by God the Father (Jn 17:11-12) we will be victorious against evil's tricks & temptations.

Every child of God is able to defeat the world. We win victory over temptations by means of our faith. Who can defeat temptations? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. (1John 5:4-5) **Jesus said; watch out and pray, so that you do not fall to temptations** (Mt 26:41) because, the Devil is a liar & father of all lies. From the very beginning he was a murderer & has never been on the side of truth, because there is no truth in him. (Jn 8:44) He keeps our mind in darkness, so that we can't see the light of Christ shining on us. (2 Cor 4:4) Jesus said; "The thief comes only in order to steal, kill & destroy. (Jn 10:10) He comes to steal our blessings, kill our living soul, destroy our physical body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit & our eternal life which is God's gift to us. (Rom 6:23)

Therefore, do not fear and run from temptations. You must fight temptations with the help of God's words, as St Paul says; "Use God's his words as weapons, in order to fight well". (1Tim 1:18) Yes, we must fight the Satan with Word of God, without losing faith. Because, "If your faith does not endure you will not endure in the war. (Is 7:9)

Jesus has promised to fight for us till our last breath. Yes, he will protect our soul, lest we fall in temptations. He promised;

- I will keep you firm till the end, so that you may be fault less on the Day of the Lord. (1 Cor 1:8)
- Jesus Christ will strengthen you and keep you safe from the evil one. (2 Thes 3:3)
- When you walk through the valley of death, (Temptations) Jesus the Shepherd will protect you & keep you safe. (Ps 23:4)
- Jesus Christ is faithful to his promise. Because, he is the shepherd of your soul. (1 Pet 2:25)

JESUS SAID; I will look for those that are lost, bring back those that wandered off, bandage those that are hurt, and heal those who are sick.
*Because I am the Good Shepherd
 who does what is right.
 (Ezekiel 34:16)*

QUESTION NO -16

WHAT IS FEAR?

“Fear is appalling status of mind!”

IS FEAR CAUSED DUE TO LACK OF TRUST IN GOD?

Fear is that part of 'moment of anxiety' in life when we are uncertain about things which may or may not happen. This uncertainty cause doubt in us which results in distress & restlessness.

- ***Fear destroys the 'Peace' which Jesus gives***, for he said; "Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid. (Jn 14:27)
- ***Fear ruins the 'Rest' which Jesus offers***, for he said; "Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. (Mt 11:28)
- ***People give-in for fear because they do not have faith in God's words, but rely on their understanding.*** God has offered us the promise that we may receive that rest he spoke about. Let us take care, then, that none of you will be found to have failed to receive that promised rest. For we have heard the Good News, just as they did. ***They heard the message, but it did them no good, because when they heard it, they did not accept it with faith.*** We who believe, then, do receive that rest which God promised. (Heb 4:1-3) ***If you do not believe, you will live in fear!***

In fear we try to find solution for our problems. Yet, we are not sure about ourselves and so we try to find solution through worldly means such as; astrology, palmistry, zodiac signs, witchcraft, black magic and consulting spirit of the dead etc. Such practices cause distress in us. We lose peace & rest because; our approach is not pleasing God. Because God said; *Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the LORD in everything you do, and he will show you the right way.* (Prov 3:5-6)

The root cause for fear is "there is no trust". It may be lack of trust in God (or) lack of trust in human beings (or) lack of trust in society (or) Government etc. In present days the "Word Trust" has lost its essence. Trust is a "rare commodity" because, the needs, desires & greed of the human heart has grown in multitudes. Human beings want to achieve their desires and ambitions at all cost. Hence, they work all day giving their best. ***In the process of achieving their***

desires, ambitions and greed people cheat each other, betray each other and they go to the extent of even killing each other. Men have reached a stage where love for human beings & trust amongst them is not found any more. Such is the present-day world where people do not trust in each other. Neither do they trust in God! Yes, there is 'No Trust' among people. That is why human beings are living in fear.

This awful situation has also crept in to families, where blood related persons; Father, Mother, Brothers, Sisters, Husband, Wife and close relatives deceive each other for their own material gain and bodily desires. With-in family, blood related people and spouse do not trust each other. There is no trust amongst them and they also do not trust God. Consequently, fear sets in them automatically.

When it comes to trusting God, people display ungrateful attitude due to various reasons as given below:

Firstly, they lack knowledge on what God has spoken about them and about God's plan for them. They lack knowledge on God's Promises!

Secondly, even if they are aware on what God has spoken about them, his plan & his promises, they do not have reverence for God's words nor do they honour God by giving him first place in their life!!

Thirdly, people may honour God & worship him only as an external ceremony. But deep in their mind they have no faith in God's living words; because, they rely on their own mind, wisdom, understanding and strength. Because, they have grown in since and intelligence!!!

Such attitude cause people to live against the teachings of Christ. Consequently, they live in sin. When we sin, the Satan sows the seed of fear in our mind. Yes, when sin enter us, it destroys our confidence & determination, for Jesus said; the Satan comes only to steal, kill and destroy. (Jn 10:10) Consequently, fear sets in mind. Thus, people live in the bondage of fear. "Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned" (Rom 5:12) Because everyone has sinned fear has been seeded in their mind by the Satan. Therefore, the whole mankind lives in fear.

But if we accept Jesus as our saviour, have faith in his living & active words, his love will be made perfect in us. (1 Jn 4:12) There is no fear in Christ's love; for perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid,

because fear has to do with punishment. There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. (1 Jn 4:18) Do you believe in Jesus?

IS LOVE RULING MANKIND?

Many time we have read in news/heard in news media about incest, physical/sexual abuse among family members, who are blood relatives. Of late we hear in news that; fathers rape their daughters; brothers rape their sisters. Countless murders have been committed with-in family all over the world for the sake of bodily pleasures, money, wealth, property, status, power, ego & other related issues. ***What does all these speak about? What does all such cowardly actions indicate? It indicates that; 'Love' which is the life line for mankind does not rule mankind in this materialistic world.***

This only speaks volumes that; man has lost 'Love' for his neighbour. Yes, love does not rule people anymore. Thus, man lives against the Christ's commandment "Love your neighbour as you love thyself". (Mt12:31) It is also the most important commandment that Jesus gave; "Love your neighbour as you love they self". (Mt 22:39) ***It is love that brings trust among people & bind them together in harmony and makes them live as one family/one society.*** But if Love is lost, there will be no trust among people; be it with in family/in a society. ***If love is lost, people lose trust in each other. If people lose trust in each other, fear sets in mind, because Jesus said; "There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fears". (1 Jn 4:18)***

BREACH OF TRUST INSTIL FEAR IN MIND!

Breach of trust is very dangerous. Because, every human being looks for someone who is dependable to bank on him/her for their peaceful co-existence by reposing trust on each other. But if there is breach of trust in such relation, then people lose their confidence and peace. This causes anxiety and hence doubtfulness surround them. This situation brings lot of uncertainty about the present & future. When there is breach of trust, people are filled with fear & they get worried about the future which caused fear in them.

Say for example: If there is infidelity in marriage, the future of the family and children is uncertain. When the future of a person is uncertain, then he is ready to do anything what his human wisdom conceives as right and hence we see many are already on the wrong track. Breach of trust has been the cause for many murders that have been committed by husbands and wives. Now people who have committed such crime live in guilt. Their sin/guilt cause fear in them.

Breach of trust in the society and organisations also leads to similar dangerous situation. For example: When a low-income group person fears future of his family due to increased materialistic desires of this attractive world and does not have money to afford them, he gets into the world of unethical earnings such as corruption, bribery, drug peddling, flesh trade, bootlegging, money laundering leading him breach trust that the society reposes on him as a good citizen. This causes him live in guilt. This sin/guilt brings fear in him. From the discourse above we discern that; 'Sin is the root cause for fear', because the Satan plants fear in mind when we indulge in sin.

WHY DO WE FEAR?

Solomon gives the answer for this question! He said; *Fear is nothing but the failure to use the help that reason (Word of God) gives. When you lack confidence to rely on reason, (when you do not trust his word) you give in to fear caused by ignorance. (Wis 17:12)*

From the above discourse we also discern that; there are three reasons why fear creeps in people's mind;

- i) Because people commit sin and are guilty of their sins!*
- ii) Because people not trust in God's plan for them!!*
- iii) Because people do not have faith in God's words!!!*

These three attributes of fear have been explained in detail as below:

IS OUR SINS & GUILT CAUSING US TO LIVE IN FEAR?

God said: "I am holy, and my people stumble over me because of their sins, for I am like a rock". (Is 8:14) We stumble before God because of our sinfulness. A person who has no sin in him, will have no guilt feeling and hence he will not stumble before God, because; he will have no fear to come in to the presence of the Lord. From the Bible, we understand that; Adam & Eve were trying to hide themselves from God's presence after they committed sin. (Gen 3:7-8) When God called out Adam; "where are you"? Adam answered; "I heard you in the garden; I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked." (Gen 3:10) Adam and Eve were hiding from God's presence, because; the sin of disobedience which the Satan planted in them brought fear, & so they hid themselves. We people also hide from God's presence due to fear caused by our sins and guilt feelings.

Prophet Isaiah said: "People will hide in caves in rocky hills, or dig holes in the ground to escape from the Lord's anger and hide from his power and glory" because of their sins. (Is 2:10) Sin weighs upon our soul. (Wis 9:15) It makes us to hide from God. Thus, "our sins will instil fear in us and in fear we will hide from God's presence".

DOES LACK OF TRUST IN GOD'S PLAN CAUSE FEAR IN US?

God said; I have known you even before you were conceived in mother's womb. (Jer 1:5) *Do not be afraid—I will save you. I have called you by name, you are mine. (Is 43:1) "You are the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light. (1 Pet 2:9-10) And "I alone know the plan I have for you. Plans to bring prosperity & not disaster, plans to bring about the good future you hope for". (Jeremiah 29:11)*

In God's plan, he called us as his own son. He said; "Israel, you are my dearest son, the child I love the best. Whenever I mention your name, I think of you with love. My heart goes out to you. I will be merciful". (Jer 32:20) But people have no trust in God & so they have not accepted him as their Father. Because of their sins, they do not enjoy their relation with him as Father & son. (Gal 4:3-7) Also, they do not accept Jesus as their friend (Jn 15:14) and as their brother, and do God's will for which all are called for. (Mk 3:34-35) Instead, they have turned away from our God-Jesus and reposed faith in things that are created instead of the Creator. (Jer 3:11-13 and Rom 1:21-23) **Thus they live in sin & their guilt cause them to live in fear.**

In God's Plan, he wants that man should glorify God's Spirit in his body and in his life. (Is 43:7 & 1 Cor 6:19-20) People of this world do not have reverence for God & they do not honour him by glorifying his Spirit in their body. Instead, they live as it pleases their mind & body to enjoy all sinful pleasures and glorify devil. Instead of living holy life, they invite all kind of sin and lose kingdom of God as spoken by St Paul in 1 Cor 6:9-10 & Gal 5:19-21. Instead of giving their allegiance to God, they desecrate God's presence in them. (1 Cor 3:16) **Thus, they live in sin and guilt which make them to live in fear.**

In God's Plan, he promised prosperity & good future to those who obey him. (Duet 28:1-14) Instead of obeying God, people live as per desires of flesh. They consult spirits of the dead and do witchcraft, black magic, to know their future/prosperity. (Is 65:4-6, Is 8:19, Duet 18:9-13, Lev 19:31) Instead of trusting God's plan in which he promised good future/prosperity, they trust astrology, movement of planets/stars and zodiac signs to know their prosperity/ future. (Is 47:11-15) To them God says; "I will make fools out of fortune tellers, and frustrate predictions of astrologers. The words of wise I refute & show that their wisdom is foolishness. (Is 44:24) Thus, they live against God's will. **Their sin/ guilt feeling causes them to live in fear.**

In God's plan, he promised to give Wisdom, Peace and Power over ones' mind & body to those who worship / seek Christ before sunrise. (Wis 6:12-21) But people reject God's call to worship Christ before sunrise to gain wisdom, peace & power. However, they rely on their own understanding, strength and try to gain wisdom to become wise by following legends and teachings handed down by men. (Col 2:16-19 & 2 Tim 4:3-4) God warns those ignorant people and says; People say they are wise, but their wisdom is foolishness. I will destroy wisdom of the wise & understanding of the scholars". (1Cor 1:18-19)
Thus people sin by rejecting God's call & their sin cause fear in them.

In God's plan, he promised life & health to those who pay attention to his words and retain them in their heart and obey/live by them. (Prov 4:20-22) However, people of this world have no reverence for God's words. They neither make attempt to read God's words in the morning and in the evening worship, as God commanded Joshua to do to receive blessings. (Josh 1:8) Nor, do they remember God's words in practical life and obey / live by it, so that they will be blessed with prosperous life & good health. Also, they do not meditate on God's words to gain insight & understanding. (Sir 6:37) Instead, to find life & health people follow worldly ways and adopt various life styles promoted by leaders who do not know Christ. (2 Tim 4:3) Yes, in order to find health & life, they turn away from listening to the truth (Christ) and give their attention to legends. (2 Tim 4:4) **To find life and health they reject immortal living God-their Creator and worship things that are created.** (Rom 1:20-21) Also, they indulge in various sinful activities and entertainments to find life and health. By doing so, they live in sin. **Their sin & guilt make them to live in fear.**

In God's plan, he gives wealth to those whom he chooses, as he said; "By my great power and strength I created everything on this earth, the animals and all living things. And, I give them to those whom I choose". (Jer 27:5) God does not give wealth to everyone. He gives wealth to those whom he chooses. And Jesus said; You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so, the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name. (Jn 15:16) Yes, God chooses people those who obey his words, bear witness to Christ and bless them with all that their heart desires. God does not deny anything good for people who live life pleasing God-the righteous ones. (Ps 84:11) But we see people who live in sin, amass wealth by cheating, lying, deceiving, murdering & by destroying families. They may have plenty of wealth, but their mind will never enjoy peace that Jesus gives, neither their soul will be at rest because of their wickedness.

Their wickedness will burden them with more of guilt and sadness. (1Tim 6:10) **Consequently, their sin/guilt makes them to live in fear.**

In God's plan, out of all creation not one of the creatures will be missing and not one will be without its mate. The LORD has commanded it to be so. He himself will bring them together, (Is 34:16) & unite them in marriage which is a Sacrament of the Church, (Gen 2:24 & Mt 19:6) at the time chosen by him, because in God's plan everything happens at the time chosen by him. (Eccl 3:1-11) God who created Man & Women says; Marriage is to be honoured by all. Husbands & Wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery". (Ex 20:14, Heb 13:4) But presently what we see is; man & women are living to gather for a brief period without marriage to enjoy pleasures & depart in their own way. They commit fornication, adultery, orgy and swipe their spouse for sex according to desires. To possess a man/woman whom they are obsessed with, they lie, deceive each other and they cunningly cause division and break marriage. Further, to separate married couples they indulge in witchcraft/black magic. To enjoy sex, people indulge in rape/gang rape and commit murder. **Thus, they break God's Laws. Their sin & wickedness cause them to live in fear.**

Dear believers, the above discourse gives clear understanding that man refuses to trust in God's plan. Yes, human beings have gone far away from God's plan and his commandments to live according to the desires of their mind and to enjoy pleasures of the body. People exercise their freedom & freewill and choose to do evil and thus they live in sin. When sin enters their body, the Satan plants the seed 'fear' in their mind. Their sins bring death in them because wage of sin is death. (Rom 6:23) This attitude makes people to live in fear of punishment. Yet, human beings choose to live in sin. Thus, man's wickedness & guilt makes him to live in fear & distress always.

DOES LACK OF FAITH IN GOD'S WORD CAUSE FEAR IN US?

Let us introspect various situations that we encountered in the past life. When we went through doubtfulness, anxiety and were in distress, we were reeling in deep fear due to various reasons. And we were lost for ourselves not knowing what to do, how to do and how to go about? There were situations in our life which no person, even our parents or best friend, or near relatives could counsel us or console us. Because we were filled with fear which caused desperation, hopelessness, helplessness and rejection. **At times we felt we have been deceived & lost because fear took control over us!**

To overcome fear, people turn away from Jesus Christ who said; "Do not fear. I am with you till end of ages. (Mt 28:20)

To overcome fear people of this world engage themselves in drinking, entertainments, using drugs, browsing internet, reading novels, watching TV, being active on social media, touring to destinations or any other worldly ways in which their mind leads them. To overcome fear, some people try to find solution through astrology/worship of heavenly bodies and they also indulge in witchcraft & black magic. They even offer human sacrifice in pagan worship, because they are deceived by worthless people who introduce them in such practice. People are also deceived to change their faith. To overcome fear, they don't hesitate to give up faith in Christ and embrace other faith. **Thus, we see all over the world people are being deceived to reject faith in Jesus & are introduced to wrong practices to overcome fear.**

To overcome fear, some have even turned away from True God to repose faith in things that are created instead of Creator himself. They believe that they will overcome fear by worshipping pagans, living beings, reptiles & heavenly bodies. They also worship demons/evil forces with a hope that it will change situations. Their mind is kept in the darkness by evil god of this world. (2 Cor 4:4) **They fail to understand these solutions will lead them nowhere, but in sinful bondage. Such solutions do not solve the real problem because 'fear' is caused by the evil spirits. To those people who have turned away from Jesus Christ to indulge in such practices God says:**

Israel my servant, you are the people that I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham, my friend. I brought you from the ends of the earth; **I called you from its farthest corners and said to you, 'You are my servant. I did not reject you, but chose you. Do not be afraid—I am with you! I am your God—let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you. "Those who are angry with you will know the shame of defeat. Those who fight against you will die and will disappear from the earth. I am the LORD your God, I strengthen you and tell you, 'Do not be afraid; I will help you.'** (Isaiah 41:8-13)

God says, I am the one who strengthens you. Why should you fear mortal man, who is no more enduring than grass? **Have you forgotten God who made you, who stretched out the heavens & laid the earth's foundations? Why should you live in constant fear of the fury of those who oppress you, of those who are ready to destroy you? Their fury can no longer touch you.** All prisoners will be set free & they will live a long life and eat all they need. I am your God; I stir up the sea and make its waves roar. I stretched out the heavens and

laid the earth's foundations; I say; you are my people! I have given you my teaching and I will protect you with my hand. (Is 51:12-16)

Yes, God assures deliverance from all fears: He says; Look up at the heavens; look at the earth! The heavens will disappear like smoke; the earth will wear out like old clothing & its people will die like flies. **But the deliverance I bring will last forever; my victory will be final. God says that his victory is final:** Yes, he says; Listen to me, you that know what is right, who have my teaching fixed in your hearts. Do not be afraid when people taunt & insult you; they will vanish like moth-eaten clothing! **But the deliverance from fear that I bring will last forever; my victory endures for all time. (Is 51: 6 - 8)**

People who have faith in God's Words and live by his Spirit, will have their spirit renewed every day. (2 Cor 4:4) They will live by God's Word, trusting in him. The Lord will take delight in them and give them new life. (Zeph 3:17) **In such spiritual renewal God will lead them by his splendour and all fear will be gone because;** God has commanded; every high mountain & the everlasting hills shall be made low; he has commanded that the valleys shall be filled & the ground levelled, so that the people of Israel may come safely home delivered from bondage of fear in the glory of God. At the command of God, forests of fragrant trees (Holy Spirit) will spring up to provide shade for the people of Israel. (Ps 91) God will lead Israel home. They will return with great joy, guided by his righteousness & mercy surrounded by the light of his glorious presence. (Bar 5: 7-9)

From this chapter, we understand, we live in fear because; Our sins & guilt inflicts fear in mind. Also fear grips our mind because we fail to believe in God's plan for us in which he has prosperity & good future. **Above all, it is the apathy that the evil god of this world has kept our mind in darkness (2 Cor 4:4) so that do not repose faith in God's words which will burn-up all our fears like a fire and will break rocks (strongholds of evil) like a hammer in to pieces. (Jer 23:29)** Word of God is alive & active. It will deliver you from fear. (Heb 4:12)

Someone with a guilty conscience will always imagine things to be worse than they really are. So, they always live in fear. Fear is nothing but the failure to use the help that reason (Word of God) gives. When you lack the confidence to rely on reason (Word of God), you give in to the fears caused by ignorance. (Wisdom 17:11-13)

QUESTION NO -17

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FEAR?

LACK OF TRUST IN GOD'S PROMISES CAUSES FEAR!

We are believers in Jesus Christ and we are called to believe in words spoken by him, because; Jesus Christ is Word of God. (Jn 1:1, 14 & Rev 19:13) Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. (Jn 1:1-3) Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. He is the first-born Son, superior to all created things. For, through him God created everything in heaven and on earth, the seen and the unseen things, including spiritual powers, lords, rulers, and authorities. God created the whole universe through him and for him. **Christ existed before all things and in union with him all things have their proper place.** (Colossians 1:15-17) Yes, we are called to repose Faith in Jesus Christ because:

- His word is source of life. (Jn 1:4 & Col 1:18)
- His word is the light of the world that dispel darkness. (Jn 8:12)
- His word brings God's life-giving Spirits in us. (Jn 6:63 & 68)
- His word renews our body & spirit day-by-day. (2 Cor 4:4)
- His word gives us new life. (Zeph 3:17)
- His word bring healing in our body. (Ps 107:20 & Prov 4:20-21)
- His word is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. And it delivers our soul from evil spirits. (Heb 4:12)
- His word heals the broken heart. (Ps 147:3)
- His word is fire (that burns evil influences in us) and a hammer which breaks rocks (our evil bondages) in to pieces. (Jer 23:29)
- His word is breath of God's power, a pure and radiant stream of glory from the Almighty. (Wis 7:25)
- His word is reflection of eternal light, a perfect mirror of God's activity and goodness. (Wis 7:26)
- His word reaches every part of the world and it sets everything in useful order. (Wis 8:1)

Jesus is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end. Jesus reflects the brightness of God's glory and is the exact likeness of God's own being. He sustains the universe with his powerful word. (Heb 1:2-3)

The Jesus Christ is Word of God (Rev 19:13) **who existed even before the world was created.** (Jn 1-3, Col 1:15-17) Jesus himself being the source of life, (Jn 1:4 & Col 1:18) proclaimed; "Man does

not live by bread alone, but by life-giving words (Jn 6:63) spoken by God". (Mt 4:4) God has spoken more than eight thousand promises for us inherit his blessings by obeying his Laws and Commandments.

God who has given promises for all situations says we should know his promises, believe in them & claim the right promise for the right occasion to realise its power to deliver us from fear & awful situations. (Prov 15:23 & Is 62:6-7) **We as believers are called to use those promises as God's powerful weapons to destroy the strong holds of evil spirits (2Cor10:3-5) and use them as God's armour (Eph 6:12-18) to fight, get over hard situations and our fears. (1Tim 1:18)**

God who gave more than eight thousand promises for man to live life in all its fulness (Jn 10:10) also said; "Heaven and earth will pass way; but my promises shall never pass away". (Mt 24:35) Prophet Isaiah said; Grass withers and flowers fade, but the God's promises endure forever. (Is 40:8) Further, David said; The LORD IS faithful to all his promises & he is merciful in all his acts. (Ps 145:13) St Paul said; "We may not be faithful to God. But he remains faithful for all his promises; because he cannot be false to himself". (2 Tim 2:13) Also he said, 'Jesus is fulfilment of God's Promises', because; "Jesus is God's 'Yes' for all God's promises. This is why through Jesus our "Amen" is said to the glory of God. (2 Cor 1:19-20) Therefore, God said; we must claim his promises in daily worship in the morning and in the evening, for God to remember his promises and fulfil them.

So, it is important that we must know what God has spoken in his promises. He said; On your walls, Jerusalem, I have placed sentries;(God has given mouth to all of us) they must never remain silent day or night. They must remind God of his promises and never let him forget them. They must give him no rest until he restores Jerusalem & makes it a city the whole world praises. (Isaiah 62:6-7)

God wants us to recall his promises in worship while we pray, (Sir 51:22) to make our prayer powerful and effective so as to deliver us from our fears and the awful situations that we encounter in daily life. From scriptures we understand; when Simon led the people in worship, he used the promises of God in his worship. And people bowed down and received God blessings. The scriptures say: Simon came down from the altar, raised his hands over the whole assembly of Israel & reverently pronounced the blessing from the Lord, (God's Promises) while the people bowed a second time in worship to receive that blessing (promises) from the Most High. (Sir 50: 11-20) We as believers in Jesus Christ are called to live life in this manner!

NOW LET US UNDERSTAND WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FEARS THAT HUNT HUMAN MIND?

This world is full of uncertainty for people who live life on their own. That is why people of this world always live in fear. But it is not the case with people who believe in Jesus Christ and live life day-by-day obeying his word. For Jesus said; blessed are those who fear the word of God and obey it. (Lk 11:27-28) Prophet Sirach said:

- To fear the Lord is the first step to wisdom. (Sir 1:14)
- To fear the Lord is wisdom at her fullest. She satisfies us completely with her gifts. (Sir 1:16)
- To fear the Lord is the flower of wisdom that blooms with peace and good health. (Sir1:18)
- To fear the Lord is the root of wisdom, her branches are long life. (Sir 1:20)
- If you fear the lord honour & pride will be yours. (Sir 1:11)
- Fear the Lord, and you will have nothing to fear. If you trust him, you will never act like a coward. (Sir 34:14)
- People who fear the Lord are fortunate, because they know where they can look for help. (Sir 34:15)
- Wealth and strength give confidence, but the fear of the Lord can give you even greater confidence. When you fear the Lord, you need nothing more; it is all the support you need. The fear of the Lord is like a rich garden of blessings; you could not want a more glorious shelter. (Sir 40:26-27)

From the above discourse we discern; 'fear settles in mind when we lose faith in God words & when we do not hold on to God's words in our difficult situations'. And more importantly we understand that; 'We will suffer due to fear when we do not fear God who gives us wisdom, insight and understanding on how to overcome all our fears.

Now let us understand; "What are various types of fears that people go through"? & "What our loving God says about them"?

1. FEAR OF THE FUTURE:

The first and foremost fear that hunts everyone's mind is; fear of their future and fear of their children's future. This is very common in every family. *Such fear disturbs our peace because we do not trust in the promise of God regarding our future. God said; "I have known you even before you were conceived in your mother's womb. (Jer 1:4)* Because God knew us even before we are conceived,

he has made a detail plan for us in which he has already decided; Who will be our parents? When we will be born? What will be our Gender? How our physique will be? What will be our qualification? What will be our profession? Who will be our life partner? How many children we will have? What will be our children's gender? And when will we die? God who knows us in every detail said; "I alone know the plan I have for you. Plans to bring prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the good future you hope for." (Jeremiah 29:11)

In his plan, God has only prosperity and good future stored up for us and our children. Because, he said; *I will make an eternal covenant with them. I will never stop doing good things for them, and I will make them fear me with all their heart, so that they will never turn away from me. I will take pleasure in doing good things for them, and I will establish them permanently in this land. (Jer 32:40-41) Further, God has promised good life and prosperous future to those who obey his Laws. (Duet 28:1-14) About our children, God said; When you see the children, the work of my hand, then you will acknowledge that I am the holy God of Israel. You will honor me and stand in awe of me. (Is 29:23) In God's plan, he has not stored up worries & fears for us, for Jesus says; Do not be worried! Do not be upset! Believe in God & believe in me". (Jn14:1) Also he said; Do not fear, for I am with you till end of ages. (Mt 28:10, 19-20) Yes, God has not stored up worries, fears and curse for us, because; a blessing is what God promised to give us when he called all of us. (1 Pet 3:9)*

Let us understand the truth in God's plan for our prosperous life & good future: When children are conceived in mother's womb, God pronounces abundance of blessings for every Child according to his plan for the child. Yes, our God is a loving God, (Jer 31:3) a generous God, (Jas 1:5) a providing God, (1Cor 6:13) and he is God of prosperity, who provides everything abundantly for his children from his wealth. (Phil 4:19) Therefore, life of every child is like a treasure pot, filled with all kind of blessings which we can't even imagine. (1 Cor 2:9) But God says; to inherit his promised blessings, we should reject sin at all cost. Because, every sin we commit drills a hole in our treasure pot through which our blessings will drain out. We lose blessings that are promised because of our sins. (Is 59:1-3) Yes, our sins will destroy our blessings and future. (Duet 28:15 - 64)

Our sins will destroy our blessings, because the nature of sin is destruction. That's why Jesus said; the thief (sin) comes in order to steal our blessings, kill our living soul & destroy our physical body (Prov 5:1-11) and eternal life. (Jh10:10) Yes, our sins will change

the destiny which God has planned for us. One Mortal sin is sufficient to destroy our blessings & change the course of our life. We cannot regain the original blessings what God had planned for us, even if we repent and confess our mortal sin. We understand this spiritual truth in the Bible from the life of Adam and Eve, which is explained below.

God created Adam & Eve in his own image, breathed his Spirit in them. (Gen 1:27) Because they were created in God's own image and God's Spirit was dwelling in them, they were never to die. The 'Book of Wisdom' reveals the truth that; 'in God's original plan, Adam & Eve were never to die, but live for ever". (Wis 1:12-14) *When God created us, he did not intend for us to die; he made us like himself. It means; as God lives forever, man who was created in the image of God was also to live forever.* It was the Devil's jealousy that brought death. Those who belong to the Devil are the ones who will die. (Wis 2:23-24) The Devil was jealous on the status Adam & Eve were enjoying. He is a cunning beast who knew that disobedience to God will bring death. So, he deceived Eve first to disobey God and commit sin. Adam then followed her! When sin entered their body, it brought death with it, for; sin weigh upon our soul (Wis 9:15) and wages of sin is death. (Rom 6:23) Sin came into the world through Adam and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race, because everyone has sinned. (Rom 5:12)

According to God's Original Plan, Adam & Eve were supposed to live forever, because God created them like himself. God blessed them & said; "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth & bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, & all the wild animals. (Gen 1:27-28) But when they committed sin they came under God's Judgement. God said to Adam, "You listened to your wife and ate the fruit which I told you not to eat. Because of what you have done, the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from soil, and you will become soil again. (Gen 3:17-19) *Here we see, God who blessed Adam & Eve according to his Original Plan later cursed them, because they sinned. They were thrown out of the Paradise. This is how if we sin, we will also lose blessing which God has for us according to his original plan!*

Because mankind has sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Gal 3:22) God devised an alternate plan to redeem mankind. In this alternate plan, God sent his own Son Jesus Christ who gave salvation through his suffering and death on the cross. (Heb 9:21-

28) *Consequently, we discern that; by committing sins, people lose their blessings which God has for them according to his original plan in which he has promised prosperity and good future! (Jeremiah 29:11) Yes, by committing grievous sins, people lose their propriety and good future and later they keep worrying & fearing about their future and the future of their children. And that's how the whole mankind lives in fear, worrying about their propriety and good future.*

We have understood in this chapter that; sin will bring fear in mind. People who live in sin are the ones who always live in fear and worry about their propriety & future and their children's prosperity & future. To the sinners, God says; "Repent and turn away from your sins" (Mt 3:2) and confess your sins to receive God's forgiveness. (*Jn 20:20-23 & Jas 5:16*) *Believe in God and believe in Jesus, (Jn 14:1) so that he will restore your lost blessing through his alternate plan. (Joel 2:18-26) If you turn away from all your sins & serve God using all you have, you will win God's favour. (Jer 36:9, Daniel1:9, Gen 6:8, Gen 39:21, 2 Kgs 13:23, Is 60:19 & Is 62:4) God will restore blessing that you have lost in double measure. (Is 61:7 & Zech 9:12) You must reject sin in all its forms and live righteously. For, in God's alternate plan, he has prosperity & good future instore for you & your children. So, leave your fears to God, for he cares for you. (1Pet 5:7)*

2. FEAR OF THE EVIL SPIRITS.

People always have a subconscious fear in them for evil spirits which is displayed in their attitude & behaviour. Fear of evil has been instilled in us since young age by parents, elders & friends. Added to it, the television programmes people watch, the novels they read, the movies they see, all portray evil spirits as invincible power and they are also a cause for instilling fear in their mind. *Fear of evil spirits is a spiritual issue. It must be addressed spiritually by counselling!* We are believers in God's Spirit. We must accept the fact that evil spirits do exist, for Jesus himself delivered many people from evil spirits. (Lk 9:37-43, Mk 1:21-28, Mt 9:32-34)

Further St Paul says; "In this world, we are not fighting against human beings, but against the wicked spiritual forces of the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities and cosmic power of this Dark Age. (Eph 6:12) Further, he said; we too were slaves of the ruling spirits of the universe before we reached spiritual maturity. (Gal 4:3) Therefore we reconcile to the truth that this world is under the influence if the evil spirits which are troubling the believers and keeping them in darkness to understand the power God has given to

mankind against the evil spirits. (2 Cor 4:4) Man does not believe in the power/authority which God has given to humans over evil spirits.

Yes, When God created man & women he said; "Multiply and fill the earth with your decedents and rule over everything" (Gen 1:28) Here, everything includes power/ authority to rule over evil spirits who are ruling the earth." (Gal 3:22) *That is why, God the Father made a covenant with human beings and said; I make a covenant with you: I have given you my power (over evil spirits) and my teachings to be yours forever. From now on you are to obey me and teach your children and your descendants to obey me for all time to come."* **When Jesus came, he renewed God's covenant for power & authority over the evil spirits which he gave to man.**

Jesus gave human beings authority over evil spirits. He said;

- *I have given you authority to walk on snakes and scorpions and to overcome the power of the enemy. (Satan) Nothing will harm you. (Lk 10:19)*
- *Whatever you bind on earth, it will be bound in heaven. And whatever you set loose on earth; it will be set loose in heaven."* (Mt 16:18 & 18:18) (By saying so, Jesus gave human beings authority to bind evil spirits and to deliver evil spirits from people who are possessed)
- *After resurrection Jesus said; "Believers are given power to perform miracles; they will drive out demons in my name."* (MK 16:17)

People fail to believe in the power that God has given to them over evil spirits, because; "their minds have been kept in the dark by the evil god of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light shining on them, the light that comes from the Good News about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God". (2 Cor 4:4) Because people do not believe in these powers & use them, they live in fear of evil spirits. God says do not restrain the Holy Spirit (God's Power) and do not despise the inspired messages. Put all things to the test: (Use spiritual powers over the evils spirits to cast them away) keep what is good and avoid every kind of evil. (1 Thes 5:19-22) *God calls us to live righteously and practice these spiritual powers with faith to experience the power over evil spirits which he has given to mankind.*

Jesus said; If you have faith as big as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Pull yourself up by the roots and plant yourself in the sea!' and it would obey you. (Lk 17:6) Therefore, to those who fear evil spirits, God says; Firstly, give-up all your evil

works and live righteous life. Secondly, remain with Christ (Jn 15:1-5) and do not doubt your faith. (Jas 1:22-24) *If you believe and put your faith in to action, you will see God's power working in you; for God is at work in those who believe. (1 Thes 2:13) Yes, if you believe you will see Glory of God. (Jn 11:40) Yes, God has given you power. The evils spirits will obey you and you will not to fear them anymore.*

3. FEAR OF INSECURITY.

Human beings always live in fear about their security. They fear that they may lose their Job/earnings, their possessions, their business & competitors, their children, their wealth, their health and their life. The feeling of insecurity causes them to lose peace which Jesus gives. (Jn 14:27) And hence, they are not able to enjoy the rest which Jesus has promised to his children. (Mt 11:28) *Therefore the feeling of insecurity results in fear, anxiety & restlessness which are the cause for lifestyle decease.* People suffer from blood pressure, diabetics, depression, indigestion & other psychosomatic deceases. Therefore, people are not able to enjoy their life as Jesus says; 'Rejoice in the Lord always', (Phil 4:4) and "Be joyful always, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus". (1Thes 5:16, 17,18)

Fear of insecurity enters our mind when we lose faith in God. Because God says; "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not rely on your own understanding. (Prove 3:5) Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right path. (Prove 3:6)

God knows all our problems and the situations that we face. For every situation, God has given promises to bless us, because; "Blessing is what God promised to give us when he called us". (1 Pet 3:9) *Yes, God expects us to know his promises, believe in them and use them as our source for help.* About help that God renders to people, King Solomon said; "Lord, you have made your people great & glorious in all respects. You have never neglected them. You have given them help, always, everywhere". (Wis 19:22) *Therefore, God promises help to overcome all our fears. Now let us understand what God has spoken on the feeling of insecurity in various aspects of life!*

Fear of insecurity about - losing Job/earnings.

As you pursue your carrier/employment, keep God in mind above all things so that you will prosper, because God said; Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you. He will provide you with all these other

things. (Mt 6:33) And in everything you do or say, do it in the name of Jesus as you give thanks through him to God the Father. (Col3:17)

As you pursue your carrier/work, be sincere in all things you do; then you will prosper. For God says; Slaves, obey your human masters in all things, not only when they are watching you because you want to gain their approval; but do it with sincere heart because of your reverence for the Lord. **Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for God and not for people.** Remember, the Lord will give you as a reward what he has kept for his people. Because Jesus is the real Master you serve. (Col3:22-24)

Pray before you start your daily work for God to bless your hand, for he said; "Ask the LORD to bless your plans, and you will be successful in carrying them out." (Prov 16:3) Never show laziness in your work, put in your best, for God said; "No matter how much a lazy person may want something, he will never get it. A hard worker will get everything he want." (Prov 13:4) And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause. (2 Cor 9:8)

Having earned your wages bring the full amount of your tithes to the Church, so that there will be plenty of food there. For God says; "Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things". I will not let insects destroy your crops, and your grapevines will be loaded with grapes. Then the people of all nations will call you happy, because your land will be a good place to live. (Mal 3:10-12)

Those who understand God's promises, accept them, believe in them, and live obeying them will live in assurance of the Lord for security. They will have no cause to worry or to live in the feeling of insecurity!

Fear of insecurity about - losing possessions:

About feeling of insecurity on losing your possessions, Jesus says; where your possession is, there will be your heart. (Mt 6:21)

If you have earned your possessions with sincerity and hard work, nothing will destroy them. (Duet 5:33) And use all your possessions to glorify God so that God will bless your possessions. (1Cor6:19-20) If you use your talents & possessions to serve God, he will bless you and your possessions will continue to grow. Further, God says; be sure that the book of the Law is always read in your worship. Study it day & night, and make sure that you obey everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Josh 1:8) And, you will

be famous among the nations. God says; people who see you will know that you are the one whom I have blessed. (Is 61:9) **Therefore, glorify God with all you have so that your possessions will be blessed! Then you will have no cause to live in fear of losing your possessions.**

Fear of insecurity about - incurring loss in business:

About fear of incurring loss in business, God says; Do your business honestly to gain my favour. If you make profit dishonestly, you get your family in trouble. If you are honest in business dealings, you will prosper and live longer. (Prov 15:27) Do not use in-correct weights & measures. (Prov 16:11) The LORD hates people who use dishonest weights/measures. (Prov 20:10,23) Do not deny wages to labours & do not oppress them. (Duet 24:14-15) Do not rob or take advantage of anyone. Do not hold back the wages of someone you have hired, not even for one night. (Lev 19:13) Remove the chains of oppression & the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free.

Be generous and share your profit with your labourers and food with the poor. You will be blessed for it. (Prov 22:9) If you make gifts to rich people or oppress the poor to get rich, you will become poor yourself. (Prov 22:16) **Those who give to the poor are lending to the Lord himself and they will surely not go unrewarded.** (Prov 19:17) If you do business in this manner, then God's Favor will shine on you like the morning sun. God will be always be with you to save you; his presence will protect you on every side. When you pray, God will answer. When you call, God will respond. (Is 58: 6-9) And you will have no cause to fear about prosperity in your business.

Fear of insecurity about - losing Children:

People fear about their children on two counts as given below:

- **Firstly, they fear that their children should not lose their life** due to accidents, drowning, riots, enmity/vengeance, flood, fire electrocution, natural disaster or any other un-natural death.
- **Secondly, they fear that their children should not become a slave for sinful habits,** (such as; getting addicted to liquor/ drugs/pornography), or sinful relations (such as; in adultery /orgy) and forbidden relations (such as; gay/ lesbian/ incest)

About fear of losing children, God said: Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a real blessing. The sons a man has when he is young are like arrows in a soldier's hand. Happy is the man who has many such arrows. He will never be defeated when he meets his enemies in the place of judgment. (Psalms 127:3-5) Also he says; when you see the children that I will give you, then you will

acknowledge that I am the holy God of Israel. You will honor me and stand in awe of me. (Is 29:23) **Further, God says; I will pour out my spirit on your children & my blessing on your descendants. They will thrive like well-watered grass, like willows by streams of running water.** (Is 44:3-4) Yes, dear parents, in this earthly life God has great plans for your children in which he will give them good future and prosperity. (Jer29:11) Further God has wonderful/marvellous plan to unite your children with heavenly beings as one family with Christ as head in their eternal life according to his Eternal Plan. (Eph 1:3 to12)

However, God who has great plan for our children, to fulfil his plan he warns every parent; that we as parents should know God's Laws, obey them and teach God's Laws to our children & make them to obey God's Laws; so that God's great plan would be fulfilled in them (Is 59:21) and that, they will always walk in the light of the Lord and live righteous life. (Sir 50:28-29) God says those who obey his laws and live righteously, will live full life & long life. (Duet 5:33, Prov 3:1-2 & 16:31, 1 Kgs 3:14-15, Eph6:1-4) **Jesus says; if you love me, you will obey my commandments, (Jn 14:15) and I will give you life in all its fulness. (Jn 10:10)** Further, God says; if children obey me, I will keep them safe from all hidden dangers & from all deadly diseases. I will cover them with my wings; they will be safe in my care; my faithfulness will protect them and defend them. They need not fear any dangers at the night or sudden attacks during the day or the plagues that strike in the dark or the evils that kill in daylight. No disaster will strike them and no violence will come near their homes.

God will put his angels in charge of them to protect them wherever they go. They will hold them up with their hands to keep them from hurting their feet on the stones. Your children will trample down lions & snakes, fierce lions & poisonous snakes. God says; "I will save those who love me and protect those who acknowledge me as LORD. When they call to me, I will answer them; when they are in trouble, I will be with them. I will rescue them and honor them. I will reward them with long life & I will save them. (Ps 91:1-16) **If you bring up children with fear of God, you will not have fear of losing them to sinful habits, sinful bondages and wicked relations. Jesus the shepherd will protect them from all dangers. (Ps 23 & 121) If children live with fear of God, they will live long & healthy life. (Sir 1: 12-20)**

Fear of insecurity about - losing wealth:

About fear of losing wealth God said: By my great power and strength I created the world, human beings and all the animals that live on the earth & I give it to anyone I choose. (Jer 27:5) It is useless

for you to work hard for a living, getting up early & going to bed late, for; it is I, the Lord who provide all good things to those who love me and live righteous life (Ps 84:11) while they are asleep. (Ps 127:2) We have a generous God who will give us more than we need for ourselves and more than enough for every good cause. Yes, God will make us rich enough to be generous at all times. (2 Cor 9:6-11)

Yes, God provides wealth to the person whom he chooses. Jesus said; you did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so, the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name. (Jn 15:16) We discern from these words that; if we do what pleases God, i.e., if we bear fruits that endures, which means; if glorify God in everything we do, and use all our possession to witness Christ, and be useful to the kingdom of God, then God will provide all the wealth we need. And God will also give satisfaction with the wealth what he provides.

However, it is better, much better to have wisdom and knowledge than gold and silver. (Prov 16:16) *Those who depend on their wealth will fall like the leaves of autumn, but the righteous will prosper like the leaves of summer. (Prov 11:28) Good people will have wealth to leave to their grandchildren, but the wealth of sinners will go to the righteous. (Prov 13:22) The more easily you get wealth, the sooner you will lose it. The harder it is to earn wealth, the more you will have. (Prov 13:11) Therefore, never move an old property line that your ancestors established. (Prov 22:28) Which means; do not do anything evil out of greed for wealth. The wealth that God provides will always remain with you, because God himself will protect the wealth that he has given you, for THE LORD said; **No matter how shepherds yell and shout, they can't scare away a lion from an animal that it has killed. In the same way, there is nothing that can keep me the LORD Almighty from protecting Mount Zion. Just as a bird hover over its nest to protect its young ones, so I, the LORD ALMIGHTY will protect you, your wealth and defend it. (Isaiah 31:4-5)***

However, regarding wealth, God says; "Wealth and strength give confidence, but fear of the Lord will give you greater confidence. When you fear the Lord, you need nothing more; it is all the support you need. Fear of the Lord is like a rich garden of blessings, and you could not want a more glorious shelter. (Sir 40:26-27) Yes, God says; **"You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth.** For you have died and your life is

hidden with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ. When he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory". (Col 3 :1 - 4)

Fear of insecurity about - losing health:

Regarding health, God said; I chose you before I gave you life. Before you were born, I chose you as a prophet." (Jer 1:5) The kings of Judah, the officials, the priests, and all the people—will be against you. But today I am giving you the strength to resist them; you will be like a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall. They will not defeat you, for I will be with you to protect you." (Jer 1:18-19) Yes, he said; 'If you obey me, my saving power will rise on you like the sun and bring healing like the sun's rays. You will be as free & happy as calves let out of a stall. (Mal 4:2) Also, God said in my mercy, the angel will say, "Release them! They are not to go down to the world of the dead. Here is the ransom to set them free." **Their bodies will grow young & become strong again; when they pray & worship, God will answer them & set things right for them again.** (Job 33:24 - 26)

God promised to celeb; even at the old age of eighty-five you will be as strong as a man of forty to climb hill. (Josh 14:6-12) Yes, God will restore our weak aging body if we live a life that pleases him as written in Ps 15:1-5, Is 58:1-12, Ezek 18:5-9 & Eph 5:10, 17. And God will strengthen those who are weak & tired. Even those who are young grow weak; young people can fall exhausted. But those who trust in the LORD for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak. (Is 40:29-31) We discern that; if we live righteous life and work for salvation, God will keep us strong like an Iron Pillar & Bronze Wall against our ageing health. (Jer 1:18-19)

Further God said; If you return, I will take you back. You will be my servant again. If instead of talking nonsense, you proclaim worthwhile message. (God tells us to work for salvation) Then people will come to you. You will not need to go to them. God says; I will make you like a solid bronze wall as far as they- (all health issues) are concerned. Health issues will fight against you, but they will not defeat you. I will be with you to protect you and keep you safe from all health issues. I will rescue you, for I am your God. (Jer 15:19-21)

Further, if we avoid sin, live righteous life (Sir 38:9-10) and meditate on God's words day & night (Sir 6:37) and obey it, (Lk 11:28) then God will bless us with good health. For God said; My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen to my words. Never let them get away from you. Remember them and keep them in your

heart. They will give life and health to anyone who understands them. Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts. Never say anything that isn't true. Have nothing to do with lies and misleading words. Look straight ahead with honest confidence; don't hang your head in shame. Plan carefully what you do, and whatever you do will turn out right. Avoid evil and walk straight ahead. Don't go one step off the right way. (Prov 4: 20-27)

Word of God brings God's life-giving Spirit in us and gives life & good health, (Jn 6:63) because; "God's Words is a breath of God's power—a pure & radiant stream of glory from the Almighty. It is a reflection of eternal light, a perfect mirror of God's activity and goodness". (Wis 7:25-26) Where ever the Spirit of God/ Word of God/ the living water flows, it brings life and good health, (Ezek 47:8-12) because, Jesus said; "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Mt 4:4) So, accept God's Words with faith & obey it. You will be blessed with good health (Lk 11:27-28) and you can face all conditions. (Phil 4:13) King Solomon said; "No medicine or ointment cured them. They were restored to health by your word, O Lord, the word which heals all humanity." (Wis 16:12) And he said; "it is your word that maintains those who put their trust in you". (Wis 16:27) Yes, God's words will maintain good health in you, if you accept the word & obey the word.

Fear of losing life:

Human life is a precious gift from God. That's why God said; 'I have called you by name, you are mine; You are precious in my eyes.' (Is 43:1-4) The soul living in us is God's breath. He breaths an active soul into our body when we are conceived in mother's womb. (Wis 15:11) Our earthly life begins when God decides to give life because his words say; God sets the time for our birth. (Ecc 3:2)

God says; man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Mt4:4) So everything that happens to us is happening according to God's will (Is 55:8-11) at the time he decides. (Ecc 3:1) We cannot live a day longer as decreed by the Lord in his plan for us. (Mt 6:27) Even our hair does not fall unless God permits, for he says; even the hairs of your head have all been counted. (Mt 10:30) And our soul will depart from body when God decrees so, at the time he sets time for our death. (Ecc 3:2) "When the God the Most High has pronounces the final decree that a person shall die, his soul leaves the body to return to the one who gave it." (2 Esd 7:78) This is the truth about our life on earth! We must reconcile to the fact that; we are living because of God's mercy!

To those who fear about losing life and want to live long-life, God says:

- **My child, don't forget what I teach you. Always remember what I tell you to do. My teaching will give you a long & prosperous life.** And Long life is the reward of the righteous; Gray hair is a glorious crown. (Prov 3:1-2, Prov 4:10 & Prov 16:31)
- Obey the LORD & be humble. You will get riches, honor & will live a long life, content and safe from harm. (Prov 19:23, Prov 22:4)
- Obey all my laws so that all will go well for you. You will continue to live in the land that you are going to occupy. (Deut 5:33)
- If you want to enjoy life and wish to see good times you must keep from speaking evil and stop telling lies. (1 Pet 3:10)
- Respect your father & your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you. (Ex 20:12 & Eph 6: 2-3)
- Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things. (Including long life) (Mt 6:33)
- It is better to pray sincerely and to please God by helping the poor than to be rich and dishonest. It is better to give to the poor than to store up gold. Such generosity will save you from death and will wash away all your sins. Those who give to the poor will live full life. But those who are living in wickedness and sins are the one who desire for their own death. (Tobit 12:8-10)

God's Promises for protection & long life to obedient people: God says:

- I will save those who love me and will protect those who acknowledge me as LORD. When they call to me, I will answer them; when they are in trouble, I will be with them. **I will rescue them and honor them. I will reward them with long life; I will save them.** (Ps 91:14-16)
- I am the Shepherd who protect you from all dangers. His promises for protection are pronounced in Psalms 23 & Ezek 34 (Good Shepherd), Ps 91 & Ps 121. (God's protection)
- Your security comes from your righteousness and your splendour comes from your devotion to the Lord. (Baruch 5:4)
- I stretched out the heavens and laid foundation of the earth. I say to Jerusalem; 'You are my people! I have given you my teaching, and I protect you with my hand'. (Is 51:16)
- **I will be with you and protect you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you unless I have done all that I have promised you."** (Gen 28:15 & Heb 13:5)
- **And Jesus said; I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness.** (Jn 10:10)

Dear believers, God has promised us abundance of security and protection from all physical dangers of this sinful world. Also, he has promised protection in this spiritual world from dangers of evil spirits. (Is 51:12-13) You can experience God's protection if only you are loyal to him, faithful to him, and honour him in everything by keeping your Body, Soul and Spirit free from sin for your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 3:16) If you are sincere & faithful to him, and live a righteous life, God will protect your body and your children. And if you glorify God's spirit in your body where God lives, (1 Cor 6:19-21) God's mighty hand will be upon you (Is 41:10 & Josh 4:24) and his glorious Spirit will rest upon you. (1 Pet 4:14) God will also protect the wealth you earned honestly because he is a faithful God. Our God is faithful to all his promises. (2 Tim 2:13 & Ps 147:13)

Those who live in sinful bondages or sexual immorality will always live in fear of insecurity. Their sins will plant fear in mind. People who are dishonest, indulge in bribing stealing, deceiving, murdering & betraying will always live in fear. People who indulge in crime, hate, revenge, murder, rape, adultery & orgy will lose their confidence, because their sins will witness against them, (Is 59:12 & Jas 5:3) and destroy peace & rest. They cannot sleep in peace. **They will always live in the feeling of insecurity about everything, because, they will not enjoy God's protection.** (Psalms 22 :1 & Rom 1:21-31)

Finally, God assures righteous people that; like trees, they will live healthy and long life. He said:

- The righteous will flourish like palm trees; they will grow like Cedars of Lebanon. They are like trees planted in the house of the LORD, that flourish in the Temple of our God, that still bear fruit in old age. They are always green & strong. (Ps 92:12-14)
- People will build houses & live in them. They will not be used by others. They will plant vineyards & enjoy the wine. It will not be drunk by others. **Like trees, my people will live long lives & will fully enjoy the things that they have worked for.** (Is 65:21-22)

4. FEAR OF SICKNESS/DECEASES.

Fear of sickness / decease is a major concern for the people of present day, because; sickness and decease restrict all their activities. Sickness do not allow them to eat food of their desire and it destroys their ability to earn & enjoy good life. Further, people fear sickness/decease because it drains their finances & destroys wealth. Sickness is of different types. Many people are sick in their body. Some are sick in their mind and some are sick in soul. (Jer 17:9-10)

Now let us understand the truth about sickness.

When God created human beings, they were robust & healthy.

Their body did not have any deformity and they did not suffer from any sickness for, God cannot create something which is defective. He created everything so that it might continue to exist and everything he created is wholesome & good. (Wis 1:14) There was no defect in any of God's creation, for our God he is an awesome God. (Ps 147:2) And all creations reflect God's Glory. (Sirach 42: 15-25 and 43:1-33)

When God created human beings in good health, wholesome without decease/sickness or deformity, how sickness, decease & deformity captivated mankind? This is a very interesting question which needs to be answered, and it needs to be answered convincingly!

God who created human beings in wholesome & good health said; "Obey me in everything so that all will go well with you"! (Duet 5:32-33) Further, he said; I will make an eternal covenant with them. I will never stop doing good things for them. I will make them fear me with all their heart, so that they will never turn away from me. I will take pleasure in doing good things for them and I will establish them permanently in this land. (Jer 32:40-41) And Jesus said; Blessed are those who hear Word of God and obey it. (Lk 11:27-28)

Therefore, we discern that; 'for man to live healthy life, he should obey God's Laws'. And God has decreed that; "only in obedience to his laws, mankind will inherit all blessing through God's promises". (Duet 28:1-14 & Lev 26:3-13) Yes, when we obey his laws, God's Spirit burns around us as a wall of fire and preserves our health and other blessings from the evil spirits. (Zech 2:5) But when we sin, we dig a hole in the wall of fire which is burning around us and invite the evil spirits in us. And they shoulder the burden of sin upon us & escape through the hole which we dug for them in the wall of fire. (Ezek 12:11-12) **When the evil spirits enter our body, they captivate our mind for sin, make us slaves and abuse our body to commit sin again & again. Thus, we become a slave for sin.** (Jn 8:34)

When sin enter our body, it brings death along with it. (Rom 5:12) Yes, the power of sin works like a virus in the computer. The power of sin will slowly and progressively destroy our body through sickness; 'for the nature of sin is destruction'! That is why Jesus said; the Satan comes to steal, kill & destroy. (Jn 10:10) By committing sin, we invite evil spirits to abide in our body. Once the evil spirits abide in us, they will bind our internal organs and progressively we

will lose our health. (Wis 17:17 & Ps 107:10-13) Thus people suffer from diabetes, kidney ailment, paralysis, cancer, intestine ailments, BP & so on. If we sin, the evil spirits will bind our body to destroy us. This truth was revealed by the miracles performed by Jesus Christ.

- When Jesus healed a paralysed man lowered from the roof, he said to him; 'your sins are forgiven. Then the man was healed and he went home walking'. (Lk 5: 17-26)
- Jesus healed a man lying near the Bethesda pool for 38 years. Later when he met him, he said to him; "do not sin any more, else, much worse thing would happen to you". (Jn 5:1-14)

Consequently, Jesus revealed the relation between 'Sin & Sickness'. Yes, the relation between 'Sin & Sickness' has been explained by King Solomon in Proverbs Chapters 3,4 & 5 for us to read and understand.

Now let us understand the truth about deformity in body.

With regard to deformity in the body, God says; 'do not invite curse upon yourself' by displeasing poor people who are in need! Yes, God says; My child, don't prevent the poor people from making a living, or keep them waiting in their need. **Never give a hungry person any cause for resentment or anger. Don't add to the troubles of someone who is already desperate. If he is in need, don't put off giving to him. Don't refuse to help a beggar who is in distress. Don't turn your back on a poor person or give him any reason to curse you. If he becomes so bitter that he does curse you, his Creator will hear his prayer.** (Sir 4:1-6) Yes, if a poor person curses you for whatever bad things you have done to him, then his prayers will be answered by God. And whatever curse he pronounces on you in his distress will become reality in your life. That's how we take curse upon ourselves. Because of poor people's curse, children are born with deformity, many tragedies happens and people do not prosper.

Such unfortunate things happens not because God has cursed us. Yes, God does not curse any one (Num 23:8) because, we are created in his own image (Gen 1:27) and God loves us with an everlasting love. (Jer 31:3) It is we who invite curse upon ourselves by our stupidity. It could be that; we may have caused grievous hurt to someone by wounding their feelings, (or) not keeping up the promise we made to them, (or) betraying them, (or) by denying their rightful belongings/rights (or) committing murder (or) by not helping a poor person who was in distress in spite of being in the position to help him. **Such person who was grievously wounded in his soul by us may have cursed us. The curse of the wounded person will affect us.**

Otherwise, to the best of our knowledge & in conscious mind we may not have caused any such grievous hurt to any person. But it may be our forefathers up to previous third or fourth generation who may have caused such grievous hurt to anyone in distress in the manner as written in the previous para and have invited their curse upon themselves. **Such curse will affect us and our children in way of chronic decease or deformity or by way of unfortunate happening in the family. Yes, curse of a poor person will affect our generations.**

For, God said; I bring punishment on those who hate me and, on their descendants, down to the third and fourth generation. But I show my love to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my laws. (Ex 20:4-5) Yes, God said; I keep my promise for thousands of generations and forgive evil & sin; but I will not fail to punish children & grandchildren to the third & fourth generation for the sins of their parents. (Ex 34:17) **Yes, God warns us that; "Our sins will affect our descendants up to third and fourth generations".**

So, it is important for us to introspect our life to understand the cause for sickness and reconcile ourselves to truth and live a changed life. If we are suffering due to sickness/decease, first thing we should do is to introspect ourselves, repent for sins and confess them to receive God's forgiveness. When sins are forgiven, our body will recover from sickness. Yes, God says; confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you will be healed. The prayer of a good person has a powerful effect. (Jas 5:16) **In the verge of death King Hezekiah repented and confessed his sins to the Lord. The Lord did not bring death on him but forgave his sins and healed his sickness. And God gave him fifteen more yeas to live. (Is38:1-9)**

Sickness of Mind: Concerning sickness of mind, we should know that our mind will be shaped by our habits and attitude. Our habits are formed and our attitude is nurtured by what we think and what we do! God said; Be mindful of your thoughts and actions because your life will be shaped by your thoughts & actions. (Prov 4:23-27) If your thoughts are evil, your actions will also be evil. If your thoughts are evil, your mind will be sick, because your mind will dwell in darkness, lest, you will realise the light of Christ shining on you. (Is 60:19-20) Jesus said; the light has come into the world, but people love darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil. (Jn 3:19) **If our thoughts are evil, our mind will be sick and our attitude will be indifferent. And this is how people live with sick mind.**

God said;_Who can understand the human heart? There is nothing else so deceitful; it is too sick to be healed. I, the LORD,

search the minds and test the hearts of people. I treat each of them according to the way they live, according to what they do.” (Jer 17:9-10) That is why St Paul said; “Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good & is pleasing to him and is perfect”. (Rom 12:2)

Further he said; The Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, his Spirit fills us with power, love, and self-control”. (2 Tim 1:7) You have been raised to life with Christ; so, set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. **For you have died & your life is hidden with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ. When he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory! (Col 3:1-4)** This is how a person living with sick mind can overcome his sickness!

Sickness of heart & soul: Concerning sickness of heart & soul we must know what Jesus said. He said; the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these are the things that make you ritually unclean. From a man’s heart come evil ideas which lead him to kill, commit adultery, and do other immoral things; to rob, lie and slander others. These are the things that makes people unclean. (Mt 15:19-20) **From our heart comes, jealousy, envy, pride, vengeance, revenge, anger, lust, greed, unfaithfulness, hate, sadness, wickedness and cruelty. All these negative attitudes are the infliction of evil spirit in our soul which make our heart and soul sick.**

To overcome this evil infliction, one need to fast & pray, read Bible at least twice a day, meditate on God’s words day & night. (Sir 6:37) The insight & understanding which Word of God gives him will deliver him from all negative attitudes. His heart & soul will be delivered & healed. It will happen because Jesus promised; I will give them a new heart & a new mind. I will take away their stubborn heart of stone and will give them an obedient heart. (Ezek 11:19 & 36:26)

Fear of sickness hunts every one, because; we do not obey God & believe in his promises. God promised;

- 1.** Why spend money on what does not satisfy? (Use wealth wisely for God’s glory) Why spend all your wages and still be hungry. (we spend on medicines) Listen to me what I say. (Obey my teachings and commandments) You will enjoy the best of food of all. (Is 55:2)
- 2.** Pay attention my son. Listen to my words. Never let them get away from you. Remember and keep them in your heart. They will give life & health to anyone who understands them. (Prov 4:20-23)

3. But for you who obey me, my saving power will raise on you like the sun's rays. You will be as free and happy as calves let out of stall, free from all sickness. (Malachi 4:2)
4. Purify yourselves, because tomorrow the Lord will perform miracles among you. (Joshua 3:5) (The Lord will heal your sickness if you repent and turn away from sins and confess them. (Jas 5:16)
5. If you obey me completely by doing what I consider right, by keeping my commandments, I will not punish you with deace that I brought on Egyptians. I am the Lord who heals you. (Ex 15:26)
6. If you worship me the Lord your God (if we honour God above all things), I will bless you with food and water and take away all your illness. In your land no woman will have miscarriage or be without children. I will give you long life. (Ex 23:25-26)
7. You will build house and live in it. Your house will not be used by others. You will plant vineyards and enjoy the wine—it will not be drunk by others. Like trees, you will live long life. You will fully enjoy the things that you have worked for. The work you do will be successful, and your children will not meet with disaster. I will bless you and your descendants for all time to come. (Is 65:21-23)

Our loving God repeatedly warns us saying; only in obedience to his commandments, (Ex 20:1-17) teachings (Mt:1-45) and inspired messages given by the Holy Spirit (1Thes 5:19-22) we enjoy good health and long life like trees". (Is 65:21-23) To those who obey him in everything, God assures his promise that; "No medicine or ointment will heal them. They will be restored to health by 'My Words', the Word which heals all humanity." (Wisdom 16:12) Further, God assures "It is My Words that maintains (good health in) those who put trust in me." (Wisdom 16:26) So stop worrying about your health and give up fear on sickness. Learn to do what pleases the Lord & obey him in everything. (Eph 5:10,17) For God's teachings comes from the heavenly throne, (Mic 4:2) and it gives good health to those who obey them. Jeremiah said; **Whether it pleases us or not, we will obey the LORD our God, to whom we are asking you to pray. All will go well with us if we obey him.**" (Jer 42:6)

5. FEAR OF WITCHCRAFT & BLACK MAGIC.

The heart and mind of man are so evil that he does not like to see wellbeing and prosperity in his neighbours. (Gen 6:5-7, Jer 17:9-10 & Mt 15:18-19) And people are so jealous that they do not like to see their neighbours living happily in harmony. Such attitude creeps in mind because they do not worship Jesus who is God of love! If the Spirit of Jesus abides in them, they will love others (Mt 22:39)

like themselves as Jesus Christ commanded. But what we see in this world is, people are filled with selfishness and greed. So, they burn with envy & jealousy when they see progress in others and they lose sleep over it. Their jealous attitude drives them to make plans to destroy the progress of neighbours and harmony in their family. So, they indulge in witchcraft or black magic to destroy others wellbeing and prosperity. It is true that such wicked practices will destroy people's life against whom witchcraft or black magic had been done. Consequently, people always fear about witchcraft and black magic.

To those who fear witchcraft and black magic, God assures them, that; he himself will burn around them as a wall of fire and protect them from the wicked spiritual forces and witchcraft & black magic can't harm the righteous people. Yes, God has promised that:

- He himself will be a wall of fire round the city (his righteous children) to protect it and he will live there in all his glory. (Zech 2:5) Yes, God's Spirit will burn around us to protect us from evil forces if we live righteous life, as spoken by God in Ps 15, Ezek 18:5-9 & Is 58:1-12.
- The righteous will live on for ever. The Lord will reward them; the Most High will protect them. He will give his Royal Splendour and a magnificent crown. He will shield righteous people with his powerful arm. He will go out into battle determined to defeat our enemies and use creation itself as his weapon." (Wis 5:15-17)
- This is what the LORD has said about the Assyrian emperor (Witchcraft & Blackmagic): 'He will not enter this city or shoot a single arrow against it. (Witch craft & black magic will not have power over the righteous) No soldiers with shields will come near the city, and no siege mounds will be built around it. He will go back by the same road he came, without entering this city. I, the LORD, have spoken. I will defend this city and protect it, for the sake of my own honor and because of the promise I made to my servant David. (Is 37:33-35)
- **The powers of witchcraft and black magic will not work against righteous people. Yes, God promised that; "There is no magic charm, no witchcraft that can be used against the nation Israel.** (Num 23:23)
- *Because, the Goodness of the Lord and his glorious presence will always be with all Israel, (1 Esdras 5:61) and God will lead Israel home. They will return with great joy, (live safely & happily) guided by his mercy and righteousness, surrounded by the light of his glorious presence. (Baruch 5:9)*

God wants; we should honour him in all things, (Jer 32:39) and live righteous life. He says; even lions may go hungry, but those who obey me will lack nothing, (Ps 34:10) for, I do not withhold anything good for righteous people. (Ps 84:11) Yes, in all things God does everything good for those who are righteous. (Rom 8:28) **If we do not live righteous life & trust God's promises, then we will continue to live in fear of witchcraft & black magic. There will be no end to it!**

6. FEAR OF COURT CASE & INJUSTICE.

People have aversion/fear to hear the words; Court & Justice. Because most of the times, justice is perverted in Courts. People do everything possible to hide truth and pervert justice. They also bribe authorities to corrupt justice. This is the fact of life. So, people fear that they may be denied justice which they rightfully deserve. Such thing is very common in present days and we come across poor and weak who are the victims for such misfortune. **But the Lord assures Justice to the poor and weak. When Justice is denied, the Lord says;**

- Do not take revenge friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written; revenge is mine. I will repay, says the Lord. (Rom 12:19 & Heb 10:30)
- May those who accuse others falsely not succeed, (Ps 140:12) for the "Lord will fight those who fight against you and rescue you. (Is 49:25)
- He will defend you and protect you for the sake of his own honour. (Is 37:35) No weapon will be able to hurt you; you will have an answer for all who accuse you. God will defend his servants and give them victory. (Is 54: 17)
- God will do what is right: he will bring suffering on those who make you suffer and he will give relief to you who suffer. Even if you die without justice, he will restore justice when Jesus appears from heaven with his mighty angels. (2 Thes 1:6-7)
- God says; Do not pay back evil with evil or cursing with cursing; instead, pay back with a blessing, because a blessing is what God promised to give you when he called you. (1Pet 3:9)
- **In this legal battle you will succeed not by military might or by your own power but by God's Spirit. The obstacles as great as mountains will disappear before you, (Zach 4:6-7) because; this legal battle belongs to the Lord. (2 Chr 20:15 & 1 Sam 17:147)**

In God's kingdom justice may be delayed, but justice will not be denied. If we do not trust in God's promises, we will give in to fear. Happy are those who remain faithful under trials, because when they succeed in passing such a test, they will receive as their reward the life which God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

7. FEAR OF DREAMS

Many people have violent dreams while sleeping, which gives them fear. Such dreams do not allow them to sleep peacefully.

Because of such fear, they cannot sleep alone. They need someone to sleep next to them and they also disturb the whole family at night. Such violent dreams are caused by the evil spirits which doesn't allow them to enjoy peace (Jn14:27) & rest (Mt11:28) Jesus gives at night.

To such people God assures peace & rest at night. He says; "When you lie down, you go to sleep in peace, I alone will keep you perfectly safe." (Ps 4:8) Also, he says; Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding will keep your hearts & minds safe in union with Christ Jesus when you sleep. (Phil 4:6-7) And Jesus says; "I have told you this so that you will have peace by being united to me. (John 16:33)

People who are getting disturbed in sleep by dreams must claim Christ's promises for peace and rest every day. For Jesus has promised;

- Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace I give you. I do not give like the world does. Do not be worried and upset and do not be afraid. (Jn 14:27)
- Come to me all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads and I will give you rest." (Mt 11:28)
- It is useless to work so hard for a living, getting up early and going to bed late. For the LORD provides "peace & rest" for those he loves, while they are asleep. (Ps 127:1-2)
- My child, hold on to your wisdom and insight. Never let them get away from you. They will provide you with life—a pleasant and happy life. You can go safely on your way and never even stumble. (You will sleep without disturbance) You will not be afraid when you go to bed, and you will sleep soundly through the night. (Prov 3:21-24)
- The LORD will give the people of Israel relief from their pain and suffering (relief from the wild dreams) and from the hard work they were forced to do. (So, you will sleep in peace and enjoy the rest that Jesus gives at night) (Is 14:3)
- The LORD has promised that he himself will be a wall of fire around the city (you & your family) to protect it and give peace & rest. And that he will live with you in all his glory. (Zech 2:5)
- **Finally, Jesus promised; I will take them out of foreign countries, gather them together, and bring them back to their own land. I**

will lead them back to the mountains and the streams of Israel and will feed them in pleasant pastures. I will let them graze in safety in the mountain meadows and the valleys and in all the green pastures of the land of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep. I will find them a place to rest. (To rest peacefully at sleep) I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken. (Ezek 34:13-15)

People who are disturbed by dreams at night must read Psalms 4 every night, before they sleep. They must accept God's promises given above in faith, so that they will experience God's power and sleep in peace. Else, they will continue to live in fear of bad dreams & lose peace, rest which Jesus offers; for he is the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6-7) and a Good Shepherd who gives rest. (Psalms 23:1-6) It is a good practice to pray Rosary to Mary, mother of Jesus who is our guardian. The Satan fears her because, she keeps him under her feet. He will not disturb you. You will be at peace at night.

8. FEAR OF BEING ALONE - FEAR OF LONELINESS:

This world calls the loneliness as a psychological decease or mental disorder. People of this world who do not know Christ suffer from this decease-loneliness. **For that matter, even Christians who do not take words of Christ seriously, and do not accept the promises of Christ also suffer from this decease-loneliness!** They always feel alone though they live with their family and siblings. Such awful thing is happening to them because, they are blind for the presence of Christ who lives in them, for the Scriptures says; "The Spirit of Christ who is in you is more powerful than the spirits those who belong to the world". (1 Jn 4:4) Yes, Christ lives in us, for the Bible says; Christ has poured out his Spirit on you. As long as his Spirit remains in you, you do not need anyone to teach you. For his Spirit teaches you about everything, and what he teaches is true, not false. Obey the Spirit's teaching, then, and remain in union with Christ. (1 Jn 2 :27)

Because people do not know scriptures and even if they know, they do not believe in Word of God. Hence, they fail to realise the presence of Christ in them and his presence is moving with them, for, the LORD has promised that; he himself will be a wall of fire around the city (you) to protect it and that he will live there (live in our body) in all his glory." (Zech 2:5) Jesus said I will not leave you like orphans. (Jn 14:18) **I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever.** He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive him, because

it cannot see him or know him. But you know him, because he remains with you and he is in you. (Jn14:16-17) **Yes, Jesus promised:**

- **That; I will never leave us or forsake us. (Heb 13:5)**
- **I will be with you always to the end of the age. (Mt 28:18-20)**

Jesus said; even though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit. (Col 2:5) But what believers fail to understand is:

- That; Christ is present in Word of God, for the Scriptures says; Jesus is the Word of God. (Jn 1:1-3 & Rev 19:13)
- That; if we live with Word of God, meditating on it day & night (Sir 6:37) we can feel Christ's presence moving in & around us.
- **That; Jesus said 'Remain united to me, (through my words) and I will remain united to you. You cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me'. (Jn 15:4-5) We must realise that; 'without Christ's presence in us, we cannot do anything'**
- That; Christ lives in us, for he says; Surely you know that you are God's temple & that Christ's Spirit lives in you! (1 Cor 3:16)
- That; Jesus promised, "No one will be able to defeat you as long as you live. I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will always be with you; I will never abandon you". (Josh 1:5)
- That; Jesus promised, 'Remember, I have commanded you to be determined & confident! Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, am with you wherever you go. (Josh 1:9)
- That; Jesus has promised; "Do not be afraid—I am with you! I am your God—let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you. "Those who are angry with you will know the shame of defeat. Those who fight against you will die and will disappear from the earth. I am the LORD your God; I strengthen you and tell you, 'Do not be afraid; I will help you.'" (Is 41:10-13)
- St Paul said; as you meet together, and I meet with you in my spirit by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ who is present with us in Spirit." (1 Cor 5:4) Yes, Christ's Spirit is living in us!

People of this world are blind for the truth that "we are never alone in this world", because; Christ's presence always surrounds us. To experience his presence, we must enrich/fill ourselves with his life-giving words (Jn 6:63 & 68) and meditate on it. (Sir 6:37) People who experience loneliness must sit in worship before sunrise between 3 & 6 am, to experience the awesome presence of Christ who will reveal himself to them and guide them in all difficult situations by his words (Is 30:20-22) and counsel them in all problems. (1 John 2:27)

It is very important for people who suffer from loneliness to meditate on Word of God Day & Night, to gain understanding & insight (Sir 6:37) on how Christ's presence will renew their spirit day-by-day (2 Cor 4:16) to give them New Life by his Spirit, (Zep 3:17) and how his words will guide their feet & lead them in his light. (Ps 119:105) Those who obey Christ's words, will taste and see how good Jesus Christ is! (Ps 34:8) **Yes, we are never alone because, Jesus has promised; I will be with you always to the end of the age. (Mt 28:18-20) But the Satan deceives us for the truth that; Christ's presence is in us and around us always.** Consequently, people of the world do not believe, because; "their minds have been kept in the dark by the evil god of this world. He deceives them in truth that; Christ is living in them & his presence always surrounds them. (2 Cor 4:4) **So dear believer in Jesus, no one can separate us from the presence of Christ. (Rom 8:38-39). So, you are never alone in this world. (Psalms 23:4)**

God has promised his children that he will remain with them forever. God's Promises for his continued presence with us are given below:

I have called you by name and you are mine, when you pass through a deep sea of trouble, I will be with you. Your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, it will not burn you. The hard trials that come will not hurt you, for; I am the Lord your God, the Holy God of Israel, who saves you. (Isaiah 43:1-5)

Israel my servant, you are the people I have chosen from the ends of the earth. I do not reject you, but chose you. "Do not fear, I am with you. I am your God, let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you. Those who are angry with you will know the shame of defeat. Those who fight against you will die and disappear from earth (Is 41:8 -12) Small and weak you are Israel, do not be afraid and I will help you. I, the holy God of Israel, am the one who saves you. (Isaiah 41:14)

Apart from these promises, God says that; he will be our shepherd to guide us and to protect us. He said; "I will look for those who are lost, bring back those that are wandered off, bandage those that are hurt, heal those that are sick. I myself will be a shepherd of my sheep and I will find them a place to rest. I, the Sovereign Lord have spoken". (Ezr 34:15-16) Finally Jesus said; "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." (Heb 13:5) If we refuse to accept these Words in faith and lose the sight of these promises, we will continue to live in fear of loneliness.

9. FEAR OF DEATH:

The word 'Death' sends ripples in mind & our body shivers, because we know that after death, we will enter in to an unknown world leaving our dear & near ones, and all our possessions. No one like or desire death because we are very passionate about our life on earth and our possessions. Hence, we like to live on earth endlessly.

Let us understand what the Bible says about our life & death: The Bible acknowledges that; We were existing even before we were born, because God said: I have known you even before you were conceived in mother's womb. I have chosen you to be my servant before you were born. (Jer1:4-5) **Therefore, unless we were existing in spiritual body before our birth on this earth, God would not have spoken saying; he knew us even before we were conceived.**

God chooses the time for our birth: At the time God chose for us we were conceived for our parents whom he has chosen and are born at the time chosen by him, for; "God sets time for birth". (Eccl 3:2)

Our life depends on God's plan: Our life on earth is determined by God according to his plan, for he said; "I alone know the plan I have for you; the plan for prosperity not disaster. The plans to bring about the good future you hope for." (Jer 29:11) According to his plan, God has chosen our parents, gender, physique, profession, our spouse & children, all other blessings & time for our death. (Eccl 3:2)

We die on earth when God pronounce death for us: At a time decided by God (on completion of God's plan for us), our soul departs from our body. (Ecc 3:2) The Scripture says; When God the Most High has pronounces the final decree that a person shall die, the soul departs from our body & returns to the one who gave it. (2 Esd 7:78)

Now we discern that our spiritual body/soul existed & remained with God before we were born. When we were conceived, God breathed a soul in our physical body and that's how we become human beings. Then, we are born at the time chosen by God and live according to his plan. We die when God pronounces death. Our soul departs from body on accomplishment of the purpose for which our soul was sent.

Consequently, we understand that:

- *Our birth is a transformation from spiritual being in the heavenly world in to a physical being on this earth.*
- *And, our death is a transformation from our physical being on earth back to spiritual being/spiritual life which is eternal life.*

In this transformation i.e., after death, we will meet our Creator and live with him eternally, if we have lived a life pleasing him. This is the eternal life which Jesus promised us. (Jn 11:25-26)

In eternal life we will live by sharing God's glory, for the Bible says;

- Jesus prayed to his Father! You have given them to me (His believers) and I want them to be with me where I am, (in the heaven) so that they may see (and share) my glory, the glory you gave me; for you loved me before the creation. (Jn 17:24)
- Those whom Jesus had already chosen (we are chosen-Jn 15:16) he also set apart to become like his Son, so that the Son would be the first among many believers. And so, those whom God set apart, he called; and those he called, he put right with himself, and he shared his glory with them. (Rom 8:29-30)
- God's plan is to make known his secret to his people, this rich and glorious secret which he has for all peoples. And the secret is that Christ is in you, which means that you will share in the glory of God. (in your eternal life) (Col 1:27)
- All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord, who is the Spirit, transforms us into his likeness in an ever-greater degree of glory. (2 Cor 3:18)

Therefore, after death our eternal life will be a joyful spiritual life in God's presence, away from pain & sufferings of this world. (2 Esd 8:52-54) So dear believers, death came to people who lived before us. It will come to us & it will come to people who will be born after us. (Sir41:1-4) We must understand; death is transformation of our life from physical being in to spiritual being. (1 Cor 15:20-58)

Hence, fearing death will in no way help us in avoiding it. Rather we should be glad, hoping for the day when we will leave this world of misery and enter in the world of joyful bliss to live with Jesus Christ. For God said;” *You have been raised with Christ. So, set your hearts on things that are in heaven where Christ sits on his throne on the right-hand side of God the Father. Keep your mind fixed on things in heaven and not on things on earth. For your life is hidden with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ. When he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)*

Regarding the transformation of our physical life on this earth to a spiritual life after death, Jesus said;

- *Those who live a life pleasing God, doing his will be given the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life that grows in the Garden of God. (Rev 2:7) This is the eternal life which he promised us.*

- *To those who win the victory I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give each of them a white stone on which is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it. (Rev 2:17)*
- *To those who win the victory, who continue to the end to do what I want, I will give the same authority that I received from my Father; I will give them authority over the nations, to rule them with an iron rod and to break them to pieces like clay pots. I will also give them the morning star. (Rev 2:26-28)*
- *This is the 'Joy' that awaits in death for those who believe in Christ and live a righteous life, pleasing him. (Eph 5:10 and 17)*

If you understand this spiritual truth and accept this life on earth as only temporary phase and our permanent living place is heaven in God's presence, you will overcome fear of death.

10. FEAR ABOUT FINANCE:

This world teaches us that; money is the source of life and that money is everything & money can buy all things. Yes, people live with the attitude that; with money power they can do all things. Certainly, it is true that we need money to live and do God's will. Yes, we cannot even preach Gospel, or attend church worship, or attend any prayer service/convention or do any kind of ministry without money. **Unfortunately, money has taken centre place in people's life "but not God". That's how money has taken "precedence over God" in our life.** Because of this attitude, fear settles down in people's mind, for the reason "money is not certain in life". We all know; money may come & money may go away from us at a time we least expect. There is no guarantee that money, the possessions & wealth we earned will remain with us always, for; events that are happening in this world are not certain, they keep changing. Because nothing is certain in this world, people always live in anxiety/worries.

Yes, there are many uncertainties about money. For the sake of money, people cheat, betray & commit murder. Money which people invest in share market gets lost in a day. Money invested in bank do not return for the banks become insolvent suddenly. Gold, they keep in bank lockers is looted. Money, they gave as loan cannot not be recovered, because the loanee has become bankrupt. Siblings engage in court case for money/property issues. Families are broken because of property. People indulge in witch craft and black magic to destroy their own siblings and family members for the sake of money and property. **And there is no end for fight among people for money. There are many uncertainties about money which brings fears in us.**

GOD IS CERTAIN.

But God is certain in our life and our God is a generous God.

He is the provider of all good things. (Jas 1:17) If we honour God who is certain, worship him/place him above all things in life (Duet 10:12 & Jer 32:39) do everything in the name of the Lord (Col 3:17) and worship him before sunrise, (Wis 6:12-21) then, God who is the provider, (Ps 145:16-19) will provide money and wealth that we need generously (Jas 1:5) to live righteous life. Further, God will also protect the wealth which he has given us and make us prosper. (Jer Jer 32:40-41) People fail to realise that; "Wealth, prosperity & good future comes from the hands of God." Because, God said; "I alone know the plan I have for you; the plan for prosperity not disaster. The plans to bring about the good future you hope for". (Jer 29:11) God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause. (2 Cor 9:8, 1Tim 6:17-18) Yes, wealth comes from God.

About wealth God said; "By my great power and strength I created everything on this earth, the mankind and all the animals that live on earth; and I give it to any one whom I choose. (Jer 27:5)

God's words give a clear understanding that money/ property/wealth comes from the hands of God and he gives wealth to the one whom he chooses! Unfortunately, people do not realise that we are the people chosen by God, for he said; "Before you were born, I have chosen you." (Jer 1:4-5) "You did not choose me, but I chose you to bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures". (Jn 15:16) And "You are the chosen generation the King's Priest, the holy nation, chosen to proclaim wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness in to his marvellous light. (1 Pet 2:9) Yes, you are chosen by God to do his work, for he said; "People of Israel, you are my witnesses; I chose you to be my servant, so that you would know me, believe in me and be my witnesses to the ends of the earth". (Is 43:10-12 & Acts 1:8)

Since we are chosen by God to be his witnesses, we will receive the wealth which God has planned to give us to live righteous life, but not lavish life. Unless God decides to give us wealth according to his plan for us, (Jer 29:11) we cannot not have wealth how much ever we struggle to accumulate it.

However, to the chosen people (you are chosen) God said, you should live righteously to inherit wealth from him. We become righteous when we repose unconditional faith in God. (Romans 4:13)

➤ ***A righteous person lives according to God's Laws; as written***

- in Ex 20:1-20, Ps 15:1-6, Ezkl 18:5-9 & Is 58:1-12.
- A righteous person worships Jesus every day before sunrise as spoken by King Solomon in Wisdom 6:12-21.
 - A righteous person will give one tenth of his earning to God, for God said; "bring full amount of your tithes to the temple, so that there will be plenty of food there. Put me to test and you will see that; I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you abundance of all kind of good things. I will not let insect to destroy your crops & your grape vines will be loaded with grapes. Then people of all nations will call you happy, because your land will be good place to live in. (Mal 3:10-12)
 - If we live righteous life in this manner, then, we will lack nothing in our finance, because; God does not withhold anything good for the righteous person. (Ps 84:11)
 - It is useless to work so hard for a living, getting up early and going to bed late. For the LORD provides for righteous, while they are asleep. (Ps 127:2)
 - Further, he promised; Righteous men will be happy and things will go well for them. They will be able to enjoy everything that they have worked for. (Is 3:10) Yes, God will provide everything we need if we are righteous. We will lack nothing.

Dear believer, are you always worried about wealth and fear about your finances? Introspect your life according to the word of God given in this discourse to know whether you are living righteous life? If not, change the way you live, so that God may provide you everything more than you need for all good purposes. (2 Cor 9:8) Then all your fears about your wealth & finance will flee. Your house will be blessed with all good things that you could ever think of, for God's words says; "what no one ever saw or heard, what no one ever thought could happen, is the very thing God prepared for those who love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9, Jeremiah 32 :39-42 & Micah 3:10-12)

From his abundant wealth through Jesus, God will provide all your needs. (Phil 4:19) God will fill your barns with all good things, for, "The Lord is the provider of all good things. He supplies needs of those who honour him. (Ps 145:19) Even lions may go hungry, but those who honour the Lord will lack nothing, (Ps34:9-10) for, God is the provider for the Body, (1Cor 6:13) and he himself will be all you need. (Sir 45:22) So, you will have no cause to worry about finance, and you will get over your fear about wealth. You will always have more than enough for yourself to live righteously & do good deeds. God wants you to witness him with all you have and glorify him, for he said; "They are my people. I created them to glorify me". (Is43:7)

11. FEAR ABOUT MARITAL RELATION & CHILD BIRTH:

Many young people have fear about marital relation & fear about bearing children. Yes, young men have a fear that; will they be able to satisfy their spouse in their martial obligations? This is fear of opposite sex and they fear about conjugal relation. Some young women have fear about marriage and about bearing children. Even if they marry, they fear to indulge in conjugal relation due to various reasons based on their past bad experiences. All such fears are only imaginary! All such fears come to a person who is not aware of truth on what God spoke about marriage, conjugal relation & about women giving birth to children. Thus, lack of knowledge causes fear in them.

A Man may have fear about his ability or capacity to fulfil obligations towards his spouse in martial relation, because;

- **His perseverance about marriage is; 'it is only meant for sex'.** He looks at a woman an object of sex, instead of accepting them as human being created in image of God, (Gen 1:27) & their body is temple of the Holy Spirit. (1Cor3:16) Also, he is not aware; in conjugal relation couples glorify God (Is 43:7) and God is pleased with a couple who live in love. (Sir 25:1)
- **Because of his perception that; marriage is meant only for sex;** he may be in the habit of watching pornography / reading books on dirty sex/enjoying virtual sex and been indulging in self-abuse (masturbation) since young age to satisfying his sexual desires. Such orientation of mind about marriage coupled with the habit of masturbation will make him to lose confidence in himself on his ability to fulfil marital obligations.
- **Having habituated to the act of self-abuse, he will become an introvert.** Consequently, will lose confidence in himself to indulge in healthy conjugal relation & fulfil martial obligations.
- **Since his mind is already biased on healthy martial relation** and he lost confidence, fear sets in his mind and consequently he gets in-capacitated for healthy martial relation in his mind, but not in his body. It is a psychological disorder.
- **If he lives in a mindset that he has no capacity to engage in healthy conjugal relation,** he will lose faith in himself and thus fear will take over him. He can't prove to be a good husband.

Similarly, some women have fear about marriage and raising children, because:

- **They may have been kept in captivity and abused sexually** in their young age which makes them to fear; that in marriage their husband may also abuse them sexually & torture them.

- They may have been sexually abused and tortured at a very young age by their own relatives/friends/neighbours which may have caused fear in them about marriage.
- They may have been raped/gang raped, which must have instilled terror/fear in their mind about conjugal relation.
- They may have been exposed to the cruelty which their mother has experienced from her husband which may have caused aversion/hatred in mind about marriage.
- They are exposed to the cruelty which married women in the society are subjected to by their husband from the news media. Such awareness brings fear in them about marriage and conjugal relation.
- They are exposed to many deaths caused to young mothers due to complications in pregnancy or medical negligence, which causes them fear in them to bear children.
- They are also aware about the medical problems which the new born children undergo, such; as downs syndrome, birth defects, neurological problems, cerebral palsy & other serious complications which brings fear in them to raise children.

To a person who lives in such fears, God says; I have called you by name, you are mine. Do not fear! (Is 43:1-2) I created you to glorify me by doing my will. (Is 43:7) My will for you is to multiply & fill the earth with your children (Gen1:28) like the stars of the sky & the sands of the sea. (Gen 22:17 & Ex 32:13) For you to multiply & prosper, I will provide you strength, confidence and capacity from abundance of my wealth (Phil 4:19) for, I am the provider for your body. (1 Cor 6:13) **Do not be afraid. I am with you! I am your God. Let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong & help you.** (Is 41:10)

The LORD says; I strengthen you & tell you, 'Do not be afraid; I will help you. Small and weak as you are, Israel, don't be afraid; I will help you. (Is 41:13-14) **Today, I am giving you the strength to resist your fears and to overcome them; you will be like a fortified city, an iron pillar & bronze wall. (Strong to fulfil marital obligations) Your fears will not defeat you, for I will be with you to protect and give strength. (Jer 1:18-19) I will make you like a solid bronze wall as far as your fears are concerned. Your fears will fight against you, but they will not defeat you. I will be with you to protect you & keep you safe. I will rescue you from all fears & give capacity, confidence to fulfil marital obligations. I, the LORD, have spoken.** (Jer 15:20-21)

Those people who live with fear about marriage/child birth must know that; 'When a marriage is solemnised by a Priest in the

RC Church, the couple is united by God himself as one body and they are no more two persons. (Mat19:5-6) In marriage, God anoint them by the power of Holy Spirit and enriches them in all graces, wisdom, strength and understanding to live a healthy marital life, to satisfy emotional and physical needs of their spouse and live happily in love.

The anointment of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament– Marriage, provides the couple all their needs for healthy conjugal relation, for; God is the provider of the body. (1 Cor 6:13) After confessing sins before marriage, the couple must forget all their past sinful habits and all past bad experiences. They must look ahead on what God has in store for them, instead of holding on to their past bad experiences. *God says; Do not cling to the events of the past, or dwell on events that happened long ago. Watch out for new things that I am about to do. It is happening already-you can see it now. I will make roads through wilderness and give you streams of water there. (Is 43:18)*

It is very important for people who live in fear about conjugal relation & child birth to understand, that; In conjugal relation & child birth, we glorify God. About our body, God said; **Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in you (1 Cor 3:16)** and you do not belong to yourself but to God, for he bought us for a price-blood of Jesus. (1 Cor 6:19-20) And about marriage, people must understand that;

- Marriage is an institution blessed by God for pro-creation and for human beings to live in love and enjoy life. (Gen 1:27-28)
- In marriage husband & wife become one body. They are no more two persons. (Mt 19:5-6) Hence, Adam said to Eve; you are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. (Gen 2:23)
- Marriage was instituted by God so that husband & wife will live to gather till death to take care the children born to them, and make them truly God's people lest they are left as orphans. (Mal 2:13-16)
- Marriage was instituted by God, for human beings to live a disciplined life & righteous life pleasing God. (Exodus 20:14, 2 Thes 4:3-8 & Heb 13:4)
- In marriage, a wife is not the master of her own body, but her husband is; in the same way a husband is not the master of his own body, but his wife is. (1 Cor 7:4)
- God wants; husbands must love their wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. Men should love their wives just as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. (Eph 5:25-28)
- God takes delight in married couple who live happily, sharing

- their love and enjoying healthy conjugal relation. (Sir 25:1)
- God looks at every family a Church by itself with Christ as head of the family. (Eph 2:19-22 & Eph 5:23)
 - **A women will be saved through bearing children. (1 Tim 2:15)**
 - **Whoever loves his spouse is a child of God and knows God.** Whoever does not love his spouse does not know God, for God is love. No one has ever seen God. But if we love our spouse, God lives in union with us, and his love is made perfect in us. (1 Jn 4:7-12)

Yes, God said; "They are my people. I created them to glorify me." (Is 43:7) *Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in you, who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself but to God. He bought for a price (Blood of Jesus) So, glorify God's Spirit in your body. (1Cor6:19-20) We glorify God's Spirit in Conjugal relation, by raising children & bringing them up truly as God's children. **Yes, we are called to honour marriage.***

These words of God will bring power & grace in us and change our mind to live for the glory of God and do his will, which is; "to multiply and fill the earth with our descendants." If you are a person living in any fear about marriage and child birth, read more and more of God's words before sunrise. (Wisdom 6:12-21) God will fill you with Spirit of Wisdom which will give you insight to understand truth in the Sacrament of Marriage & you will be set free of all fears.

12. FEAR OF WATER:

We know by the 'Law of Nature' if anything falls in water, it is bound to sink, unless, the object is designed in shape of a boat, so that it can float. Therefore, people take extra precautions when they cross water bodies or when they sail. In spite of all such precautions, people still sink in water and lose their life. In Scriptures we read that the disciples were sailing in the sea at night. They were straining at the oars of the boat because they were rowing against strong wind. **Somewhere between three and six o'clock in the morning Jesus came to them walking on the water.** They all were terrified when they saw him. Then Jesus said to them; 'do not fear, it is me'. Then he got in to the boat and the strong wind in the sea died. His disciples were completely amazed to see what had happened. (Mark 6:45-51)

Now let us understand; why did Jesus come to the disciples walking on the water? *Jesus could have reached the disciples in the sea by using another boat. Or, he could have reached them by swimming. Or, the angels could have carried Jesus in their arms to reach the boat by air, for he is the Son of God. But Jesus chose to reach his disciples in the middle of the sea by walking on the water!*

By walking on water, Jesus conveyed a very important message to his believers.

The spiritual meaning of Jesus walking on water (or) the message that Jesus conveyed to his believers by walking on the water is; if you believe in Jesus & hold his hands, you will also walk on the water like how Peter walked on the water. (Jn 14:25-29) *Here, what believers need to understand is; water refers to the sins/sickness/troubles of world in which people of this world are sinking.*

Jesus conveyed a message that; we should not have fear on how to overcome sins, sickness & troubles which we encounter in daily life. Jesus conveys that we must only believe in him & believe in God, (Jn14:1) obey his words (Lk 11:28) and remain united with him in all circumstances, (Jn 15:1-5) so as to realise the power & grace Jesus gives. With this power & grace we can overcome our sins & sinfulness, experience healing in soul & body (Prov 4:20-22) endure & overcome all troubles and walk on them without being hurt.

Yes, Jesus says; Troubles of the world will not overwhelm you; When you cross rivers, you will not drown in them. And the fire of this world (Sins & Sickness) will not catch upon you & burn on you. (Is 43:2) If you are united with Jesus through his life-giving words, (Jn 6:63) he will give you power to walk on your sins and your sinful nature. Also, you will walk on the troubles you encounter in daily life.

The sins of the world, your weakness and desires to commit sin and the troubles of the world will be like dust under your feet, (Malachi 4:2-3) if you are united with Jesus Christ and obey him in everything. **Jesus conveyed this spiritual truth by walking on the water.**

To be united with Christ you should do the following;

- You should worship Jesus Christ in the early morning between 3 and 6 AM. (Wis 6:12-21)
- You should read Bible with faith (Rom 4:13 & Heb 11:6) in your worship in the morning and in the evening. (Josh 1:8-9)
- You should accept that Words in Bible as God's life-giving words, (Jn 6:63) and his words will give life in all its fullness. (Jn 10:10)
- You should obey his words, commandments, teachings and the inspired messages. (Is 59:21 & 1 Thes 5:19-21)
- In memory of death & resurrection of Jesus, you should take part in the Celebration of Holy Mass and eat his body and drink his blood as many times possible. (Mt 26:26-30)

Dear believers, people are sinking in all kind of sins such as; bodily passions, sinful entertainments, pagan worship, idol worship & all kind of wickedness. Parents fear that their children should not drown in these sins. So, they take many precautions, counsel their

children and monitor them. Especially in this electronic age, children, grownup people and aged people are exposed to sins & wickedness through social platforms which easily lure them. People are trapped and they get drowned in the sins of the world hopelessly. **They go to the point of no-return and struggle to come out of their sinfulness. Yes, they are not able to retrieve themselves and so they suffocate.**

But if you worship Jesus Christ early in the morning before sunrise, between three & six o'clock, read his words twice a day with faith, obey his teachings, follow his ways, then Jesus will bless you with the Spirit of Wisdom. This Spirit of wisdom will fill you with grace, power, courage, conviction & confidence which will make you an 'Iron Pillar' & a Bronze Wall against sin & wickedness of this world. *For God said; "Today I am giving you strength to resist them; (resist sin/wickedness) you will be like fortified city, an iron pillar & a bronze wall. They (your desires and weakness for sin) will not defeat you. I will be with you to protect you. I the Lord have spoken" (Jer1:18-19)*

Further he said; "I will make you like a solid wall of bronze as far as they are concerned. (Our weaknesses for sin are concerned) *They (sinful attractions of the world) will fight against you, but they will not defeat you. I will be with you to keep you safe. I will rescue you from the power of wicked. I the Lord have spoken. Jer 15:19-20*

Through these promises, God says; our weaknesses for sin and deep desires for wickedness will fight against us to drown us in the sea of sin. Further, the sinful attractions of this world will lure & sink us in the sea of sin. **But if we are united with Jesus Christ, the sinful desires & wickedness which springs from our heart (Mt 5:18-20) and the sinful attractions which comes from the world will have no power over us.** Yes, sins of the world & our weaknesses for sin will have no power over us to make us fall in sin. Because; 'Jesus Christ will be with us to protect & strengthen us in all our weak areas'. If we allow Christ to enter our life & live with him, for he says I stand and knock at the door, (Rev 3:20) he will hold our hands, help us to walk over sins and sinful attractions of this world. Yes, we will not sink in this sea of wickedness in which people of this world are sinking and dying.

This how the promise given by Jesus gets fulfilled. He said; I have given you authority to walk on snakes (weaknesses and sinful desires of heart) & scorpions (attractions of the world) and overcome the power of the enemy. (Satan) Nothing will harm you. (Lk 10:19) Dear believers, do you still fear the water- "Sins of this world." Only allow Christ to enter your life, believe in his words and live with him. He will empower you to walk on all sins like how he himself walked on the water. Yes, you will walk on sins of the world. Jesus will hold your hands & you will not drown in the sins of the world.

13. FEAR OF FAILURE & CRITICISM:

This fear is the stumbling block for our progress in our worldly life and spiritual life which is deliberated in the next chapter in depth.

14. FEAR OF DARKNESS:

Fear of darkness is very common amongst people. Now let us understand why people fear darkness. Jesus said; I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life & will never walk in darkness. (Jn 8:12) Again he said; While I am in the world, I am the light for the world. (Jn 9:5) Therefore; remain united with me and I will remain united with you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself. It can do so, only if it is united with vine. (Jn 15:4) Unless we are united to Jesus through his life-giving words, our soul will not rejoice and our life will become like dry leaves, for Jesus said; 'Man does not live by bread alone but by words spoken by God'. (Mt 4:4)

The meaning of Christ's Words quoted here is; 'By nature, God has created human beings to depend on him for everything'. Because; Christ's Words brings God's life-giving Spirit in us (Jn 6:63) and his words gives us 'life in all its fullness'. (Jn 10:10) Therefore, we cannot live this earthly life alone, because the powers of darkness are fighting against humans & looking for someone to devour in the darkness. (1 Pet 5:8) St Paul says; 'in this life, we are fighting against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the authorities, rulers, and cosmic powers of this dark age. (Eph 6:12) Therefore, we need eternal light of the Lord to guide us in this dark world, because; God said; 'No longer will the sun be your light by day, or the moon be your light by night; I, the LORD, will be your eternal light'. The light of my glory will shine on you. Your days of grief will come to an end. I, the LORD, will be your eternal light, more lasting than the sun & moon. (Is 60:18-20) Yes, Jesus is the light of the world. If we go way from him, we will plunge in darkness which will cause fear in us.

Truth about darkness: When we enter a dark place, our mind perceives nothing and so, there is emptiness in mind. In the darkness we have nothing to hope for & move on. Hence, fear sets in mind spontaneously! Yes, even if we enter a dark place in a group, in spite of knowing that we have companions, we still fear in dark place, because; the emptiness in mind caused by darkness brings fear in us. But if we enter a well-lit place alone, even if it is an unknown place, yet we do not fear. Because, our mind perceives something in the light and there is something to hope for & move on. Therefore, we do not stumble. This is the truth on fear of darkness.

Darkness does not mean the literal sense of darkness. In spiritual sense, 'it refers to those areas in the spiritual world', which are not familiar to us. It is those areas of the spiritual world in which people do not dare to venture. In this un-known spiritual world, Christ promises that he will be our light to guide (Jn 9:5) and protect us as a Shepherd with his Shepherd rod & staff. (Ezkl 34:11-31 & Ps 23) Christ's light will enlighten our wisdom on all things which we do not know, (Jer 33:3 & 2 Cor 4:9) and teach us the right things. (Is 48:17 & Jn 14:26) He will direct us in the path that we should follow (Is 30:20-22) and counsel us when we are in doubt/confused. (1 Jn 2:27) He will make a road through the wilderness, (Is 43:18-19) and lead us in roads in which we have never travelled. (Is 42:16) When we go through these unknown roads in darkness, we will not stumble (Prov3:23) for, Jesus will make us as a sure footed deer. (Ps 18:33)

Now let us understand what Scripture says about darkness:

In the beginning when the world was created, there was darkness all around. God commanded; "Let there be light." (Gen 1:3) Light came in to the world and the darkness was dispelled. Light refers to "Jesus Christ"; because Jesus is the light of the world". (Jn 8:12) The Bible says; "Darkness is no darkness for the Lord," (Ps 139:12) because, "God is light, and there is no darkness in him". (1 Jn 1:5) Yes, light of Christ shines in darkness and darkness can never put it out. (Jn 1:5) Jesus said; when I am in the world, I am the light of the world, (Jn 9:5) and whoever follows me will never walk in the shadow of darkness. (Jn 8:12) **We need light of Christ, because we are living in dark age, fighting against wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities & cosmic powers.** (Eph 6:12)

Therefore, Jesus has called us out of darkness in to his marvellous light. (1Pet 2:9) He says; At one time we did not know the light (Jesus) but now God has revealed the light (Christ) to us, (Jn 3:19) and the light of Christ is shining on us. Hence, St Paul said; Wake up, sleeper. Rise from death, and Christ will shine on you. So, we should be careful about how we live! We should not live like ignorant people!! Instead, we should live like wise people and make good use of every opportunity for these are evil days. (Eph 5:14-17)

God is light, there is no darkness in him. Since we have come in to his light, we have fellowship with him. If someone claims that I have known Christ and yet says he lives in darkness or fears darkness, he has no truth in him. (1 Jn 5-7) Whoever says that he is in light of Christ but hates his brother, he is still in darkness. (1 Jn

2:8-11) All who have light of Christ in them will not fear darkness. But people who do not have the light of Christ in them, will grope in darkness. (Is 59:9-11) Yet, God made his light shine on them. They saw the great light shining on them. (Is 9:2, Mat4:16 and Micha 7:8)

The light of Christ has come in to the world. But people love darkness, because their deeds are evil. (Jn 3:19) Therefore, God said; "I will lead my blind people, (who are blind for the light of Christ shining on them-Eph 5:14) in the roads they have not travelled. I will turn the darkness before them in to light". (Is 42:16) To people who do not have this knowledge/understanding about the light of Christ which is shining on them, Jesus says; "You are the children of light, children of the day. You do not belong to night or to darkness. (1Thes 5:5) Yes, Christ says you are the light of the world. (Mat5:14)

Because the light in us is "Jesus Christ", we become the light of the world. So, "we will not stumble even if darkness shrouds our life (or) we will not grope in fear of darkness." We will walk on firm ground as a sure footed deer. (Ps 18:33) We have no reason to fear darkness, because; "for us, the sun will not be the light in the day or moon will be the light in the night. The Lord (Light of Christ) will be our eternal light more lasting than sun & moon". The Light of Lord's Glory will shine on us and dispel our darkness. (Is 60 19-20) If we do not trust in these words and accept Jesus as light in our life, we will continue to live in fear of darkness and stumble. Jesus said; "Even if you go through the deepest darkness, my light will shine on you and light up your path. You will not stumble. (Ps 23:4) Consequently, his light (his life-giving words) will be a lamp to our path and guide to our feet. (Ps 119:105)

15. UNKNOWN FEARS:

In this discourse about fear, we have understood different types of fears that people experience, such as; fear of the future, fear of finance, fear about security, fear of evil spirits, fear of failure, fear of darkness, fear of water, fear of marriage, fear of injustice, fear of sickness and fear of death, etc. We also have understood that; people who experience such fears, can surely overcome them by being united with Jesus Christ through his life-giving words. (Jn 6:63)

How much ever secured a person may be, how much ever rich he may be, settled well in life, with no cause to worry, yet they go through uncertainty in life which causes fear in them. There may not be any specific reason for such fear. Yet, they endure fear in them. This is called as 'unknown fear' which deceive people to destroy their peace (Jh14:27) and take away the rest that Jesus gives. (Mat11:28)

People living in unknown fears have physiological problems, like; depression, restlessness, nervousness, hypertension, diabetes, insomnia, etc. To overcome such problems, they take medication and get addicted to sleeping pills, anti-depression & anti-anxiety drugs. Some also get addicted to liquor/drugs. Due to unknown fears, some refuse to marry, for they lose confidence in themselves. Also, they even refuse to work for their livelihood. Over a period, they depend on others for everything. This is how unknown fear will destroy them!

About UN-KNOWN FEAR, God spoke through King Solomon.

God said: When lawless people imagined that they had your holy nation in their power, they were themselves imprisoned in a long night of darkness. They lay in their own houses, shut off from your eternal care. They thought that their sins had been secret & unnoticed, shielded from view by a dark curtain of forgetfulness, but now they were horribly afraid, confused, and terrified by ghostly forms. Not even the dark corners where they lay could protect them from fear. They were surrounded by horrible noises; grim ghosts with gloomy faces appeared before their eyes. (Solomom-Wisdom17:2-4)

No fire had power to give them light. The brilliant stars could do nothing to relieve that deathly darkness. There was only a dreadful fire, lit by no human hand, that shone on them & in their terror, they believed that real world was even worse than things they imagined. The illusions produced by their magic tricks were put to shame & all the wisdom they boasted of came to nothing. They had claimed they could drive away all the fears and illnesses of sick minds, but now they themselves were sick with silly, groundless fears. (Wis 17:5-8)

Even though nothing dangerous had actually happened, they were terrified by hissing snakes & animals advancing on them. And so, they died, shaking with fear, afraid even to open their eyes, yet unable to keep them shut. Wickedness is cowardly in itself and stands self-condemned. Someone with a guilty conscience will always imagine things to be worse than they really are. Fear is nothing but the failure to use the help that reason (Word of God) gives. When you lack the confidence to rely on reason, (Word of God) you give in to the fears caused by ignorance. (Wisdom of Solomon 17:9-10-13)

Now we discern; Lawless people believed that the real world was even worse than the things they imagined. So, they were horribly afraid, confused, and terrified by ghostly forms in the deathly darkness. Their guilty conscience will always imagine things to be worse than they really are because of fear and illnesses of sick mind.

Now let us understand 'the Cause' for unknown fears:

1. People do not retain God's Words in mind, for God said; "Pay attention to what I say my son. Listen to my words. Never let them to get away from you. Remember them and keep them in your heart. They will give life and health to those who understand them." (Prov 4:20-21) If you retain God's Words in mind, God will remind you the right choice of Words for such occasion to deliver you from fear. (Prov 15:23) God's words will burn in you as fire and it will burn-up all evil inflictions causing unknown fears in you. Further, God's Words will work like a hammer and it will break rocks (unknown fears) in to pieces. His words will destroy the 'stronghold of evil bondages' which are causing unknown fear.' (Jer 23:29) Because God's Word is 'Alive & Active', it will deliver you from unknown fears by which the Satan binds you. (Heb 4:12) Yes, God's words will deliver you from all fears.

2. People may retain God's Words in mind, but they do not accept God's Words with faith to experience its power. St Paul said; "God has offered us promise that we may receive the rest that he spoke about. Let us take care, then, that none of you will be found to have failed to receive the promised rest. For we have heard God's Words, just as they did. They also heard God's Words, but it did not deliver them, because; when they heard God's Words, they did not accept it with faith. (Heb 4:1-2) Yes, if only we accept God's Words in faith, we will experience its power to deliver us from evil inflictions, for Jesus said; 'if you believe my words, you will see God's Glory. (Jn 11:40) The Centurion believed in words of Jesus and his servant was healed at his house. (Lk 7:1-10) The ten lepers who came to Jesus believed in his words & they were healed on the way. (Lk 17:11-19) **St Paul says; there is another reason why we always give thanks to God. When the message was given, you heard it and accepted it, not as message from human beings but as God's message, which indeed it is. Because, God is at work in you who believe. (I Thessalians 2:13)**

3. People may retain God's Words in their mind, but God's Words may not dwell in them with all its richness and glory. For St Paul said; 'May Christ's life-giving words live in your heart with all its richness'. (Col 3:16) Richness in Christ's Words refers to fruits of the Holy Spirit, which are; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility & self-control. (Gal 5:22) Ultimately, fruits of the Spirit will bring self-control in all areas of our life. Yes, it will discipline our thoughts, words and actions. And it will discipline our family life and spiritual life. More importantly, fruits of the Spirit will bring discipline in our worship. If we worship Jesus in truth &

spirit, (Jn 4:24) we will experience his awesome presence in our worship. **And Christ's presence will deliver us from unknown fears, for he said; Now, the Lord in this passage is the Spirit. Where the Lord's Spirit is present, there is freedom from all fears. (2 Cor 3:17)**

4. People may know God's Words, but they may not meditate on them to gain the insight and wisdom. For God said; Devote all your time studying the Lord's commands and thinking about them. He will give you the insight and wisdom that you are looking for. (Sir 6:37) God said to Joshua; Be sure that the 'Book of the Law' is always read in your worship. Study it, day & night, and make sure that you obey everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Remember that I have commanded you to be determined and confident! Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, am with you wherever you go. (Josh 1:8-9) **Yes, God wants us to read his words in the morning & in the evening in our worship so that; he will give the insight/understanding on all fears.** He will make us understand that; Fear is nothing but failure to use the help that reason (Word of God) gives. When you lose confidence to rely on Word of God, you give in for fear caused by ignorance. (Wis17:1-13) **So, ignorance is the cause for all fears. God says; Trust in my words with all your heart and do not rely on your understanding. (Prov 3:5)**

Dear believer if you accept Word of God with faith, (Heb 4:2) retain them in your mind, (Prov 4:22-22) meditate on them 'Day and Night' and at your leisure time (Sir 6:37) you will gain the insight and wisdom. The Spirit of wisdom will give you understanding on the richness that dwells in Word of God. Consequently, the richness in the Word which are; "fruits of the Holy Spirit" will give you power & grace to overcome all fears which we deliberated throughout in this Chapter. Yes, we do not use the worldly weapons which has no power over the power of evil. (Our fears) But we use God's Most Powerful Weapons, which he has given us for fighting against our enemy the Satan, who instil fear in mind to destroy our progress in spiritual life.

Yes, fear comes from the Satan. But power comes from God (Ps 62:11) who says; "Do not fear, I am with you. Let nothing terrify you." (Is 41:10) In the Bible, God has spoken 365 times, saying; "Do not Fear". Which means, every day-throughout in a year, 365 days God cautions that we should not bow-down to the Satan in fear, but we must use God's Words as the most powerful weapons to destroy the strongholds of evil & false arguments and pull down every proud obstacle that is raised against the knowledge of God. We must take every captive thought on of fear & make it obey Jesus. (2Cor10:3-6)

God says, small & weak as you are, Israel, don't be afraid; I will help you. *I, the holy God of Israel, am the one who saves you. I will make you like a threshing board, with spikes that are new and sharp. You will thresh mountains and destroy them; hills will crumble into dust. You will toss them in air; the wind will carry them off, and they will be scattered by the storm. Then you will be happy; for I am your God; you will praise me, the holy God of Israel. (Is 41: 14-16)*

16. FEAR OF SITUATIONS:

We are living in a world of competition, pride, envy, jealousy, enmity, revenge, theft, terrorism, pandemic, natural disasters & war. We encounter many problems and failures from all corners. We also encounter anger, enmity & feud within our family. Even our children may abandon us and we may be in financial/emotional distress. It is obvious that these situations will cause anguish, depression, anxiety and fear. We have no option to escape from such situations but to face them. Hence, we are bound to go through fire & flood upon such happenings. Let us understand what God says about such situations.

IT IS THE LORD WHO HAS CAUSED THIS SITUATION!

When everything around you has failed, when the whole world has rejected you, when the trusted people have deceived you, when people around you become hostile, when the most loved ones have rejected you or betrayed you, when the medical science have failed to heal your disease, when there is shadow of darkness and death around you causing fear/distress, do you still dare to trust in God to save you, redeem and deliver you in those awful situations?

God says; it is I who has caused this situation. Yes, he says: *My son, if you want to serve God, be prepared for times of testing. (Sir 2:1-6) I will test my people & will purify them as silver is purified by fire. I will test them as gold is tested. Then they will pray to me, and I will answer them. I will tell them that they are my people, and they will confess that I am their God.” (Zech 13:9) **In such situations/ times of testing God says:** My child, pay attention when God corrects /tests you & do not be discouraged when he rebukes you. For, God corrects everyone he loves & punishes everyone he accepts as his child. (Heb 12:5-6) He allows such sufferings/unfavourable situations in life so as to make you understand that; this world will let you down irrespective of your position, wealth, & status. Your relatives, loved ones, siblings & friends will turn against you. (Mk 13:12-13, Mt 10:21 & Lk 12:52-53) **And it is I, your God, has caused such situations in your life, because I am in control of your life & situations. (Is 45 :7)***

Therefore, it is discerned from the above, that; If God has chosen you specially for a specific purpose, he will make you to go through such situations, trials and tribulations, because; 'God does not change his mind about the one whom he chooses and blesses'. (Rom 11:29) God has chosen you to bless you. Yes, Jesus said; 'You did not choose me. I chose you to bear good fruits that endures'. (Jn 15:16) It is through sufferings, he wants to draw you close to him, so that; you will experience his unconditional love, forgiving love, Sacrificial love and unending miraculous power in such situations to overcome all your problems, thereby, you will become his witness to proclaim God's unconditional, intense, sacrificial and everlasting love to the world. Yes, through sufferings God teaches many spiritual truths, opens your eyes for faith, fills you with wisdom (Job 36:15) and gives insight on the earthly worship & the heavenly worship. (Heb 9:1-22) Thus, God will make you as his instrument to do good deeds /witness Jesus to the ends of the earth. (2 Tim 2:21)

Therefore, we understand that; it is only the Lord who has caused this situation/tribulation can save us, because; 'he has called us for this unique spiritual experience'. In this call, our Lord says; "Israel, you are my dearest son/daughter, the child I love the best. When I mention your name, I think of you with love. My heart goes out to you; I will be merciful. (Jeremiah 31:20) And, because of my love, "I will make my power known to you," (Jeremiah 16:21) so that you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judaea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. (Acts1:1-8) Yes, you are called.

However, when you go through such situations/tribulations the Lord assures help. For, he says; when you are in distress, filled with fear, I the Lord who created you & called you by name (Is 42:1-2) for this unique experience say; I myself will prepare your way, levelling mountains/hills. I will break down bronze gates & smash their iron bars. I will give you treasures from dark secret places; then you will know that I am the LORD AND that the God of Israel who has called you by name. (Is 45:2-3) I assure to protect you by my hand, (Is 51:16) and I will defend you for the sake of my honour. (Is 37:35)

Yes, the Lord says Look up at the heavens; look at the earth! The heavens will disappear like smoke; the earth will wear out like old clothing, and all its people will die like flies. But the deliverance I bring will last forever; my victory will be final. Listen to me, you that know what is right, who have my teaching fixed in your hearts. Do not be afraid when people taunt and insult you; they will vanish like moth eaten clothing! But the deliverance I bring will last forever; my

victory will endure for all time, (Is 51:6-8) and my promises will not fail. (Hos 2:20) Further, the Lord of Israel assures; No weapon will be able to hurt you. You will have an answer for all who accuse you. I will defend you my servant & give you victory. (Is 54:17) **However, God says; when you go through fire & flood, be still (Lam 3:28-36) and know that I am the Lord, supreme among the nations & over the world. I God of Jacob, am with you; I am your refuge. (Ps46:10-11)**

Therefore, we will not be afraid even if the earth is shaken & mountains fall into the ocean depths; even if the seas roar & rage and hills are shaken by the violence. There is a river (Spirit of God) that brings joy to the suffering people, to the sacred house (Our body) of the Most High. God is in that city, (is with us) so, we will not be destroyed; at early dawn he will come to our aid. (Ps 46:2-5)

Dear believers, read God's promises given in Psalms 23,46, 91 & 121 and meditate on them day and night to experience God's power to protect you from all dangers and deliver you from the grave situations/tribulations/trials, because God says; "I will put my angels in charge of you to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you up with their hands to keep you from hurting your feet on the stones. You will trample down lions and snakes, fierce lions and poisonous snakes. (Psalms 91:11-13) **Further he promises; I will save those who love me and will protect those who acknowledge me as LORD. When they call to me, I will answer them; when they are in trouble, I will be with them. I will rescue them and honor them. I will reward them with long life, and I will save them. (Ps 91: 14-16)**

These promises of the Lord are true, for Jesus said all the words written in the Scripture are true, (Jn 17:17) and all the words in the Scripture are active and living words. (Heb 4:12) It is very important that; we must have faith in God's words, because his words work in those who believe. (1Thes 2:13) St Paul said; God has offered us the promise that we may receive protection/rest he spoke about. Let us take care, then, that none of you will be found to have failed to receive the promised protection. We have heard the Good News, just as they did. They heard the message, but it did them no good, because when they heard it, they did not accept it with faith. We who believe, then, do receive protection/rest which God promised. (Heb 4:1-3) Those who first heard the Good News did not receive protection / rest because they did not believe. (Heb 4:6)

Let us, then, do our best to receive that protection, so that no one of us will fail as they did, because of their lack of faith. (Heb 4:11) Yes, we must accept God's promises for he said; My word

is like the snow & the rain that come down from the sky to water the earth. They make the crops grow and provide seeds for planting and food to eat. So also, will be the word that I speak— it will not fail to do what I plan for it; it will do everything I send it to do. (Is 55:10-11) Further, God says; “Remind him of his promises, twice in a day.”

Yes, he said; “On your walls, Jerusalem, I have placed sentries; They must never be silent day or night. They must remind the LORD of his promises and never let him forget them. They must give him no rest until he restores Jerusalem and makes it a city the whole world praise”. (Is 62:6-7) If we remind the Lord on his promises and claim them every day through Jesus Christ who is ‘Yes’ for God’s promises and its fulfilment (2 Cor 1:20) we will continue to experience God’s Power to work in us. Consequently, we will encounter God’s power in difficult situations and grow in spiritual life.

Believers are advised to read Ezekiel 34 to understand how God will take care of us as a Shepherd to guide, protect & deliver us from all awful situations. Jesus says; *I, the Sovereign LORD, tell you that; I myself will look for my sheep & take care of them in the same way as shepherds take care of their sheep that were scattered and are brought together again. I will bring them back from all places where they were scattered. I will take them out of foreign countries, gather them together & bring them back to their own land. (Ezek 34:11-13)*

I will lead them back to the mountains & the streams of Israel and will feed them in pleasant pastures. I will let them graze in safety in the mountain meadows and the valleys and in all the green pastures of the land of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep and I will find them a place to rest and give protection. “I will look for those that are lost, bring back those that wander off, bandage those that are hurt and heal those that are sick; but those that are fat and strong I will destroy, because I am a shepherd who does what is right. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken. (Ezek 34:13-16) And Jesus promises;_When you go through the deepest dark hour in fear, my shepherd rod and staff will protect you. (Psalms 23:1-6)

Further Jesus said; “When you go through sea of troubles, I the Lord will strike the waves!” (Zech 10:11)

Fear is nothing but the failure to use the help that Word of God gives. When you lack the Confidence to rely on Word of God you give in to the Fears caused by ignorance. (Wis 17:12-13)

QUESTION NO -18

DO YOU FEAR TO WITNESS JESUS CHRIST?

ARE YOU THE ONE CHOSEN TO WITNESS JESUS CHRIST TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH?

Isaiah said; The Sovereign LORD has filled me with his Spirit.

He has chosen me and sent me to bring good news to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to announce release to captives & freedom to those in prison. He has sent me to proclaim that the time has come, when God will save his people & defeat their enemies. He has sent me to comfort all who mourn. To give to those who mourn in Zion joy and gladness instead of grief & a song of praise. (Is61:1-4)

The Lord called Jeremiah and said; I chose you before I gave your life.

Before you were born, I selected you to be a prophet." (Jer 1:4-5) Go to the people I send you and tell them everything I command you to say. Do not be afraid of them, for I will be with you to protect you. (Jer1:7-8) "Listen, I am giving you the words you must speak. Today I give you authority over nations and kingdoms to uproot and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." (Jer 1:9-10) Go and tell them everything I command you to say. Do not be afraid of them. Everyone in this land—the kings of Judah, the officials, the priests, and the people—will be against you. But today I am giving you the strength to resist them; you will be like a fortified city, an iron pillar & a bronze wall. (Jeremiah 1:17-19)

God called Ezekiel to be a prophet. He said; "Mortal man, I am sending you to the people of Israel. They have rebelled and turned against me and are still rebels just as their ancestors were. They are stubborn and do not respect me, so I am sending you to tell them what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to them. You, mortal man, must not be afraid of them. They will defy and despise you; it will be like living among scorpions. Still, don't be afraid of those rebels or of anything they say. You will tell them whatever I tell you to say, whether they listen or not. Remember, they are rebels. (Ezek 2:1-7)

Yes, dear believers; if God has chosen you to witness Jesus, at first, he will make you to go through fire & flood. (Sir 2:1-6 & Zech 13:9) You will encounter tribulations, awful situations, insults, loses & times of testing. Your suffering may be sickness which comes from God himself, like how St Paul suffered. (2 Cor 12:1-11) Your

sufferings may be decease given by Satan, like how Job was given satanic decease. (Job 2:6-10) Your suffering may be injustice like how Christ was denied justice. (Acts 8:33) You may be insulted like how Christ was insulted. (Mk15:16-20) You may be denied legitimate rights like how the disciples were denied right to practice their faith. (Acts 16:16-40) You may experience spiritual anguish like how Jesus experienced in Garden Gethsemane. (Lk 22:39-46) Your suffering may be political slavery, hardships, persecution like how it was meted out to the disciples by the Roman authorities. (Acts 7:54-8:3)

WILL GOD'S HAND BE UPON YOU?

But the Lord will be with you always to protect you, deliver you, heal you & to lead you. (Sir 2:10) If we read the life of Joseph in the book - Genesis, we understand that Joseph went through fire and flood before he became the Governor of Egypt. He was deceived by his own brothers and was sold as a slave. Then he became a servant in the Egyptian Palace, where he was falsely accused by the Queen and was put in the jail. But God was with Joseph all through to guide him in his sufferings because Joseph was a righteous man. Finally, God raised him to be the Governor of Egypt. (Genesis 37-41)

WILL YOU RECEIVE SURE FOUNDATION?

This is how life will be for those who desire to serve the Lord. For God says; My son, if you are going to serve the Lord, be prepared for times when you will be put to test. (Sir 2:1) Accept whatever happens to you. Even if you suffer humiliation, be patient. (Sir 2:4) Because, in your sufferings you become spiritually strong and wise. Yes, God corrects a man by sending sickness & hardships (Job 33:19) and teaches him through sufferings and uses his distress to open his eyes. (Job 36:15) Only through your sufferings and patience you receive the gift "Sure Foundation in Faith" so that you can become a loyal soldier of Christ. (Is 13:3) **Once you receive Sure Foundation in faith, (1Pet 5:10) you will realise the burden of announcing the Good News to the world.** When you take initiatives to witness Christ, you will experience "fear of failure and criticism." This fear will stop you from progressing in the mission to witness Jesus Christ to the world.

DO YOU FEAR FAILURE AND CRITICISM?

The Satan always instils fear in us about success in spiritual life. About preaching Christ, there is always fear in us, such as:

- What will others think of me?
- Will society accept me or reject me?
- Will there be obstacles for my religious work?
- Will people join me in the service that I conduct?
- Will my work be successful?

- Will there be criticism?
- Will I be able to do this, because I failed in the past?
- **Will I fail in my mission?**

These fears are the lies that the Satan instil in our mind to deceive us in our efforts, so that he will give a feeling that; Jesus who works through us has failed. Thus, the Satan will discourage us to proceed.

But God says;

- I will go with you and I will give you victory. (Ex 33:14)
- I will make all my splendour pass before and, in your presence, will pronounce my sacred name. I am the Lord and I will show compassion and take petty on those I choose. (Ex 33:19)
- I now make a covenant with people of Israel. In their presence I will do great thing such as have never been done anywhere on earth among any nations. All people see what great things I the Lord can do, because I am going to do awesome thing for you. (Ex 34:10)
- You can do all things through Christ Jesus who lives in you and works through you. (Phil 4:13)

Because of God's promises we are capable of doing all things. There is nothing to fear on our success, because; the Spirit of God does not make us timid but gives us power love and confidence. (2 Tim 1:7) Fear of failure and our doubts cannot discourage us from accomplishing our task in witnessing Jesus Christ, because; it is God's great power which works in us who believe. (1Thes 2:13) The power which is working in us is the same mighty power which God the Father used for raising Jesus Christ from death. (Eph 1: 19 - 20)

When fear of failure disturbs you, replace your worry with prayer. For God said; "do not worry about anything, but in all your prayer ask God what you need always asking with a thankful heart." (Phil 4:6) When you ask God for your needs, believe in what you pray and do not doubt God's power of fulfil your needs. (James 1:6)

Do not rely on your own understanding in such situations, but trust in God's Power, (Prov 3:5) because; "by means of his power working in you, he is able to do much more than what you ask for, or even think of." (Eph 3:20) God who spoke about your good future has promised; "I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for". (Jer 29:11) **He will make you succeed in your mission not by your power or by military might, but by the Spirit of the Lord. The obstacles great as mountain will disappear before you.** (Zech 4: 6-7)

If there is discouraging situations, fix your attention on Jesus: St Paul said; Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus on whom our faith

depends from the beginning to the end. (Heb 12:2) We are not alone in this world, for Jesus said; I will not leave like orphans. (Jn 14:18) I will never leave you or forsake you, (Heb 13:5) & I will be with you till end of ages. (Mt 28:18) So, never lose heart even if you meet failure. Because; if Christ is for us, who can be against us. Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his son for us. (Rom 8:31-32) God warns you; 'be determined & confident in your mission', (Josh 1:8, Jer 1:18-19) for I am at work in you who believe. (1 Thes 2:13)

WILL THE LORD ABANDON YOU IN YOUR MISSION?

The Lord will not abandon you to be lost for fear of failure & criticism. He gives assurance for protection and victory, for the Lord says:

- *When you go, my Spirit will go before you and give victory, (Ex 33:14) & I will make my Splendour pass before you. (Ex 33:19)*
- *In your troubles do not fear, do not doubt my power. (Mt 11:6)*
- *Do not be afraid, I am with you. I am your God, let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you. I will protect you and save you. (Is 41:10)*
- *I will make you like a bronze wall as far as your problems are concerned. They will fight against you but they will not defeat you. I will be with you to protect & keep you safe. (15:19-20)*
- *Go in the name of Jesus. The name above all names. (Phil 2:9) The name which sustains the universe by its power. (Heb 1:3)*
- *By the power in the name 'Jesus', (Jn 17:11-12) all things will be held to gather in its place. (Col 2:19)*
- *In the name of Jesus all things are possible, because he is God of impossible. (Num 11:23, Jer 32:27 & Lk 1:37)*
- *If you believe in Jesus, you will see the Glory of God. (Jn 11:40)*

WILL GOD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU BY HIS SPIRIT?

In the deepest of dark hours, when you are lost in fear to witness Christ, he gives assurance that; I will go before you to lead you and fight for you. (Duet 1:30) My glorious presence will be with you to guide you by my eternal light. No longer will the sun be the light for you by the day nor will the moon be the light by the night; I the Lord will be your eternal light. The light of my glory will shine on you in your distress and your grief will come to an end. (Is 60:19)

The Lord who assures help says; "When you go through the sea of trouble, reeling in fear, I the Lord will strike the waves. (Zach 10:11) Yes, God promises to deliver you from your distress and all fears. So, dear believers you should not be bogged down in fear, because; our Lord gives us an unconditional assurance that; he

will fight for our deliverance by his Spirit. Yes, he said; No weapon will be able to hurt you; you will have an answer for all who accuse you. I will defend my servants and give them victory, (Is 54:17) and I will fight for you and all you have to do is keep still. (Exodus 14:14)

If you bog down in fear, you cannot take bold steps and venture into unknown areas to witness Christ. *If you fear, you will not understand how God's Spirit will work in you to lead you by his light in the darkest hours. Dear believer fear is not from God. But power is from God, for King David said, 'More than once I have heard God say; power belongs him & that is his constant love'. (Ps 62:11)*

And God said; I have made a Covenant with you. I have given you my Word & My Power to be yours for ever and ever. Dear believers, fear is a very powerful weapon which the Satan is using against mankind to keep us from getting closer to God so that we will not come to know the power he has given mankind which can be used against him. Fear do not allow people to venture into unknown areas in spiritual life. So, they are blind for the spiritual powers (Lk 10:19 & Mt 18:18) and gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:7-11) which God has for us. Regarding giving power to mankind, God said; ***"I the Lord have made a covenant with the mankind; "I have given my power and my teachings to be yours for ever & ever. And from now on, you have to obey me and teach your children & your descendants to obey me for all time to come."*** (Is 59:21) Believers receive this spiritual power only through faith in Jesus & in his words. People who believe receive authority over evil spirits. (Mk 16:17-18) By devoted spiritual life, believers are also blessed with fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Fruits of Holy Spirit are: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Humility, Faithfulness and Self - control. (Galatians 5:22)

Gifts of Holy Spirit are: Wisdom, Knowledge, faith, power to heal, power to work miracles, gift of speaking God's messages, ability to tell the difference between the gifts that come from Holy Spirit and that are not, ability to speak in strange tongues/heavenly language, & ability to explain what is spoken in strange tongue. (1Cor 12:8-11)

Fruits of the Spirit & Gifts of the Spirit are the mighty weapons which God has given us to fight against powers of darkness and establish a powerful spiritual life to serve God. Also, Jesus has given his own power to us, which our mind fails to believe. So, we are lost for the authority to rule over the evil spirits. (Wis 6:20-21 & Lk 10:19) Hence, the Satan repeatedly instils a feeling in us that; we do not have power over him and we are nothing before him. Further,

he makes us to feel that we are nothing in the eyes of God. Whereas God said; I have called you by name, you are mine, (Is 43:1) you are precious in my eyes, (Is 43:4) and you are the dearest child, who I love the best. (Jer 32:20) Also, God said; You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask, I will give you the whole nation; the whole earth will be yours." (Ps 2:7-8) Further, he said; "My son, you are always here with me, and everything I have is yours. (Lk 15:31)

St Paul said; You are sons of the living God; hence you are no more slaves for the ruling spirits of the Universe. Because you are God's child, he will give you all that he has for his children. (Gal 4:3-7) But, we are not alive for God's Words which gives us authority over evil spirits. Also, our mind does not accept God's Words which gives authority over powers of darkness. Therefore, we are lost for the authority over evil spirits & consequently, we always live in fear.

Jesus has given authority over evil spirits to believers & said:

- I have given you authority to walk on snakes and scorpions, and overcome the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you. (Lk 10:19)
- Whatever you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven. (Mt 16:18 & Mt 18:18) It means; if you bind/caste away evil spirits on earth in the name of Jesus, they will be bound/driven out. And Whatever you set loose on earth (if you deliver a person from evil spirits, he will be set free)
- Believers will be given power to perform miracles; they will drive out demons in my name; they will speak in strange tongues; if they pick up snakes or drink any poison they will not be harmed; they will place hands on sick who will be healed." (Mark 16:17-18)
- Believers will do more miracles than me, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12)
- The desire for Wisdom (desire for Jesus) can prepare you to rule a kingdom. (Kingdom of the Satan) So then, you that rule the nations, if you value your thrones (if you observe holiness in your body, soul & spirit) and symbols of authority, (honour the anointment of Holy Spirit you received in church Sacraments) honor Wisdom (honour Jesus) so that you may rule forever. (You can rule over the evil spirits for all time) (Wisdom6:20-21)

The question to believers at this juncture is; "Do you believe in these promises in which God has given you authority over evil spirits? Our mind fails to believe in the power that has been

promised to us. Therefore, we fail to believe in the ministry which Jesus has established through believers. Yes, Jesus said to disciples:

- *When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)*
- *To Peter he said, you are a rock. On this rock foundation I will build my church, & not even death will ever be able to overcome it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven; what you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven. (Mathew 16:18-19)*
- *Then Peter proclaimed; You are the chosen generation, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of Almighty living God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light. (1 Peter 2:9)*

Yes, we are called to profess our faith by practicing Christ's teachings & by exercising the spiritual authority he bestowed upon us! But we do not believe in this spiritual life & in the spiritual authority, because the Satan has blinded our mind & deceived us for the spiritual authority, as St Paul said; They do not believe, because their minds have been kept in the dark by the evil god of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light shining on them, (Authority given to them) the light (Authority) that comes from the Good News about the glory of Christ, (Ministry of Christ) who is the exact likeness of God. (2Cor 4:4) *That is why Christians are always living in fear. God said; Trust in the Lord with all your heart, & do not rely on your own understanding. (Prov 3:5) But we rely only on our mind. So, we deceive ourselves & deprive ourselves for the 'Authority' given to us.*

To understand this authority and evoke the spiritual powers we need God's wisdom! To receive God's Wisdom (1 Cor 2:6-10) we must take break from routine life and sit at the feet of Christ early in the morning between 3 & 6 AM to experience Christ's presence & pace, because his Spirit moves around the World in the early morning to bless those who are awake/alive to encounter him. (Wis 6:12-21) His Spirit will teach how we must to live. (Is 30 :20-21 & Mic 4 :2-4)

"Secret / Truth About Early Morning Worship"

We read in the Gospel; the disciples were straining at the oar in the middle of the sea in the night. Somewhere between 3 & 6 AM Jesus came to them walking on the water. The disciples feared thinking that it was a ghost. Jesus said to them; it is I, do not fear! Then he got in to the boat and the wind died down. (Mark 6:45-52)

Here, Jesus revealed a secret/truth: If you worship Jesus every day between 3 & 6 AM, you will encounter his awesome presence and he will bless you with peace. (Wis 6:15) He will give power and grace to walk on all your trials & tribulations and rule over them. (Wis 6:20-21) Jesus will take control of your life (Rev 3:20) and calm down all fears which does not allow you to witness him to the world. **Jesus will bless you with wisdom/insight which will reveal the authority God has given you. Jesus will enlighten you on the power abiding in his words, (Jer 29:23) and he will open your mind to understand the Scripture. (Lk24:44-45) Thus, this understanding will deliver you from all fears.**

God will open a New Path: **Your daily encounter with Christ in worship will bring inwardly transformation of heart.** (Rom 12:1-2) This transformation will help to live with Christ & obey him in all you do whether you like it or not. (Jer 42:6) When you walk through the valley of death, Christ will be light in your path & his words will guide to your feet. (Ps 105:119) He will not let you astray from righteous path, (Is 30:20-22) and he will counsel you in times of doubt/despair. (1 Jn 2:27) You will experience Christ's hand working to deliver you from awkward situations. (Is 51:16) And he will destroy all the false arguments that are raised against the Knowledge of God. He will destroy strongholds and pull down all proud obstacles that are raised against you. (2 Cor 10:4-5) **Jesus Christ will open new path as he opened up the Red Sea for the Israelites when they were chased by the Egyptian's army. (Ex 14:14-25 & Is 43:16-17) He will guide you by eternal light, (Is 61:19) and bless you with Wisdom. (Sir 1:1-20)**

The Spirit of Wisdom will deliver you from fear: The Spirit of Wisdom will instil 'fear of God' in you and help you to obey Christ (Lk 11:28) and inspired messages. (1Thes 5:19-22) In obedience, the Spirit of Wisdom will give understanding on your ability and also give insight on how God's power will work in you, if you believe. (1Thes 2:13) **This 'Unique Spiritual Experience' will deliver you from all fears which are holding you as captive for "fearful thoughts".** People who do not fear God, who do not have reverence for God's Words will grope in darkness (Is 59:9-13) and in darkness they will live in fear. **Their fear will bring negative attitude in them, which will not allow them to take bold steps/challenges to witness Jesus. They crumble down with small problems which will destroy their spiritual life. Their fear will undermine the authority & spiritual gifts God has given them.**

Such people fail to realise that; with God's power they can handle much bigger problems & issues in their worldly life & in spiritual life and come out colourfully. **Fear is the reason why people**

do not venture into spiritual life. Because of fear, they do not realise the power that God has given them, by which they can "walk on trials & tribulations which are snakes & scorpions for them". (Luke 10:19) That's why God said: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, do not rely on your own understanding. (Prov3:5) **This is how the promise given to us; "I have given my power and my teachings to be yours forever and ever" (Is 59:21) works in us, if we believe, because; "God is at work in those who believe". (1 Thes 2:13)**

WHAT ARE ROADS THAT WE NEVER TRAVELLED IN SPIRITUAL LIFE?

The Lord spoke through Prophet Isaiah, and said; I will lead my blind people through the roads they have never travelled. I will turn their darkness into light & make rough country smooth before them. These are my promises and I will keep them without fail. (Is 42:16)

In this promise the Lord clearly speaks about two things:

- 1: That we people are blind for God's power, and
- 2: The spiritual path that people have never travelled.

Now we will try to understand and gain insight on these two aspects:

1. ARE WE BLIND PEOPLE?

The Lord calls us as 'blind people' because we are blind for the truth (Christ) and hence we are blind for the power which Christ has given us. Consequently, the Satan uses our spiritual blindness to keep us under the bondage of fear. **Are we really blind for Christ? Let us see what does the Bible says about Jesus Christ. The Bible says:**

- Jesus Christ is the Word of God. (Jn 1:14 & Rev 19:13)
- Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Luke 5:24)
- Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. (Is 9:6)
- Jesus Christ is the King of all kings. (Rev 17:14 & 19:16)
- Jesus Christ's kingdom never ends. (Is 9:7 & Luke 1:32-33)
- Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. (Jn 8:12)
- Jesus Christ is the Truth. (Jn 8:32)
- Jesus Christ is the wounded healer. (1 Per 2:24)
- Jesus Christ is the Lord of Salvation. (Jonah 2:9)
- Jesus Christ is the one who gives salvation. (Acts 4:12)
- Jesus Christ is the Supreme Ruler & Authority. (Col 2:10)

There is power in words of Jesus Christ

St Paul said in the honour of the Name-Jesus; every living being in the heaven, on the earth and in the world below will fall on knees and all will openly proclaim; 'Jesus is Lord for the glory of the Father'. (Phil 2:10-11) **Jesus is Word of God who existed before creation of**

the universe, (Jh1:1&Col1:17) and all things in creation were created through him. (Jn 1:3 & Col 1:16) The whole universe & everything in it are being sustained and held together by the power in his Word. (Heb1:3 & Sir 43:26) Christ's Words brings God's Life-giving Spirit in us, (Jn 6:63) it cleanses our soul, (Jn 15:3) and heals our body. (Ps 107:20 & Wis 16:12) His words give life & health those who retain them in heart (Prov4:20-22) & believe in its mighty power. (Jn11:40) Christ's words which is alive & active will deliver our soul from evil bondages, (Heb 4:12) and it will give life in all its fullness. (Jn 10:10)

The Bible describes Jesus Christ in the following manner:

Jesus is the Son of God who has authority over all creations. (Mt 28:18) He has authority to forgive our sins. (Luke 5:24) As a Shepherd, he is the keeper of our souls. (1 Pet 2: 25) As the Son of God he gives eternal life to those who believe in him. (Jn 11: 25-26)

Jesus is the King of all kings. (Rev 17:14) His kingdom will not be destroyed, his power will never end & he will rule for ever. (Dan 6:26)

Jesus is eternal light who shines in the darkness on all creations. (Wis6:12&Is 61:19) He is the light of the world. (Jn 8:12)

Jesus is the truth who sets us free from all evil bondages. (Jn 8:32) Jesus is the deliverer who sets us free. Therefore, stand as free people and do not allow yourselves to become slaves again. (Gal 5:1)

Jesus is a healer who heals body, spirit & soul. (1Pet 2:24) He healed the crippled, sick, blind & brought dead to life. (Jn 11:17-44)

Jesus is the Supreme Spiritual Ruler & Authority who has power on all beings in heaven, on earth and in the world below. (Col 2 :10)

Jesus is our Salvation, because the scriptures say; 'Salvation is to be found through him alone. In all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us from power of sin. (Acts 4:12)

Jesus is the Lord of Glory; In the end, Jesus the Son of Man will appear, coming in the clouds with great power and glory. He will send the angels out to the four corners of the earth to gather God's chosen people from one end of the world to the other. (Mk13:26-27)

From the discourse above, it is undoubtably discerned that; Jesus Christ is the Son of Almighty Living God, and he is the Supreme Ruler & Authority in the universe (Col 2:10) who lived on this earth and preached the Good News about love, repentance, forgiveness of

sins and sacrificed his life for our Salvation. He also preached on spiritual power/authority over evils spirits which he has given to us.

About sharing his authority to man over evil spirits Jesus said:

- *I have given you authority to walk on snakes & scorpions and to overcome power of the enemy. Nothing can hurt you. (Lk 10:19)*
- *Whatever you bind on earth, (when you bind evil spirits) it will be bound in heaven. Whatever you set loose on earth, will be set loose in heaven.” (Mt 18:18) (when you deliver a person from evil spirits, he will be set free from the evils spirits)*
- *Believers will be given power to perform miracles; they will drive out demons in my name; they will speak in strange tongues; if they pick up snakes or drink any poison, they will not be harmed; they will place hands on sick people who will get well”. (Mark 16:17-18)*
- *God the Father said; “I make a covenant with you; I have given you my power and my teachings to be yours forever. From now on you are to obey me and teach your children and your descendants to obey me for all time to come.” (Isaiah 59:21)*

If we are blind for these spiritual powers that are with-in us and do not use these powers to fight against the powers of darkness, then Satan will gain advantage over us to keep us in darkness of fear. Our fear will not allow us to enter in unknown areas of spiritual life. Whereas, Jesus has given us power & authority over evil spirits. He said; those who believe will perform greater miracles than me & they will drive out evil spirits”. (Jn 14:12 & Mk 16:17-18)

We receive spiritual powers through faith in Christ and by putting our faith in to action. (Jas 1:22-24) But the Satan blinds our mind for these powers (2 Cor 4:4) so that we may not repose trust in God's promises & exercise these spiritual powers given to us against him. ***If we fail to believe in God’s promises for power, Satan has already won over us. Consequently, our mind will be filled with doubts. This doubt doesn’t allow us to dare to hope in the Lord. Our doubts will cause fear in us and ultimately, we will lose in this battle.***

Fear is nothing, but failure to use the help that reason gives. (God’s promises gives) When you lack confidence to relay on reason, you give in to fear caused by ignorance. (Wis 17:12) When fear grips our mind, we fall in faith and so we are filled with worries, doubts, anxiety leading to a hopeless situation which makes us grope in the darkness. And, this is the exact situation that Satan creates in every

believer's mind so that believers don't dare to hope in the Lord and use these spiritual powers and authority given to them to fight against him and progress in the mission to witness Jesus Christ. **Yes, lack of knowledge is the cause for our fear, (Hos 4:6) thus the Satan is ruling over mankind (Gal 3:22) instead of we ruling over him. But Jesus said; all things are possible for those who believe in him. (Mark 9:23) And so, dear believers, never lose yourself to the Satan in fear.**

To those who are living in fear, Jesus says:

- Do not restrain the Holy Spirit (power) and do not despise the inspired messages (God's call to uses his power) Put everything to test (put my words to test to see the power working in you) keep what is good and avoid all kind of evil (1 Thes 19-21)
- Blessed are those who do not doubt my words." (Mt 11:6)
- If you believe, it will happen to you as you believe. (Mt 21:22)
- And, if you believe you will see God's glory!" (Jn 11:40)

Yes, we read in bible, whenever God spoke to men, he said; "Do not fear". God has spoken 365 times in the Bible about fear. He said; "Do not fear"! It means every day, God says; do not fear the Satan! Jesus wants we must overcome fear. Also, whenever he spoke to his disciples he said; "Do not fear, I am with you." **So, we should be alive for the Spiritual powers given to us by Jesus.**

2. WHAT ARE THE ROADS THAT WE HAVE NEVER TRAVELLED?

The second aspect God speaks in this promise Is 42:16 is: "He will lead his children who are blind in the roads that they have never travelled." From the above discourse we discern that all these years we were blind for the truth about Jesus & the spiritual authority which he has given us. Therefore, all these ages people were walking in the same path of their ancestors (Is 59:10-13) who did not know; God has given his power and his words to them. (Is 59:21) **So, God says my people are dying for lack of knowledge. (Hos4:1-6, Job 36:8-12)**

God said; Our ancestors were living in sin & were walking in the unmarked path not knowing where they are going. They were blind for God's light that shone on them. (Is 60:18-19, Eph5:14) So, they suffered the fate of godless people, (Jer23:12) and were lost for God's glory. (Rom 3:23) Sin destroyed all their blessings, (Jn 10:10) because they knew God, but did not give him the honor that belongs to him nor did thank him. Their thoughts were complete nonsense. Their empty minds were filled with darkness. (Rom 1:20-21) So, they lived in fear and stumbled before God. (Isaiah 8:13 & Rom 9:32-33)

DOES GOD WANT TO SHARE HIS POWER & GLORY WITH PEOPLE AND USE THEM AS HIS WITNESS?

The kingdom of God is not just a matter of words but power. God says; You are my chosen people, whom I have called by name to witness me to the ends of the earth. (Is 43:1-4 & Acts 1:8) Come and inherit my kingdom with all its powers which I have reserved for you, because; you are my dearest son, (Jer 31:20) and all I have is yours. (Lk 15:31) Further, God says; You are the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of living God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light. At one time you were not God's people, but now you are his people; at one time you did not know God's mercy, but now you have received his mercy". (1Pet 2:9-10) That's why Jesus said; Seek the kingdom of God above all, (Mt 6:33) for, the Kingdom of God is not just a matter of words but power. (1Cor 4:20)

Jesus said; If you remain in me and my words remain in you, whatever you ask the heavenly Father in my name will be given to you. (Jn 15:7) He promised to give you spiritual powers as spoken in Is59:21, Lk10:19, Mt 18:18 & 16:17-18. If you are desirous and serious about your call to harvest souls for Jesus, then he will enlighten you on how to use these spiritual powers. In faith, if you put his words to test, (1Thes19-21) those spiritual powers will work in you, for God's power will work in you who believe. (1Thess 2:13)

Christ's promises for authority over evil spirits are in fulfilment of his Father's promise which he gave to our ancestors through Prophet Isaiah. Yes, God the Father said; I make a covenant with you; **I have given you my power and my teachings/words to be yours for ever & ever.** From now on you are to obey me, teach your children and your descendants to obey me for all time to come. (Isaiah 59:21)

St Peter said; "God's divine power has given us everything we need to live a true religious life through our knowledge in Jesus who has called us out of the darkness to share his own glory and power, (2 Pet 1:3) so that we may witness Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. (Mt 28:18-20 & Acts 1:8) St Paul said; We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he called according to his purpose. Those whom God has already chosen, he also set them apart to become like his son, so that the son would be the first among the many brothers. And those whom God set apart, he called; and those he called he put them right with himself and he shared his power & glory with them. (Rom 8: 28-30)

The above discourse acknowledges; God who created us in his own image (Gen 1:27) has given us his own power to witness him. For he says; Those whom he called, he shared his power with them. *We are called to inherit this power & receive the gifts of Holy Spirit (1Cor 12:7-11) to enter in to unknown area in spiritual life to witness Jesus & harvest soul. This is what God referred in his promise as; "I will lead my blind people in the roads that they have never travelled".*

DOES GOD WANT TO BLESS US?

Yes, God wants to Bless us and use us in his Ministry: God's will for us is; We must respond to his call, live a righteous life and inherit the authority he has promised to us, so that; he can use us in his Ministry to save people from sin & harvest souls for Christ. God wants; we must get enriched in his power (Mt 18:18) & authority (Lk 10:19) so that, we can destroy the works of devil and do his work, such as; *Word ministry, Lay ministry, Healing ministry, Deliverance ministry, Counselling ministry, Priestly ministry, Ministry of Religious order (Nuns/Brothers,) Ministry of Intercession & Ministry of Charity.*

These are the roads in spiritual life we do not travel, because we live life in flesh & blood. But to those people who realise God's call and surrender their life to do his work, God will open their mind for this great promise; "I will lead my blind people by the roads that they have never travelled. I will turn their darkness into light and I will make rough country smooth for them. These are my promises and I will keep them without fail. (Is 42:16)

So, my dear believers, do you really trust in Jesus and his words to inherit the Authority promised? If you trust in him, you will receive the power to overcome your fears on witnessing Jesus. Do you have resolute faith in Jesus? Do you have unconditional faith? Do you have conviction in your faith? Do you have blind faith? If you have such faith in Christ's words which is the truth, (Jn 17:17) you will know the truth (Christ) & this truth (power) will set you free from all your fears because, Jesus said; "you will know the truth (Christ) and the truth (Christ) will set you free", from all your fears. (Jn 8:32)

We need God's Grace to believe in this blessing.

So, let us ask God to give us his grace to repose trust in his words, for he said; "My Grace is all you need. My power is greatest when you are weak-in faith. (2 Cor 12: 9) It is only by God's grace we will receive conviction to put our faith into action to see how the Word works in our life, for; "God's Words will work in those who

believe". (1 Thes 2:13) At the same time, God also said; "They heard Good News, but it did not do anything good to them because when they heard, they did not accept it with faith." (Heb 4:2) Do you doubt Jesus? He says; "Blessed are those who do not doubt me." (Mt 11:6)

Yes, my dear believer, if you do not dare to hope in the Lord, (Or) if you fail to believe in God's Words, but continue to rely on what your mind says, you will never be able to see how God's power will work in you to set you free from fear. That is why, before raising Lazarus from death, Jesus said to Martha; Didn't I tell you, if you believe you will see glory of God? (Jn11:40) because, Martha did not believe that the decomposed body of Lazarus would come back to life. She relied on her mind instead of trusting the power in life-giving words of Jesus, who said; Lazarus will come alive. (Jn 6:63) Do not worry on your unknown fears. Only trust in God's words and meditate on it day & night to gain insight & wisdom. (Sir 6:37) The Spirit of Wisdom will help you and deliver you from all fears to witness Jesus.

Let us dare to hope in the Lord & believe in his Words, for the he knows what is good for us, for; in all things he does everything good for those who love him. (Rom 8:28) He will provide us with Grace that we need, for St Paul said; God shall supply all our needs form his abundant wealth through Jesus. (Phil4:19) We must pray to God with faith to fill us with grace to overcome fears. To those who pray with faith, God gives them generously and graciously. (Jas 1:5)

Dear reader, the Lord is in full control of every situation and nothing moves without his consent, for he said; everything is made possible through me, for you can do nothing without me. (Jn 15:5) Jesus who called you to share his power will not abandon you to the power of evil. So, do not fear evil, rather with help of God the Father, (Jn 17:11) with help of his Son Jesus Christ who is our Friend & Shepherd, (Jh15:14-15) and with help of the Holy Spirit, our Helper & counsellor (Jh14:16) fight the Satan who instils fear in your mind. **Never bow down to the Satan in fear, for he gives us only fear but God fills us with his mighty power. (Ps 62:11 & Is 59:21)**

The LORD has called out his proud and confident soldiers (you) to fight a holy war (to do his Ministry) and punish those he is angry with (to destroy the works of the evil one.) *Isaiah 13:3*

QUESTION NO: 19

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT FEAR?

IS OUR SINS INSTILLING FEAR IN US?

God said: "I am holy, and my people stumble over me because of their sins, for I am like a rock". (Is 8:14) We stumble before God because of our sinfulness. A person who has no sin in him, will have no guilt feeling and hence he will not stumble before God, because; he will have no fear to come in to the presence of the Lord. *In the Bible, we understand; Adam & Eve were hiding themselves from God's presence out of fear because they committed sin. (Gen 3:7-8)* When God called out Adam; where are you? Adam answered; I heard you in the garden; I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked. (Gen 3:10) Adam & Eve hid themselves from God, because, the sin of disobedience which the Satan planted in them brought fear in them. We also hide from God's presence due to fear caused by our sins & guilt. *Isaiah said: People will hide in caves in rocky hills, or dig holes in the ground to escape from the Lord's anger and hide from his power & glory, because of their sins. (Is 2:10) Yes, our sins will instil fear in us. In fear, we will hide from God's presence.*

DOES OUR SINS WEIGH UPON OUR SOUL?

God warns; if you go away from me due to sins, you will be captives & slaves. (Is 50:1) *The Satan will put more and more fear in you and drag you into the world of dead where your soul will cease to rejoice in God & live. God refers this as death of soul, as he warns:*

- If someone stops sinning and keeps my laws, if he does what is right and good, he will not die; he will certainly live. All his sins will be forgiven and he will live. His soul will live and rejoice, because he did what is right. Do you think I enjoy seeing evil people die? asks the Sovereign LORD. No, I would rather see them repent, turn away from sin and live. (Ezekiel 18:21-23)
- But if a righteous person stops doing good and starts doing all the evil, disgusting things that evil people do, will he go on living? No! None of the good he did will be remembered. He will die because of his unfaithfulness and his sins. (Ezekiel 18:24)
- So then, my friends, we have an obligation, but it is not to live as our human nature wants us to. For, if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death your sinful actions, you will live. (Rom 8:12-13)

WILL TURNING AWAY FROM SIN BRING LIFE IN US?

God says; repent & return to me, for I am your God. My love for you is eternal. (Ps 136:1-25) Yes, God says; I have loved you with an everlasting love. (Jer 31:3) In my anger I may have rejected you due to your sins for a brief moment. But if you repent and return to me, I will gather you with great compassion. (Is 54:7) All day long I wait and I hold out my open arms to welcome you, my disobedient & rebellious child. (Rom 10:22) However red your sins are, I will wash all your sins with my blood & cleanse you as white as wool. (Is 1:17-18) I will take delight in you and my love will give New Life in your soul. (Zeph 3:17) Do not go away from me out of fear caused by your sins, for I will never reject you. I will not forsake you. (Heb 13:5)

God says; turn away from your sin and be my messenger.

If you continue to live in sin, you will never experience God's presence in you. Unless you repent, even God cannot help you. Yes, without your efforts to give up sins, God is also helpless to redeem you from the slavery of sin. The choice between "to repent (or) not to repent, but to live in sin" is within you. You need to exercise your freedom to return to God. **If you do not realise your sinfulness and make efforts to repent, even God cannot help you.** Yes, God waits for your decision to return to him in repentance so that he will gather deep love & compassion (Is 54:7) and redeem you from your slavery. If you take one step to repent, God will take ten steps to come near to you. **Yes, God says; If you return, I will take you back and you will be my servant again. If instead of talking nonsense, you will proclaim a worthwhile message and you will be my prophet again.** (Jer 15:19)

Unless you decide to repent and return to God, you will not receive God's help. The Satan will hold us as captive and refugee in your weaknesses for sin and crime. (Ezkl 12:11-12) Your sins will weigh upon your soul. (Wis 9:15) If you continue to live in sin, by postponing your repentance for the last day, that last day will never come. Then you will reach a stage where the power of sin will be so intense in you, that; even if you make efforts to turn away from sin, you will never be able to repent and turn back to God. Because, you would have gone past the point of "No Return." You will remain as a slave for sin, for Jesus said; I am telling you the truth: everyone who sins, is a slave of sin. (Jn 8:34) The power of your sin will weigh upon your soul. St Paul explains this spiritual apathy; how the power of sin will weigh on your soul in 2 Tim 3:1-7. (You are advised to read this passage to understand the gravity of sin) That's why God said; Today is the Day of the Lord. Repent & rejoice. (Neh 8:9-10 & Phil 4:4)

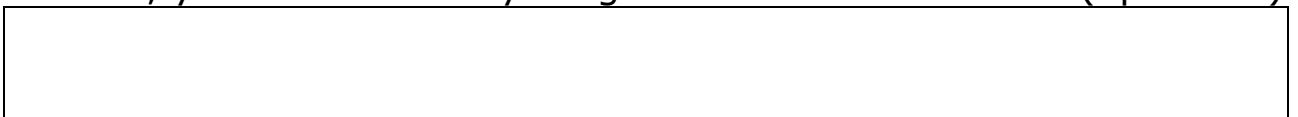
God says; Do not fear because of your sins.

God knows that we are weak for sin, because; the seed of sin was planted in man's body by the Satan when Adam & Eve committed sin. Hence, sin lives in us. (Rom7:15-17) God knows our sinful nature and when we sin, he takes pity on us because we are committing sin out of ignorance. (Hos 4:6) By sinning, we lose God's presence & live in darkness, which cause fear in us. Our sins take us far away from God's like how the prodigal son went away from his father's presence & lost everything. (Lk 15:1-30) God hates sin but not the sinners, because Jesus said; I have come to seek the lost; I have come for the sinners. (Lk 19:10) **So, God says; take courage. Return to me & I will return to you.** (Zech 1:3) Turn back to me & I will turn to you. (Mal3:7) **Come near me & I will come near to you.** (Jas4:8) **If someone evil stops sinning and keeps my laws, if he does what is right / good, he will not die; he will certainly live. All his sins will be forgiven & he will live, because he did what is right.** (Ezek 18:21-22)

WHY SHOULD YOU LIVE IN CONSTANT FEAR OF FURY?

God says; I am the one who strengthens you. Why should you fear mortal man, who is no more enduring than grass? Have you forgotten the Lord who made you, who stretched out the heaven and laid the earth's foundations? **Why should you live in constant fear of fury of those who oppress you & those who are ready to destroy you?** Their fury can no longer touch you. Those who are prisoners (for fear) will soon be set free; they will live a long life and have all food they need. I say to Jerusalem; "You are my people! I have given you my teaching and I will protect you with my hand". (Isaiah 51:12-16)

Yes, my dear brother/sister, our Christian life is a spiritual war between the Holy Spirit & the evil spirits. (Eph 6:12) God has given us power to fight against the evil spirits which are causing fear in us; so that we may not take bold steps to witness Christ. All we need to do is; read God's words, retain them in our heart, remind God his promises day & night (Is62:6-7) and claim God's faithfulness for his promises (2Tim 2:13) through Jesus who is the "Yes" for God's promises. (2Cor 1:20) God says; use the right choice of God's Words for the right situation against the Satan. (Prov 15:23) Yes, we are called to use God's words as powerful weapons against our enemy to fight well (1Tim1:18) in order resist his attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground to witness Christ. (Eph 6:13)



The Bible says; "Word of God is the Spirit and wherever there is God's Spirit, there is freedom." (2 Cor 3:17) It means, you will be set free from all your fears. Yes, when you are filled with God's words and use the right choice of Word effectively at the right time, you will be delivered from all fears the Satan is trying to instil in your mind. **This is the reason why St Paul said; Christ's message must live in your hearts in all its richness, (Col 3:16) because; his message is a fire that will burn up all fears in you and his word is a hammer that break rocks (power of evil causing fear) in to pieces. (Jer 23:29)** Such wonderful thing will happen to you, because; God's words are alive & active. His words will deliver you from the evil spirits which are causing fear. **God says; Word of God is alive & active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through where your soul & spirit meet (evil spirit) & will deliver you from the evil spirits which are causing fear. You will be set free from all fears. (Heb 4:12)**

AT TIMES OF FEAR, DO YOU INTROSPECT YOURSELF WITH GOD'S WORDS?

When you go through moments of fear in times of trials and tribulations, do you reflect on Word of God as below?

1) *Do you understand that the times of testing & tribulation has come from God's hand?* For David said; God makes us to go through fire & flood; then brings us to a place of safety. (Ps 66:10-12) Sirach said; My child, if you are going to serve the Lord, be prepared for times when you will be put to the test. Be sincere and determined. Keep calm when trouble comes. Stay with the Lord; never abandon him, and you will be prosperous at the end of your days. Accept whatever happens to you. Even if you suffer humiliation, be patient. Gold is tested by fire, and human character is tested in the furnace of humiliation. Trust the Lord, and he will help you. Walk straight in his ways, and put your hope in him. Do not get discouraged. (Sir 2:1-6)

2) *Are you alive for the truth to understand and accept that; 'God is permitting such a test on you?'* Because, God tests the heart & mind of people. (Jer 17:10) And he tests people whom he things they are worthy, like how gold is tested in furnace. (Wis 3:5-6) Yes, when he tested Job for his faithfulness, he permitted the Satan to destroy all his wealth, blessings, including his body. (Job 1:1-11) But God did not give the Satan authority over Job's life. (Job 1:12) Yes, God may permit troubles & tribulations in your life. He may even allow the Satan to destroy your wealth, and take you to the point of death. But God will revive you to live again like Job, (Is 66:9) so that you will come to know God's power and proclaim God's glory & power to the world and draw people in faith by sharing your spiritual experiences.

3) How faithful are you to God, at the time when you are put to test? Jesus asked Peter thrice; Do you love me? He questioned Peter's faithfulness knowing well that he will deny him thrice. (Jn 21:15-17) *Dear believer do you also deny Jesus when your faith is put to test?*

4) During the times of testing and tabulations, how deep is your faith in Jesus? A Canaanite woman was pleading Jesus to deliver her daughter possessed with evil spirits! To test her faith, Jesus told her; how can I through the bread to dogs which are meant for his children? The woman who had great faith in Jesus replied; "It is true Sir, but even dogs feed on the leftover bread that fall from their master's table." *Jesus was amazed with her faith and said: "You are a woman of great faith"! (Mt 15:21-28) Do you have such faith?* Similarly, a Centurion was pleading for healing of his sick servant to Jesus. When Jesus wanted to reach the Centurion's house to heal the servant, the Centurion said; "Lord I am not worthy to have you under my roof. But, say a word from here, my servant will be healed". *Jesus was amazed at his faith. (Mt 8:5-10) Do you have such blind faith?*

5) Do you trust God in times of testing, even at the point of death, for God to rescue you? Daniel trusted the Living God to rescue him when he was thrown in the lion's pit and remained there for seven days. *God sent an angle to protect Daniel from the lions and finally Daniel was pulled out of the lion's pit by the King. (Daniel 6:10-28)* The three men Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown in a blazing furnace for reposing faith in the Living God. Yet, knowing the danger of being thrown in the furnace, they did not lose faith in God to rescue them. *And the Lord sent an angel from heaven who did not allow them to be burnt by fire. And the king pulled them out of the furnace. (Dan 3:8-25) Their resolute faith in living God saved them.*

6) At the time when you are put to test, are you trying to find solution through worldly means, outside God's teachings to get over your fear? For, people go to astrologers for predictions (Is 47:12-13), consult spirits of the dead, medium and offer sacrifices at pagan's altar to find solutions. (Is 8:19-20) Also, they indulge in witchcraft /Blackmagic to find solution for problems and get over the situation.

7) At times of testing and tribulations, are you trying to overcome fear with your knowledge (or) with the help the Lord offers you? Because Jesus is your friend, (Jn 15:14-16)) your Counsellor (Is 9:6) and the Holy Spirit is your Helper (Jn 14:16) who will give solutions to all your problems! If you are trying to fight fear only with your little worldly wisdom, then you have more reasons to give-in for fear, because; the Satan is very cunning & clever beast, who will trap you

*in your weakness. But if you fight your fears with God's Words and resolute firmness in faith, you will never give-in for fear, but you will walk over fear and find victory. Because God said; Do not be afraid, I am with you. I am your God let nothing terrify you. I will make you strong & help you; I will protect you & save you; those who are angry with you will know the shame of defeat. **Those who fight against you will die and disappear from the earth. I am the Lord your God; I strengthen you & say; Do not be afraid, I will help you. (Is41:10-13)***

ARE YOU DETERMINED & CONFIDENT?

8) At times of trials and tribulations do you remain determined & confident? *The most important thing that you must understand is: You can experience God's power to rescue you from any situation, if only you remain confident to face problems with determination that; with God's help you can win over all situations. When Joshua was to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land, to overcome challenges God warned him thrice. "Remember Josuha, he said, I have commanded you to be determined and confident! Don't be afraid or discouraged, for I, the Lord your God, am with you wherever you go. (Josh :1 -9)*

When God called Jeremiah to proclaim his message to the rebellious people, he warned him to be determined & confident. (Jer:4-19) Yes, if you are not determined & confident about your call to witness Jesus the Satan will use your wavering mind and shallow faith to gain upper hand. You can't experience God's protection if your faith is weak, for St James said you will be like a boat tossed in the storm. (Jas1:2-8)

If you fear about the difficulties, challenges, insults & persecutions that you may have to face for the sake of witnessing Jesus to the world, then you should observe regular fasting, fill yourself with God's Words in faith which will deliver you from all fears, for Word of God is a double-edged sword. It will enter in between your soul & the evil spirit which has enslaved it and deliver your soul from evil spirits & give freedom. God's Word will deliver you from all fears. (Heb 4:12)

If you make such sincere effort, God of all graces who has called you according to his purpose to witness Christ, surely will help you to get rid of all your fears, give you strength & sure foundation (1 Pet 5:10) to overcome all fears & help you become his servant to proclaim Jesus to the ends of the world. For, God has given a promise that; "The son of God keeps him (you) safe, and the evil one can't hurt him (you)." (1 Jn 2:19) **Yes, the Lord says; "Stop fearing Evil. I am with you and I will rescue you from its power". (Jer 42:11)**

DO YOU STILL HAVE AN ELEMENT OF DOUBT IN YOUR MIND?

Now in our changed life, after we have understood the saving power of Christ, having overcome all fears, we want to spend the rest of our life in service to God; by preaching, counselling, praying over the sick, serving the poor & the disabled, conducting praise & worship and prayer meetings etc. It means to follow the life of Jesus Christ, for which we all are called & are chosen. ***But there is always an element of fear of failure and criticism in us. Therefore, you are advised to read the discourse on "Fear of failure and criticism" deliberated in this chapter to know what God spoke about such fears.***

If you witness Christ, the world will reject us. Do not fear.

When you move forward to witness Jesus the Satan will give fears, anxiety & problems to discourage you. The world will reject you, like how Christ was rejected! Justice was denied to him. The same thing will happen to you. Your dear & loved ones will reject you if you witness Christ, for he said; Because you are faithful to me, some of your own people hate you, and will have nothing to do with you."(Mt 10:21-22) It will be time of testing for faith because, Christ said; In my name people will reject you, accuse you, arrest you, & produce you in front of authorities and Governors. (Lk 12:11) If they kill the master, they will kill the servants also. (Jn 15:20-21) You will face trials & persecutions because, the world will hate you when you work for salvation. ***But never give-in for fear, for God said; his power & his presence will be always with us to lead us, fight for us and to deliver us from all difficulties as we read below. God said:***

- Do not be afraid of them because the decision you make (to serve/witness the Lord) comes from God. (Duet 1:17)
- Do not be afraid of those people (your enemy-Satan). The Lord God will lead you, and he will fight for you, just as you saw him doing in Egypt & in the desert. (Duet: 1:29-30)
- I will take up your cause and make them (our enemies) to pay for what they have done to you. (Jer 51:36)
- Do not be afraid of them (our enemies) for the Lord your God will fight for you & give victory over them". (Duet 3:22 & 31:5)
- Now I will make you as firm as rock, as hard as diamond. Do not be afraid of your enemies. (Ez1 3:8-9)
- I am giving you strength to resist them. You will be an iron pillar & bronze wall as far as they are concerned. They will not defeat you. I am with you to protect you. (Jer 1:18-19)
- I will make you a solid wall of bronze as far as your enemies are concerned. They will fight against you, but they will not defeat you. I will be with you to give victory. I will rescue you from the power of the wicked. (Jer 15:19-20)

When Joshua was to lead the Israelites in the desert, God spoke to Joshua through Moses. He said; "Be determined and confident. Do not be afraid of them. Your God himself will be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you". "Be determined and confident. You are the one who will lead these people to occupy the land that the Lord has promised to their ancestor" (in our context the land refers to living a righteous life & witnessing Jesus to the world) The Lord himself will lead you & be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you". So do not lose courage or be afraid. (Duet 31:6-8) The Lord is with you, there is no reason for you to fear anything. The Lord God is with you & his power gives you victory. (Zeph 3:15-17)

DO YOU FALL FOR SITUATIONS THAT THE SATAN CREATES?

Dear believers in Christ; are you still fearing about your life, about your future, about your problems, about sinful habits, about sickness, about your relations, about you children's life, for unknown fears or about taking bold steps to spread message of Good News, for which you are called? If you still fear, you are not trusting in Word of God, which gives assurance for protection in all these areas which were deliberated in this chapter. *As a believer, remember one thing; "As long as you live, the Satan will always be there to create such situations where you may lose courage, determination, and confidence, which will cause fear in you so that you may fall in faith".*

Thus, the Satan will cause hindrance in your service to God. But he cannot stop you in God's work, because, the light of Lord's glory will shine on you. Your days of grief will come to an end. The Lord will be your eternal light more lasting than the sun & the moon. Even the smallest & humblest will become a great & powerful. The Lord will make it happen. (Is 60:19-22) Because, his splendour will pass before us, he will go before us to give us victory. (Ex34:14 &19)

The Satan will sow the seed of fear in our mind, because he knows that we are weak in flesh. (Mt 26:41) Christ lived as an ordinary man and suffered in human nature on the cross. When Christ was in the garden Gethsemane, praying, he knew what is going to happen to him when he is arrested. In his human nature he also feared about his sufferings that he was about to undergo. But at that moment God the Father sent an Angel to encourage him, to strengthen & fill him with abundance of God's grace, to take up the cross and do his Father's will; which is to redeem the fallen mankind.

Yes, you will also be filled with God's grace to proclaim Jesus to the world if you accept God as your heavenly Father in

faith, and accept his words as true words, (Jn 17:17) living words, (John 6:63) accept his words as alive and active words, (Heb 4:2) accept the truth at there is power in the name 'Jesus', (Jn 17:11) then you will experience power of the Lord working in you when you go through moments of fear. (1 Thes 2:13) Word of God will deliver you from all your fears, because Word of God will cut through in-between your soul and the evil spirits which enslaves your soul to cause fear & it will deliver you from fear as we read in Hebrews 4:12.

If we live with Word of God realising all its richness & dare to hope in the power that dwells in it, (Col 3:16) to fight our enemy the Satan, our Lord Jesus Christ will give us victory in all our struggles. For his Words says; I will fight for you by My Spirit. The obstacles as great mountains will disappear before you. You will win victory not by your military might, but by my Spirit. (Zech 4: 6-7) Yes, wherever the Spirit of God is present, there is always freedom from all evil things & there is deliverance from all fears. (2 Cor 3:17)

DEAR BELIEVER DO YOU STILL FEAR? Speak to Jesus Christ about your fears. You will find an answer. You will be delivered of your fears, because it is a promise from our Lord to deliver you and he is faithful to his promise. (2 Tim 2:13) When you go through the valley of death, Jesus Christ who is your Shepherd will be with you to fight for you and protect you with his shepherd rod and staff. (Ps 23:4) Because you have made the LORD your defender, the Most High your protector, and so no disaster will strike you, no violence will come near your home. God will put his angels in charge of you to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you up with their hand to keep you from hurting your feet on the stones. You will trample down lions & snakes, fierce lions and poisonous snakes. God says, "I will save those who love me and will protect those who acknowledge me as LORD. When they call to me, I will answer them; when they are in trouble, I will be with them. I will rescue them and honor them. I will reward them with long life and I will save them. (Ps 91:9 - 16)

FEAR is the greatest weapon the Satan is using against Mankind to keep us away from using the power that God has given us against him. But Jesus says; I have given you authority over the Snakes & Scorpion and overcome power of the enemy. (Lk 19:19) Do not fear, I am with you till end of the ages (Mt 28:18-20) It is time to reflect on this Truth!

QUESTION NO: 20

WHAT IS FAITH?

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITH AND BELIEF?

What is Belief? To understand faith; first we should know what belief is? To believe is; to accept a thing as truth or real after seeing a tangible thing with our eyes or by physically touching and feeling a material thing. St Thomas believed that Jesus has risen and he is alive after seeing Jesus & by touching his wounds. (Jn 20:19-28) In our life, it relates to worldly material things. For e.g. We believe that the sun will rise in the east every day, because we physically see it happening. We believe that we will live a healthy life, if we eat well regularly and we believe that our wounds/sickness will heal if we are treated medically, because; we see such things happening physically. *When we talk about belief, we acknowledge our trust on things that are of this world, because we see them happening physically in life.*

What is Faith? *Faith is to believe in a happening 'to be true', even without seeing it. It may be a happening which is physical. Or, may not be not physical but it may be a spiritual happening. Faith is to believe in something to be true, which we expect to happen in the future & we are sure of about it!! We have not seen it happen, yet, we are very sure that it will.*

First, we will understand; what is faith in the happenings which are physical!

Parents of a girl for whom marriage is not settled for a long time, call upon the Lord in distress with fasting & prayer, reminding God of his promise; Search in the Lord's book of living creatures and read what it says. Not one of these creatures will be missing and not one will be without its mate. The Lord's has commanded it to be so; he himself will bring them to gather (Is 34:16) The prayers raised by the parents in faith is heard by God and he answered. (Tobit 5:16) The girl is blessed with a good life partner. This is physical happening!

Though the parents have not seen the bridegroom earlier, yet they believed that the Lord will bring a good person as their son-in-law, and it really happened. This is a physical happening. Many such physical blessings are received by believers who put their faith in to action. (Jas1:22-24) Such happenings encourage people to become confident and they are convinced about faith. Our faith in God is

renewed day-by-day by the power of the Spirit, (2Cor 4:16) and it continues to grow day-by-day by the power of the Spirit. (Rom15:13)

Now, we will understand; 'what is faith in happenings which are spiritual'!

In faith, we believe that; Jesus Christ died & rose to life again. (Mk 16:1-20) Also, in faith we believe that when we die, we will also rise to life again (1Cor 15:35-49) to live with Christ in eternal life, as he promised us. (Jh11:25) We have not seen all these things happen, yet, we believe & are very sure that they are spiritual truths and real.

Death & resurrection of Christ is an event of the past. Christ's death is a past physical event, and his resurrection is a past spiritual event. We have not seen them happen. Yet, we believe that it is true and we are sure about it. Our death and raising to life in spirit to live eternal life with Jesus is a future spiritual happening, which we strongly believe to be true and we are very sure that it will happen at second coming of Jesus. (Rom 6:3-11) So, we are preparing ourselves in this earthly life to be worthy of the free gift; eternal life. (Rom 6:23) In faith, we believe in these past physical and spiritual events - death & resurrection of Jesus, and the future spiritual event - we will raise to life at the second coming of Jesus. We are very sure about it, because God has spoken about them and his words are true. (Jn 17:17) Yes, in faith we believe and are sure that; Jesus will come again to take believers who are faithful to him till the end. (Mt 24:13)

We believe & we are sure that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and that he will come back again to raise his believers from the death for eternal life. We have not seen the resurrection of Christ, yet we believe that he rose to life again from death. This belief is known as faith. Also, we dare to put our hope in Jesus Christ and believe that he will come again to take his believers to the heavenly Kingdom, because; God's words says that this will happen. God's words create hope in us & this hope does not disappoint us (Rom 5:5) and so we believe. This belief gives confidence in spiritual truths which is known as Faith. Faith is a gift from God. The Gift of Faith is given to anyone who reads the Bible before sunrise. (Rom10:14-17 and Wis 6:12-21)

WHAT IS LIVING BY FAITH?

People of this world believe; to live healthy life we must eat healthy food regularly. But Christian's faith is, we live healthy life not by eating rich food regularly, but by living righteously, for God says:

➤ *The righteous live a full life. The Lord will reward them and the*

- Most High will protect them. (Wis 5:15)*
- *Righteous men will be happy. Things will go well for them. They will enjoy all what they have worked for. (Is 3:10)*
 - *If you obey me in everything that I command, all will go well with you; and you will prosper in your life. (Duet 5:33)*
 - *But for you who obey me, my saving power will raise on you like sun and bring healing like sun rays. You will be set free like calf let out of the stall. (Malachi 4:2)*
 - *My son, pay attention to my word. Never let them go away from you. Remember them & keep them in your heart. They will give life & healing to anyone who understands them. (Prove4:20-22)*
 - *Jesus said: Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that is spoken by God. (Mt 4:4)*
 - *Further Jesus said; I have come in order that you may have life. I have come to give life in all its fullness. (Jn 10:10)*

This means; food alone does not give good health & long life!
 We are called to live righteous life to enjoy a healthy & long life, as written in; Ps 15, Is 58:1-12 & Ezek 18:5-9. *In faith, if we live a life that pleases God, we will be blessed with good health & long life.* By doing so, we will also gain good spiritual life & await the eternal life after death, which has been promised by Jesus Christ. (John 11:25)

Living by faith means to trust in God's words & live righteous life obeying him, accepting all difficulties, sufferings from God's hands and still be sure to receive solutions for problems from God. Yet, continue our spiritual life by fasting and praying to endure trials & tribulations. God says; To have faith is to be sure of what we hope for and be certain of things we cannot see. (Heb 11:1)

WHY SHOULD WE HAVE FATH IN GOD?

In all creation, God has revealed his glory in nature. (Sir 42:15-25) And what all God created has a purpose. So, when God created human beings he had a purpose for them, which is known as *God's will for man.* According to God's will, man is created to glorify God's Spirit in his body which is the temple of the Holy spirit, (1Cor3:16) so that God can also share his glory with man, for the Scripture says;

- *Those whom God set apart, he called; and those he called, he put right with himself, and he shared his glory with them. (Rom 8:28-30)*
- *Yes, God called you to this through the Good News that is preached. He called you to possess your share of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thes2:14) *This is God's will for man.**

In the scriptures we understand, from the very beginning man turned away from God and did everything against God's will. However, God's love for man was so great that he chose prophets, revealed himself to them, shared his glory with them & used them to guide mankind in the light of the Lord. (E.g., Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah & Ezekiel etc)

God's Eternal Plan

Yes, God said: "They are my people I created them to glorify me. (Is 43:7) Further, he said; "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, but to God; he bought you for a price. (Blood of Jesus) So, use your body for God's glory. (1 Cor 6:18-20) Yes, God wants that man should remain holy (1 Pet 1:15) and glorify God's spirit in his body and also, man should share God's glory, so that God's Eternal Plan is accomplished. God's eternal plan is; at the right time, God will unite all creation-his children with heavenly beings as one family with Jesus as head. (Eph 1:8-11) And God's Eternal Plan is accomplished through his plan for us. He said; I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring prosperity & not disaster, plans to bring about good future you hope for. (Jer 29: 11)

God's plan is accomplished through faith:

But people did not give attention to warnings given by God through the prophets. They chose not to believe in God's warnings. They continued to live in sinful manner. Hence God sent his own Son Jesus to teach and guide people in the path of truth. Jesus Christ lived according to his teachings, worked miracles and wonders to make people understand that he is Son of the living God. Yet, people chose not to believe Jesus. He was rejected by the people whom he loved & was crucified because he spoke truth which they did not like.

At this juncture, it is very important for us to understand why people did not accept Jesus as their master. It was because; their mind was kept in darkness by the evil god of this world, so that they may not believe in Jesus. (2Cor 4:4 & Rom 1:21) The Bible says; *The light -Christ has come in to the world, but people love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. (Jn 3:19) The Satan blinds people's mind so that they fail to see the Eternal Light of Christ shining on them. (Is 60:19) They do not to see the glorious light of Christ shining on them. (Eph 5:14) The Satan always instil doubts & confusion in mind so that people will not come to know the truth-Jesus & receive spiritual powers he promised to mankind. (Mt 18:18)*

WHAT DID JESUS SAY ABOUT FAITH?

Jesus said; as his followers we should have faith. And about faith, he said the following:

- *Have faith in God the Father and have faith in me. (Jn 14:1)*
- *In faith if you remain in me & my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, you shall have it. (Jn 15:7)*
- *In faith, whatever you bind on earth, it will be bound in heaven. In faith whatever set loose on earth, it will be set loose in heaven. (Mt 16:18 & 18:18)*
- *If you have faith of the size of a mustard seed and you could say to this mulberry tree to pull yourself up by the roots and plant yourself in the sea, it will obey. (Lk 17:6)*
- *If you believe, you will do greater miracles and wonders than me. (Jn 14:12)*
- *Believers are given power to perform miracles; they will drive out demons in my name; they will speak in strange tongues. If they pick up snakes or drink poison, it will not harm them; they will place hands on sick people who will get well. (Mk 16:17-18)*
- *A woman who was bleeding for twelve years touched Jesus' Cloak in faith and she was healed. Then Jesus said to her; take courage! Your faith has made you well. (Mk 5:25-34)*
- *Jesus said; If you believe, it will happen to you as you have believed. (Mt 8:13)*
- *All things are possible for a person who has faith. (Mark 9:23)*
- *If you believe you will see the glory of God. (Jn 11:40)*
- ***Blessed are those who have faith in me. (Mt 11:6)***

WHAT DID THE PROPHETS & APOSTELS SAY ABOUT FAITH?

About faith, they said the following:

- *God's plan is made known to us through faith. (1 Tim 1:4)*
- *By having faith God's Words, we become righteous in the eyes of the Lord. (Rom 3:28 & 4: 11, 13)*
- *Our earthly life is a matter of faith, not of sight. (2 Cor 5:7)*
- *A person who is put right with God through faith shall live. (Rom 1:17)*
- *In faith, if you put God's words to practice, you will be blessed in everything you do. (James 1:25)*
- *Faith without action is dead. (James 2:14-17)*
- *How great is the power at work in us who believe. It is the same power which God used when he raised Christ from death. (Eph 1:19)*
- *Your faith will be a shield for you against the arrows of the*

- enemy. (Eph 6:16)
- You win victory over the world through faith. (1 Jn 5:4)
 - God will condemn you if your actions are not based on faith, because; anything that is not based on faith is sin. (Rom 14:23)
 - *It is through faith, all of us become God's sons in union with Jesus Christ. (Gal 3:26)*
 - Believe in Jesus, you and your family will be saved. (Acts 16:31)
 - ***If your faith is not enduring you will not endure. (Is 7:9)***

The thumb rule in God's kingdom is; if only we have faith in Jesus Christ and in his Words, he will make all things possible for us according to God's plan. (Jer 29:11) This calls for unconditional surrender of our intelligence (Prov 3:5-6) to repose faith in Jesus & in his life-giving Words (Jn 6:63) so that; God can work through us (Is 42:6-7) and use us as his instruments (1 Per 2:9 & 2 Tim 2:21) to accomplish God's eternal plan. (Eph1:7-11) This is the reason why we are called to repose faith in Jesus to practice a true Christian life.

DID THE SATAN PLANT THE SEED OF DOUBT IN OUR MIND?

But the Satan is always working to destroy God's plan. Because the Satan fears that; 'in faith man will realise the spiritual authority which God has given him and he may use the power against him to set himself free from the power of sin' and the Satan can no longer hold man as his captive and refugee. (Is 50:1-2 & Ezek 12:11-12) Therefore the Satan works to destroy our faith. He plants doubts in our mind about Jesus, his call for us and about his un-ending power. Thus, we fall in faith and have doubt about Jesus, his words & power.

But Jesus said; if you do not doubt, whatever you ask for in prayer in my name, my father in heaven will give it to you. (Jn 15:7) And when you pray and ask for something, believe that you have received it, and you will be given whatever you ask for. (Mk 11:24) About faith he said; Believers are given power to work miracles. They will drive out demons in my name. They will speak in strange language. If they pick up snakes or drink any poison, it will not harm them. They will place hands on sick who will get well. (Mk 16:18-19)

This is how God wants to share his power and glory with his children (Isaiah 59:21) who believe in truth. And the truth is;

- There is only one God who is our heavenly Father. He is the beginning and end. (Is 44:6 & Rev 22:13)
- The heavenly Father sent his only Son Jesus Christ to this world for salvation/to redeem the fallen mankind from sin. (Jn 3:16)

- *Jesus Christ preached Good News on love, repentance and forgiveness. (Mt 4:17)*
- *Jesus Christ was rejected by mankind, crucified, died and he rose to life again from death. (Matthew - Chapters 27 & 28)*
- *Jesus Christ now lives with us in Spirit after resurrection, for he said; "I will be with you till end of ages." (Mt 28:19-20)*
- *After our physical death, we also raise to life in spirit for eternal life with Christ. (1 Cor 15:35-58) We will receive this eternal life only through faith in Christ, for he said: **I am the resurrection and life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies & whoever lives and believes in me will never die.** (Jh11:25-26)*

WHY WE SHOULD HAVE FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST?

THE SCRIPTURE GIVES THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATIONS FOR THIS QUESTION:

1. By having faith in Jesus, we become righteous and we shall live: *God said; No one can please God without faith. (Heb 11:6) It was by faith people gained God's approval. (Heb 11:2) Through our faith in Jesus, we are accepted as righteous in the eyes of God. (Gal: 3:6) **A person who is put right with God through faith shall live.** (Rom 1:17)*

2. By having faith in Jesus, we become sons of the Almighty God: *By accepting Jesus we are baptised, (Eph 4:5) and we are recognised as sons of God. (Gal 3:26) In Baptism, God's mark of ownership is put on us by the Spirit. (Eph 4:30) Thus, we become God's children, for he said 'You are my son, today I have become your father. Ask, I will give you all the nations the whole earth will be yours'. (Ps2:7-8)*

3. By having faith in Jesus, we receive forgiveness of sins: *It is the Holy Spirit who corrects us in our sinfulness & leads us to repent for our sins. (Wis 12:1-2, Rom 2:4) It is by having faith in Christ's Ministry-the Sacrament of Confession, our sins will be forgiven. (Jn 20:19-21)*

4. By having faith in Jesus, we receive our lost blessings in double measure: *In faith, if we respond to God's call for repentance, confess our sins, receive forgiveness in the Sacrament-Confession, and turn away from sins once for all, God will restore all our lost blessings in double measure (Zech9:12, Duet30:3-13, Joel2:12-26, Lk15:10-30)*

5. By having faith in Jesus, we will be healed of our sickness: *In faith, if we repent truly & give-up sins forever, and turn back to God, God will heal all our sickness by forgiving our sins. (Is 58:6-8 & Mal 4:2)*

6. By having faith in Jesus, we become a part of his body: When we receive the Sacrament - Holy Communion, we become the chosen Children to eat Christ's body & drink his blood. Thus, we take part in the Lord's Supper & receive eternal life. Jesus said; I am telling you the truth, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man & drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves. (Jh6:53-58) Through the Holy Communion we become a part of Christ's body. (1Cor12:12-27)

7. By having faith in Jesus, we receive/enjoy fruits of the Holy Spirit: When we receive the Sacrament-Confirmation, the anointment of the Holy Spirit fills us with fruits of the Spirit. (Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control) The fruits of the Holy Spirit strengthen us in all our weaknesses and fills us with power and grace to avoid sin and live a good Christian life. (Gal5:22)

8. By having faith in Jesus, we receive authority preach Good News: Through the Sacraments - Baptism & Confirmation, God gives us the authority through the Roman Catholic Church to preach Good News and to stand as witness for Jesus Christ. (Mk 16:15-16 and 1Pet 2:9)

9. By having faith in Jesus, we will receive strength to endure all sufferings: When we repose faith in Jesus Christ, our strength gets renewed. (Is 40:30-31) His love gives us new strength. (Zeph 3:17) Christ's Love fill us with enduring grace. (2 Cor 12:9) This grace fills us with power to endure hardships, sufferings, trials and tribulations, for God says; "if your faith endures, you will also endure" in trials and tribulations that you encounter in witnessing the truth. (Is 7:9)

10. By having faith in Jesus, you will be a conqueror: In faith, you receive God's power by which you are able to do much more than you can ever ask for or even think of. (Eph 3:20) If you have faith, you will find your strength renewed. You will raise on wings like eagle; you will run, you will not get weary; you will walk & not grow weak. (Is 40:31) **By God's power working in you, you will be more than a conqueror.** (Rom 8:37) You will be able to do all things by the power Christ gives, (Phil 4:13) for power belongs to him. (Ps 62:11)

11. By having faith in Jesus, we receive freedom from power of sin: In real faith, we enjoy freedom from sin, for God said; 'Freedom is what you have in Jesus. Christ has set you free from the bondage of sin'. (Gal5:1) Those who believe in Jesus and do not abuse their body & the anointment of the Holy Spirit in them, will be given power to rule over the evil spirits. (Wis 6:20-21) And they will have authority

to walk on snakes (weaknesses & desires for sin) and scorpions (sinful attractions of world) & overcome the power of evil. (Lk 10:19)

12. By having faith in Jesus, you will escape condemnation: If you have faith in Jesus, you can escape punishment for your sins because he said; 'For those who believe in me & live in union with me, there is no condemnation'. (Rom 8:1) Yes, those who believe in the Son are not judged; but those who do not believe have already been judged, because they have not believed in God's only Son. (Jn 3:18) If you believe these words, you will not be disappointed. (Rom 10:11)

13. By having faith in Jesus, you will see God's glory. Yes, before raising Lazarus back to life after four days of his death, Jesus said to Martha; "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believed?" And with one command, Jesus raised Lazarus back to life. (John 11:38-44) Further, Jesus said; "If you believe, you will do greater miracles and wonders than me". (Jn 14:12) Yes, you will see great miracles and wonders, if you have faith in Christ. (Joshua 3:5)

14. By having faith in Jesus, you will enjoy peace: To those who believe in Jesus, he said; Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid. (Jn 14:27) If you are put right with God through faith, you will have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 5:1) And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts & minds safe in union with Jesus. (Phil 4:7) No power on the earth can destroy your peace!

15. By having faith in Jesus, our soul & body will be healed: In faith, if a very sick person or a person who is very sick and is about to die is given the "Sacrament - Anointment of the sick", by a Priest in RC Church exercising the Ministry of Jesus, that person will be healed in his soul & body. His sins will be forgiven on the death bed. (Jas 5:16)

16. By having faith in Jesus Christ we receive eternal life: For he said; I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." (Jn 11:25) **If you believe Jesus, you will receive salvation!**

From the above we discern; we will live righteous life if only we have faith in God & in Jesus Christ, (Jn 14:1) because, our life on the earth is not by sight, but it is by faith. (2 Corinthians 5:7) The souls of people who do not accept Jesus as their saviour in faith will be lost for salvation, because; by rejecting Jesus as their saviour

(Rom 1:21) they deny their salvation, because God said; Salvation is to be found through Jesus alone & in all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us from the hell. (Acts 4:12) **Yes, God has entrusted souls of believers in the hands of Jesus after their death, because; Jesus is the Keeper of our souls.** (1 Pet 2:25) And about our Salvation, the Word of God says;

- There is no condemnation for those who accept Jesus in faith as their saviour and live in union with him. (Rom 8:1)
- About faith, Jesus himself has proclaimed that; if any one declares publicly that he belongs to me, I will do the same for him before my Father in heaven. But if anyone rejects me publicly, I will reject him before my Father in heaven. (Mt10:33)
- *Whoever believes in the Son-Jesus, has eternal life; whoever disobeys his son Jesus will not have life, (Salvation) but will remain under God's punishment and lose eternal life. (Jn 3:36)*

WHAT IS REAL FAITH?

The word 'Faith' is the key which opens the doors of kingdom of God. Faith is the foundation stone for the Church - 'Body of Christ' and its existence since the beginning. Faith of believers in Church- 'the institution created by Jesus' (Mt 26:26-30 & Lk 22:14-20) stands as a rock against all trials & tribulations because, Jesus said; Peter, you are a rock. And on this rock, I will build my Church. Gates of hell will have no power over it. (Mt 16:18-19) Unless our ancestors had faith in Jesus, the Good News would not have been preached all over the world. *Though the present generations have not seen Jesus, yet we believe that; Jesus was conceived to Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35) and Jesus is the true Son of God. (Mt 3:17)*

We also believe that; Jesus was crucified, died on the cross for the sins of mankind, (Jn 19:29-42) and Jesus rose back to life on the third day of his death, (Mt 28:1-10) and went back to his Father in heaven. (Lk 24:51) Further, we believe that; once again Jesus will come to gather all his faithful believers and take them to his heavenly Kingdom. (Mt 16:27 & Rev 22:12) And we also believe that; Jesus lives in this world - in Spirit, (Mt 28:19-20) and Jesus is near to those who believe in him and call upon him. (Psalms 145:18)

If we believe in the spiritual truths revealed in this discourse, surely, we have faith in Christ. Because, none of us have seen all these things happen, yet 'in faith', we accept that these happenings are true. *Yes, our faith is good as far as a follower of Jesus. But when it comes to living a true Christian life, i.e., to practice what Jesus has taught us, it means much more. Because faith in Jesus does not mean*

only to believe in his birth, death, resurrection & his second coming. Real faith is to put in to action what we believe in faith. (Jas1:22-24)

God has spoken about practicing real faith through St Paul. He said; Be joyful always, pray at all times and be thankful to God in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus. Do not restrain the Holy Spirit; do not despise inspired messages but obey them. Put all things to the test; keep what is good and avoid all evil. May the God who gives you peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. To live life in this manner calls for real faith. (1Thes 5:16-23)

Here, St Paul said; Put all thing to the test. It means; in Real Faith, God calls you to put your faith to test. Also God says; "Put my Words to test see the power at work" because, the kingdom of God is not just the matter of words but power.(1Cor 4:20) Further, St Paul says; I ask that your minds may be opened to see God's light, so that you will know what is the hope to which God has called you, how rich are the wonderful blessings God promises his people, and how very great is God's power at work in us who believe. This power working in us is the same as the mighty strength which God used when he raised Christ from death and seated him at his right side in the heavenly world. (Eph 1:18-20)_**Consequently, we discern that; "Realising God's Power which is at work in us and putting our faith to the test to see God's power to work miracle is known as - Real Faith."**

DOES FAITH GROWS IN OUR PERSONAL RELATION WITH JESUS CHRIST?

Faith comes by reading and hearing scriptures. (Rom 10:17) But real faith grows through our personal relationship with Jesus. It is a 'one to one relation' with Jesus Christ that we encounter in our spiritual life. **Therefore, we discern that real faith in Christ come by:**

- 'Accepting the Word of God as truth'. (Jn 17:17)
- 'Accepting that God's words are living words and active words' (Jn 6:68 & Heb 4:12)
- 'Practicing our faith by putting God's words to the test, to see its power to work wonders/miracles'. (Jn 14:12 & Jas 1:22-24)
- 'Obeying inspired messages in faith to see God's power at work'. (1 Thess 5:19-21)

The Bible teaches how to build personal relation with Jesus in the book Wisdom. Through Solomon, God said;_Wisdom (Spirit of Jesus) shines bright and never grows dim; those who love her and

look for her can easily find her. She is quick to make herself known to anyone who desires her. Get up early in the morning to find her. You will have no problem; you will find her sitting at your door. To fasten your attention on Wisdom (On Christ) is to gain perfect understanding. If you look for wisdom (Christ), you will soon find peace of mind, because she (Christ) will be looking for those who are worthy of her & she (he) will find you wherever you are. She (Christ) is kind and he will be with you in your every thought. (Wis 6:12-15)

Yes, by worshipping Jesus in between 3 & 6 AM every day you can encounter Jesus; because the Spirit of Jesus moves around the world to find those who are awake & looking for him to establish personal relation with him. Like how Jesus reached the disciples who were in the middle of the sea struggling at the ore, by walking on the water somewhere between 3 & 6 O'clock in the morning, (Mk 6:46-52) he will also reach you, if you search for him in the early morning. If you seek him in the early morning, you will find him. He will open your eyes for faith, (Lk24:28-31) and give you wisdom to understand the power that dwells in his words. (Jer 23:29) Also, he will open your mind to understand Bible. (Lk 24:36-45) If you seek Jesus every day before sunrise, Jesus will establish a personal relation with you.

Jesus demonstrated the power that dwells in his Words

By living a fault less life and by working miracles & wonders Jesus made people to understand that he is the Son of God. When he was preaching, he reiterated that people should have faith in his Words. (Jn 11:40 & Jn 14:1) In all his preaching, Jesus was trying to make people understand/realise that; God's power dwells in his Words. (Wis 7:25-26) And he said; his words bring God's Life-Giving Spirit in believers. (Jn 6:63) Further, he said; his words are alive & active words and it will deliver people from evil bondages. (Heb 4:12) In all his teachings, Jesus was emphasising; "Mear knowing Word of God is not good. But we should know how to practice our faith using the power in God's Words. (Jas1:22-24) Jesus thought us how to use his Words as Armour to fight the Satan who steal our peace, joy & destroy our blessings (Eph 6:12-18) and to rule over him. (Lk 10:19)

Jesus demonstrated that; his word is breath of God's power, radiant stream of glory from Almighty, (Wis 7:25-27) and it brings God's life-giving Spirit in our body, by raising Lazarus from death by his powerful word. *When Lazarus died, his sister Martha was very upset because Jesus was not there to save him from death. She was lost for faith that; Jesus can raise Lazarus back to life, because it was*

already four days since Lazarus's body was buried. *But Jesus said to Martha; Didn't I tell you; if you believe, you will see God's glory, and gave a loud command 'Lazarus come out. The body of Lazarus came back to life to demonstrate the great power and glory in his Words. In this manner, Jesus demonstrated the power in his Words. (John 11:28-40) Also, Jesus performed many miracles and drove demons out from people by using his powerful word as we read in the Gospel.*

We are called to accept God's Words as 'Truth'.

When Jesus met ten lepers, he asked them; do you want to be cleansed? They said; "Yes." Jesus did not say to them "be healed". He said to them; 'go to your priest and show yourself'. When the lepers heard his words; "Go to your priest and show yourself, they accepted Christ's words as 'truth' and believed in his words. At that very instant they were not healed. Nor, did lepers tell Jesus that they were not healed. But they believed, 'that his words will heal them'. (It is expectant faith) We are called to repose such faith in his Words.

Having faith is not enough, we have to put faith in action!

God calls us to practice our faith by putting his words to test. Having received the command; "Go and show yourself to the Priest," the lepers instantly obeyed Christ's command by having blind faith in his words and proceeded to meet the priest. While they were on the way, they felt the healing power of Christ's Words working in them and their body was cleansed. *What is more important for us to understand is; the lepers had blind faith in Christ's words. **Not only they believed that Christ's words will heal them, they also put their faith into action.** Even before they were healed, they obeyed Christ's words immediately by going to the priest to have themselves examined. Such unconditional obedience, without doubting Christ's words revealed them God's power in his life-giving Words. Yes, while they were on the way to the priest, they were healed. (Lk 17:11-19)*

WHAT IS STANDING IN FAITH?

God calls us to put our faith into action to reveal the power in his life-giving words. (Jn6:63) *God says do not deceive yourselves by just listening to my words, instead put my words to the test by acting on it. Whoever listens to my words but does not put them into action is like a man who looks into the mirror and sees himself as he is. (Jas 2:22-23) And God says; I have given you my living & active words (Is 59:21& Heb 4:12) which will not fail to do for what it is*

sent. It will do everything what it is planned for! (Is 55:10-11) So, believe my words & stand in faith as my witness. If you put your faith into action to witness Jesus, you will feel God's protection against all Satanic attacks such as; sufferings, difficulties, insults & tribulations. **God who has called you to witness him to the ends of the earth will not leave you alone.** He said; My presence will go with you always and give you victory. (Ex 33:14) I will make my splendour pass before you and, in your presence, I will pronounce my Sacred Name. (Ex 34:19) And Jesus said; I will not leave you like orphans. (Jn 14:18) God's promises will surround you with his presence to protect you from all Satanic attacks. **Yes, God has promised that; he himself will burn around you as a wall of fire and protect you.** (Zech 2:5) Further, he said; 'No weapon of the Satan shall harm you' (Is 54:15-17) and, I will take up your cause and defend you. (Jer 51:36)

God's Promises are true & they are to be trusted. (1 Cor 1:9) You need to believe in them and put his words to test by surrendering your mind (Prove 3:5) and practice your faith by putting God's words in to action. God's promises will work in you, if only you believe and act on them, like the ten lepers who believed Christ's words blindly, and acted on his words. Because of their blind faith and their actions, they experienced the healing power in Christ's words. This is how we ought to live our Christian life, by putting our faith in to action. **Yes, practicing faith without doubt is known as 'standing in faith'.**

The Apostles firmly stood in faith: From the life of Apostles written in the Book-Acts and the letters written by Paul, Peter, James & John, we understand how they were united with Jesus through his life-giving words (Jn 15:1-5) there-by, they withstood all trials and yet, preached Christ and witnessed Jesus against persecutions. Also, they did not hesitate even to die for their faith. They put God's words in to action and experienced God's power to work in them. When St Paul & Silas were arrested for preaching Christ, they were kept in high security prison, bound in chains. **They did not lose hope, nor did they doubt their faith. They were determined in their mission and were confident in faith that Christ will not abandon them.** (Heb 13:5)

St Paul & Silas spent time in the prison by praying and singing God's praises. (Act 16:16-26) One night when they were in chains, singing praises to God, there was a wild earth quake which broke their chains, opened the prison gates and set them free. Yes, God's Spirit dwells in our praises, (Ps 22:3) and wherever God's Spirit dwells, there is freedom from all bondages. (2 Cor 3:17) In their trouble, the apostles did not lose hope. Their hope was strengthened

through faith, (Rom 5:2-5) which made them to believe that God will set them free. So, they put their faith in action by singing God's praises. And they witnessed God's power which worked miracle and delivered them. God expects us to repose faith in him in this manner.

About putting faith in to action Jesus Christ said the following:

- If you have faith of a size of mustard seed and tell a mulberry tree to uproot itself by its roots and plant itself in the sea, it would happen. (Lk 17:6)
- Believers are given power to perform miracles. They will drive out demons in my name and speak strange languages. If they pick up snakes or drink poison they will not be harmed. If they place their hand on sick, they will be healed. (Mark 16:17-18)

DO FAITH AND ACTION GO TOGETHER?

Jesus gave a promise that; 'with faith if you do anything (according to his will) and if you do it without doubt, with conviction, your actions will be blessed and whatever you believe will happen". (MK 9:23 & Jas 1:25) **If you believe and put your faith in to action, you will see God's glory. You will witness God's power to work in you.**

Jesus has called us to share God's glory: By having faith in Christ and in his words, we shall share God's glory. God has made a covenant with mankind to share his glory. He said; "I make a covenant with you. I have given my power and my teachings to be yours forever and ever. And from now on, you are to obey me for all times and teach your children and your descendants to obey me for all times to come." (Is 59:21) **Yes, God has promised to share his power and glory with his children. We are called to remain united to Christ and be faithful to him in all circumstances to share his glory!!!**

St Paul said; in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose. Those whom God had already chosen, he also set them apart to become like his Son, so that the Son would be the first among many believers. And so, those whom God set apart, he called; and those he called, he put right with himself and he shared his glory with them.

These are true words. You will experience power in these words if you put word of God to test in faith, as St Paul said; Do not restrain the Holy Spirit; do not despise inspired messages. **Put all things to test;** keep what is good and avoid all kind of evil. (1Thes 5:19-24) **Yes, we are called not only to believe in God's Words, but also to put God's words to test/ in to action, because faith and action goes together; for God said "faith without action is dead". (Jas 2:26)**

About having faith and putting faith in to action, God says:

- *With faith if you put God's words to action, you will be blessed by God in everything that you do. (James 1:25)*
- *Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, put it into practice. (James 1:22)*
- *It is by putting God's words in to action a person is put right with God, not with faith alone. (James 2:24)*
- *As the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without action is dead. (James 2:26)*
- *Happy are those who believe that the Lords' message to them will come true. (Luke 1:45)*
- *If you believe; you will see God's Glory, (Jn11:40) and you will be given power to perform miracles. (Jn 14:12& Mk 16:16-18)*

Real faith is unquestionable trust in God & in his living Words. (Jn 6:68) *In real faith; we accept that; God's words are true (Jn 17:17) and God's power dwells in his words. (1 Thess 1:4-5 & Wis 7:25-27) In real faith, we believe God's words are alive & active (Heb 4:12) and use the right choice of word for the right occasion to experience its power. (Prov 15:23) Yes, in real faith we do not doubt, but believe in the life-giving words of Jesus and practice our faith by putting his words in to action to see the power at work. (Jer 23:29 & Eph 1:18-20) Your faith without action is dead. (Jas 2:26) **But if you accept God's word as God's message, which indeed is, his words will work wonders in your life because you have believed. (1 Thes 2 :13)***

WHEN DO WE DISPLEASE GOD IN FAITH?

As Christians we are called to believe:

- That; God the Father created this universe by the great power that dwells in his Word. (Heb 11:3)
- That; The universe is sustained by the power that dwells in his Word. (Heb 1:3 & Sir 43:26)
- That; God made man out of clay and breathed his Spirit into it, through which man became a living being. (Gen 2:7)
- That; Man lives not by bread alone but by word of God. (Mt 4:4)
- That; God's words will heal sickness in human body. (Wis 16:12)
- That; God sent Jesus to redeem the fallen mankind. (Jn 3:16)
- That; After death, we will be raised to life to live eternal life. (Jn 11:25-26 & Cor 15: 12-58)
- **That; These are the foundations on which our faith is built.**

The Israelites displeased God in faith: When the Israelites were living as slaves in Egypt, God called Moses, gave his own power to him to redeem the Israelites from their slavery. **While redeeming the Israelites, God displayed his mighty power through Moses as below:**

- God turned river Nile into blood. (Exodus 7:14-20)

- God dried the red sea, made a path for the Israelites to pass through the sea. He made the water to stand as a wall when Israelites were passed through the Red Sea. (Exodus 14:21-22)
- God gave Israelites water from rock. (Ex 17:1-7 & 15:22-25)
- God gave Manna & Quails from heaven to eat. (Ex 16:1-35)

The Israelites witnessed all these wonderful acts of God. Yet, they did not trust in him. They went back to idol worship, placing trust in golden bull made by man, (Ex 32:1-10) which made God angry. They saw how God's power delivered them from slavery, led them through the Red Sea and guided them by a pillar of cloud in day & by a pillar of fire by night, protected them & provided all their needs. *Yet, they turned away from God to repose faith in idol and worshiped it. So, God warned them saying; 'he is going to destroy them'.* (Ex 32:8-10) This is how the Israelites displeased God in faith.

Moses displeased God in faith. He asked God; how to provide meat & fish for six lack people in the desert? Moses was worried that the cattle in the desert and fish in the sea would not be sufficient for them. *After having seen God's power in many instances to work impossible things, yet, Moses did not have faith that; God out of his mighty power can provide for the needs of the Israelites.* So, the Lord rebuked Moses and said; you still do not have faith in my power to provide for my people's needs'? And he asked Moses; 'Is there a limit to my power'? (Num 11:21-23) Thus, Moses displeased God in faith.

The disciples displeased Jesus in Faith: In the Gospel, we come across two clear instances where Jesus rebuked his disciples, because they did not have faith. Hence, Jesus was displeased. There was a storm in the sea when the disciples were sailing with Jesus. The disciples were frightened that the boat would be overturned. So, in anxiety they woke up Jesus who was sleeping. After rebuking the storm in the sea, Jesus asked them; "When I am with you, why you are frightened? You still have no faith? (Math 8:23-26) *The disciples knew who Jesus was, his powers to work miracles and they were conscious of his presence amongst them. Yet, they lost faith & feared that they will drown. They lost faith because; they were filled with fear and anxiety. This attitude displeased Jesus, for they had no faith.*

Peter doubted his faith and consequently displeased Jesus: In another incident, the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea. Peter also wanted to walk on the sea. He said; "Lord, if it is really you, order me to come out on to the sea to reach you." So, Jesus said; "Come". Peter got down from the boat and walked on the sea. But

when there was a strong wind at the sea, Peter's attention was diverted from his Master's command 'Come' to the "wind in the sea". Hence, he was disturbed and lost courage which brought fear in him. In fear, he lost faith in Christ's command "Come." Having lost faith, he was sinking in the water. He shouted Lord, I am drowning! Save me Lord! Jesus stretched his hands, grabbed hold of him and rebuked him saying: "Man of little faith, why did you doubt"? (Mt 14:22-32)

It is very clear from these instances that; we also displease God, when we lose faith and doubt God's power to save us, to heal us, to protect us from all dangers and to deliver us from the awful situations. For those who doubt God's power, Jesus Christ says; **How happy are those who have no doubt about my power.** (Lk 7:23)

DO WE BECOME RIGHTEOUS BY REPOSING FAITH IN GOD?

The Lord says; in middle of all adversities, I am there with you to protect you, as David said; "God will keep you safe from all hidden dangers and from all deadly diseases. He will cover you with his wings; you will be safe in his care; His faithfulness will protect you and defend you. You need not fear any danger in the night or sudden attacks during the day or plagues that will strike in the dark or evil that will kill in day time. A thousand will fall dead around you, ten thousand all around you, but you will not be harmed." (Ps 91:3-7) Further, in Psalms 46 we also read how God protects his children.

BUT GOD ASKS THE BELIEVERS!

- *Do you trust me unconditionally with conviction to protect you and deliver you from the power of the evil? Because; God says; "No one can please me without faith." (Heb 11:6)*
- *Do you trust in me with all your heart? (or) Do you rely on your own understanding? (Prov 3:5)*

God said: By trusting me, you become righteous. Abraham pleased me by having faith in my promise for a descendant at old age. So, he was accepted as righteous by me. (Rom 4:13)

So then, my friends, try even harder to make God's call and his choice of you a permanent experience; if you do so, you will never abandon your faith. In this way you will be given the full right to enter the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10)

QUESTION NO: 21

WHEN DO PEOPLE GIVE-UP FAITH?

DO WE PUT OUR FAITH INTO ACTION?

The foundation for Christian life is faith. The Church - body of Christ is built on faith. (Eph 1:23) We please God by having faith in him. And because of faith we live. (Rom 1:17) We trust in God to save us from the power of sin and grant us eternal life. (Jn 11:25-26) We are put right with God through faith and we become righteous in the eyes of God by having faith in him. (Rom 4:13) We read in the previous Chapter that real faith is to put our faith into action and experience the power in God's words to work in us. But Satan becomes very upset when we become faithful to God and practice our faith by putting faith into action. **Because, when we put our faith in action, we will come to know God's power, the power that dwells in his Words and we will use this power against the kingdom of Satan.**

Yes, Jesus promised to give authority on evil spirits. He said:

- What you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven & what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven. (*Mt 16:19 & 18:18*) *Saying so, he gave believers authority over evil spirits.*
- *Believers will be given the power to perform miracles. They will drive out demons in my name; they will speak in strange tongues. If they pick up snakes or drink any poison, they will not be harmed; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."* (*Mk 16:17-18*)
- *I have given you authority, so that you can walk on snakes and scorpions and overcome all the power of the Enemy, and nothing will hurt you.* (*Lk 10:19*)

Faith is a gift from God. No one can boast about it. (Eph 2:8-9)

Faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. (Gal 5:22) When we grow in spiritual life, our faith grows deep and we come closer to God. To destroy our faith, the Satan will inflict more & more problems on us, so that we may grow weak in faith and turn away from God. But our faith and hope will continue to grow by the power of the Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

ARE TIMES OF TESTING A SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FROM GOD?

We must always remember; our sufferings are from the hands of God. We must be very clear in mind about it. This mind set will help us to grow deep in faith & strong in spiritual life. At times when we go through trials & tribulations, sufferings and hard times,

we should accept them from the hands of God and consider them as spiritual exercises that we are exposed to, so that we grow strong spiritual life by harnessing deep faith. God also permits such trials & tribulations to test our firmness in faith & loyalty to him. (Sir 2:1-6)

People displayed resolute faith at the point of death!

In the book - Daniel, we read Daniel's friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown in blazing furnace because, they refused to worship a statue on the order of the King and also refused to give up their faith in living God. Their faith was put to test by God like how gold is tested in fire. (1 Pet 1:7) In their resolute firmness, they did not hesitate to die for their faith in living God. Seeing their actions in faith, God sent an angel to rescue them from fire. The King Nebuchadnezzar rewarded them by giving higher position in his Ministry for resolute firmness in Faith. (Dan 3: 19-25)

Similarly, Daniel refused to worship the King Darius, instead he worshipped the of living God. Because he refused to obey the King's order; 'not to worship the living God', Daniel was thrown in to lion's pit and he remained there for seven days. (Bel 1: 40-42) God tested Daniel's faith. Daniel did not hesitate to die for his faith in God. Seeing Daniel's resolute faith in him, God sent an angel to bind the lions lest they harm him. Thus, God saved Daniel. (Dan 6:6-28)

If we prove our faithfulness to God in all our trials and tribulations, the Lord of all graces promises to rescue us from our troubles and bless us with spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7-11) and sure foundation in faith, (1 Pet 5:10) so that; we become a strong and confident soldier of Jesus to be used in the work of salvation, as prophet Isaiah said; The Lord has called his proud and confident soldiers to fight a holy war & punish those he is angry with". (Is 13:3)

CAN SUFFERINGS & TROUBLES DESTROY OUR FAITH?

Sufferings, troubles & tribulations are the process through which faith is strengthened. In our sufferings we grow deep in faith and come closer to God to understand how broad and long, how high and deep is Christ's love, although we can never understand his love with our human mind. (Eph3:17-19) In trials & tribulations we understand what pleases God, (Jer 42:6) how he works to protect us, to guide us, to lead us and to provide us all that we need to do his will. (Phil 4:19) In deep, dark hours God tells us to be determined & confident, as he spoke to Joshua when Moses appointed Joshua to

lead the Israelites to the Promised Land. (Josh 1:8-9) Yes, God wants that we should be firm in faith and remain faithful to him in times of testing so that he can transform us as an iron pillar & bronze wall.

To Jeremiah God said; *Today I am giving you strength to resist them; (your tribulations & sufferings) you will be like a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall. They will not defeat you, for I will be with you to protect you. I the Lord has spoken. (Jeremiah 1:18-19)*

Again, God spoke to Jeremiah and said; *"I will make you like a solid wall of bronze as far as they are concerned. (Our sufferings, trials and tribulations are concerned) They will fight against you but they will not defeat you. I will be with you to protect you & keep you safe. I will save you from the power of the wicked". (Jer 15 :20-21)*

Similarly, God said to Ezekiel; *that he will transform him as a rock & a diamond against all his troubles. Yes, God said to Ezekiel; Now I will make you as stubborn & as tough as they are. (His sufferings & tribulations) I will make you as firm as rock and as hard as diamond. Do not be afraid of those sufferings and tribulations. (Ezekiel 3:8-9)*

The Lord who has called you to do his work/his will, gives an assurance that; *The Lord himself will go before you and destroy the nations and give victory. The Lord God will himself be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you. So, do not lose courage and do not be afraid of your sufferings and tribulations". (Deuteronomy 31:3-8)*

Further, to understand the assurances of the Lord to protect you and to give victory in your sufferings, trials and tribulations you are advised to read his promises given in this para & meditate on them: *Josh 1:5-9, Duet 7:19, Wis 16:17,24, Ex 33:14, Ex 23:20, 22, Ex 17:15, Is 30:30-32, Is49:25-26, Zach 2:8-9, Zach 4:6-7 & 9:14-17.*

WHEN AND HOW DO PEOPLE LOSE FAITH IN GOD?

In the Bible, God has given a host of promises to guide us, to lead us and to protect us in difficult times. Isaiah said; The Lord will make you to go through hard times, but he himself will be there to teach you, and you will not have to search for him anymore. If you wander off the road to the right or the left, you will hear his voice behind you saying, "Here is the road. Follow it." (Is 30 :20-21) Yes, in God will teach you the path you should follow to give victory. He will teach you what he wants you to do. For the Lord's teaching comes from Jerusalem; from Zion he speaks to his people." (Mic 4:2)

Further, he said; "I will lead my blind people by roads they have never travelled, I will turn their darkness into light and make rough country smooth before them. These are my promises, and I will keep them without fail. (Isaiah 42:16) As a Shepherd, God will guide us and lead us in the deepest darkest hours. (Psalms 23:4 & Ezek 34:10-30) **But, during such difficult times, what God wants from you is; You must maintain holiness in your body, soul & spirit (1 Peter 1:15) and remain with God in complete devotion and unflinching loyalty. Because, God says; "Your security comes your righteousness and your splendour from your devotion to your God". (Baruch 5:4)**

God wants that we should be in communion with him in all adversities by reading his life-giving words (Jn 6:63 & 68) and we should also meditate on his living & active words Day & Night to gain wisdom and insight (Sir 6:37) to handle the situations and overcome trials & tribulations. Unless we remain holy, surrender our problem to the Lord and remain in communion with him through his word, (Jn 15: 1-5) we cannot expect God to work in us to deliver us from our trials. In obedience to his commandments, (Lk 11:28) we will experience his active words, his living words which acts as a double-edged sword to work in us and deliver us from those adverse situations. (Heb 4:12) **Yes, God will make you to go through fire and flood, but he himself will bring you to place of safety. (Ps 66:10-12)**

What God wants to makes us understand is that; nothing is beyond his control & God is testing us to see how we react in times of tribulations? Whether we remain faithful to him? Or are we turning away from him to repose faith in some other worship? In our sufferings, if we turn away from Christ to find solution for problems through astrology, palmistry, zodiac sign, consulting spirit of dead, witchcraft, Blackmagic or in pagan worship/satanic worship, then we are indulging in the sin-idolatry. God said; Let there be no God for you other than me. (Ex 20:1-4) **Idol worship will bring dark cloud upon us. So, we will lose God's presence to protect & save us.**

This is the most difficult situation that believers encounter in present days. When they go through difficult times, they become impatient. They want to solve problems quickly by any means. **They do not wait upon the Lord to work in them (Ps 46:1-10) and to answer their problems at the time chosen by him.** (Ecc 3:1) So, they do not hesitate to resort to worldly ways which are outside the teachings of the Church & against the Scriptures. Thereby, they act against their faith in God. In distress, anxiety & fear they lose sight of God's words and fall in faith. **To them God says; "Pay attention to**

what I say my son. Listen to my words. Never let them to get away from you. Remember them and keep them in your heart. They will give life & health to anyone who understands them. (Prov 4: 20-22)

Yes, dear believers, we all are good Christians so long everything goes well in life and in our family. But, when anything goes wrong with us or in our family or in our business, or in our profession, our foundation in faith becomes weak. **Now let us examine the circumstances which leads to weaken our faith.** Sometimes believers become unfaithful to God and turn to other supernatural powers to solve their problems such as; depending on astrology, palmistry, zodiac signs, witchcraft, black magic, consulting spirits of dead, numerology, depending of omen etc and commit sin.

Chronic Sickness: Everyone on the earth loves to live a good life, a cheerful & healthy life. But when sickness comes, we remain faithful to God and try to get our sickness cured by medication. In some cases, believers become a chronic patient. Their pain and suffering continue to increase. They pray, they fast, and do all kinds of spiritual exercises to get healed and to remain in faith. But when their sickness is not healed, they become weak to endure it and they also lose hope in God which they received through faith. (Romans 5:2-5)

ARE WE DRIFTING AWAY IN FAITH?

At this juncture if we continue to remain with Jesus by reading his words and meditating on it (Sir 6:37), 'his peace' which is far beyond human understanding will keep our hearts and minds safe in union with Christ. (Phil 4:7) He will fill our minds with those things that deserve praise; things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely and honourable and help us to put everything into practice what we have learnt and received. (Phil 4:8-9) Yes, Christ will give us the spiritual strength (Acts 16:20) which will give us determination & conviction to remain in faith against all adversities. (Jer 1:18-19) We will understand; Christ who gives us peace is with us and through him we receive strength to face all conditions by the power he gives. (Phil 4:13) Such experience will help to understand God's will for us through faith. (1 Tim 1:4) That's why Paul said; Be joyful always. Pray at all times. Give thanks in all circumstances. For this is what is God's will for you in union with Jesus. (1Thes 5:16-18)

This understanding will give us grace to endure our suffering and remain in faith without losing hope. (Job 14:7-9) But, in such situations, if we fail to read Bible every day (morning & evening) and

take protection of mother Mary by meditating rosary, the Satan will creep in our mind and deceive us in faith. When people are deceived in faith, they look for healing through supernatural powers which are against God's will such as; reiki healing, pranic healing, acupuncture, consulting spirits of dead, Blackmagic/witchcraft. These supernatural powers are the source of evil infliction upon us. By indulging in such practices, we disobey the Ten Commandments, in which God said: Let there be no God other than me for you. Yes, if you **indulge in such practices, you declare that you do not believe in the following promises of God:**

- *I am the God the one who health thee. (Ex 15:26)*
- *No medicine or ointment healed them. They were restored to health by your word O Lord which heals humanity. (Wis 16:12)*
- *Purify yourselves, because tomorrow the Lord will perform miracles among you. (Joshua 3:5)*
- *He sent forth his Word and healed them. (Ps 107:20)*
- *Confess your sins, you will be healed. (Jas 5:16 & Sir 38:9-10)*
- *If you believe you will see God's glory. (Jn 11:40)*

The Satan creeps in:

This is a classic example of how people become weak in faith due to chronic illness. At this juncture Satan will creep in our life through various advices that godless people give. They will lure the sick people to go for spiritual healing, (outside scriptures) to ruin their faith in living God. *It is very important for believers to know and understand that any kind of healing through spiritual healers other than the Holy Spirit, is not from God. For the word of God says; "the wicked one will come (through different people) with the power of Satan and perform all kinds of miracles and wonders". (2 Thess 2:9)* Yes, the Satan will lure faithful believers from God's providence and try to change their faith in living God to wicked & satanic powers.

Never get fooled by advice given by others and fall in faith.

Sometime people go through terrible crisis in life, such as; loss in business, confusion & problems in family, problems in personal relation with spouse, infertility leading to discord between spouses, sickness which does not get healed through medicine, hatred causing enmity leading to family feud, not finding suitable bride / groom for long time, etc. People who are blind for the light of Christ shining on them attribute all these things to have been caused by their rivals or some known persons by indulging in witchcraft, black magic, charms and spells. They try to find out who has done black magic or

witchcraft or pronounced bad spells against their family. Also, the affected person may fall in the trap to go to a tantrik or to consult the spirits of the dead. The tantrik will fools them by saying that someone has done witchcraft/black magic against them and pronounced bad spell on their family/business etc. So, to overcome the power of the witchcraft, black magic, the tantric advises them to do special pooja/prayers etc. and collect heavy fees for the same.

People some time blame on fate or God for such distress, least realising that they need to please God in first place to receive his favour and blessing. Also, people relate all such unpleasant happenings to bad omen, or bad time caused due to movements of stars & heavenly bodies. So, they consult fortune tellers / astrologers to find remedy for the bad times in their family, supposedly caused due to the movements of stars and planets. The astrologer/fortune teller tell them some strange movements of stars/planets are against their family which is the cause for all their problems. The astrologer /fortune teller will advise them to perform special pooja to overcome the ill effects caused due to movements of stars and planets or some evil spells casted on their family and collect heavy fees for the pooja.

Now the tantrik / astrologer / fortune-teller is aware of the weakness of their clients. So, they will inflict more and more fear in the affected person's mind. They will make use of fear factor as an opportunity to call their clients often, corrupt them with hypothetical fear and make good fortune out of them. But their problem would continue to remain as it is! Moreover, the tantrik would have corrupted the client's mind saying; one of their relatives have done witchcraft / Blackmagic against them out of jealousy, due to which they are suffering. Now the tantrik has sown enmity in the client's mind against his relatives which will destroy harmony in the family.

The truth is; no one would have done any magic / witchcraft against them, nor does the movements of any star or planet will have any bad effect on their family. The profession of the astrologer/fortune-teller and the tantrik is to tell lies and cause fear in their client's mind to make good fortune out of them. Their advice will leave people in financial distress, spiritual distress & family discord.

DO WE INTROSPECT OUR PAST LIFE?

Now, at this stage our faith is not resting in living God who created us, who protects us, who provided us everything all these days. Instead, our faith is shifted to the astrologers /fortune tellers / magicians/tantric. Dear believer, when anything goes wrong in life,

in your business, with children/ relations/ family/ health, etc., all you need to do is sit alone & introspect your past life to see, what kind of a life you have lived and how you are living presently? Were you living a life that pleased God? (Eph 5:10,17 & Jer42:6) The answer to this question will make you understand how you displeased God, invited trouble. For God says; ungodly people have invited death and troubles on themselves by things they have said & done. (Wis 1:14)

If you were living in sin, your sins will destroy your life for the nature of sin is destruction. Jesus said; the thief- 'sin' comes only in order to steal, kill & destroy." (Jn 10:10) Avoid sin as if it were a snake. If you get too near, it will sink its teeth into your soul like a lion, and destroy you. Sin is like venom of a poisonous snake that will destroy you and all your blessings. (Sir 21:2) Your personal life, your body, your marital life, your health, your business, your education & all other things you do, may not prosper if you are living in sin. You are advised to read Bible to understand where you have gone wrong in the past and stand corrected. *(The suggested readings to introspect our life are; Heb 13 :1-19, Rom 15:1-7, Rom 8:1-38, Jer 7:5-11, Ezk 18:5-9, Col 3:12-17, Ps 15 :1-6 and Isiah 58:1-12)*

HAVE YOU DISPLEASED GOD IN YOUR LIFE?

All the Word of God quoted above speaks about; 'how we are supposed to live?' It will enlighten you on how you have displeased God by living in sin? Our God promises that; "righteous men will be happy, and things will go well for them. They will be able to enjoy what they have worked for." (Is 3:10) Our God meets all requirements of righteous children. Because, God has promised that; "Even lions go hungry for lack of food; but those who obey God will lack nothing good." (Ps 34:10) The LORD is our protector and glorious king, blessing us with kindness and honor. He does not refuse any good thing to those who do what is right. (Ps 84:11) Yes, it is useless to work so hard for a living, getting up early and going to bed late. For God provides for the righteous, while they are asleep. (Ps 127:2)

If you sincerely give your mind & ears, accept transgressions, it will make us to realise how you have gone away from God's ways like prodigal son. If you humble yourself before Word God, you will receive grace to surrender your sinful ways & return to God sincerely with broken heart with true repentance. If you respond to God's call with this positive attitude, all your problems, sickness, sadness, enmity, loss in business, slackness in studies, marital discord etc.,

will settle down on its own. God will return everything in double measure that you lost due to your sinfulness. (Zech 9:12 & Is 61:7) ***Our God says "Return you exiles who have no hope; return to your place of safety. I tell you; I will repay you twice over with blessings for all that you have suffered. (Zach 9:12)*** Yes, when we repent and return to God, our life will be filled with joy, peace, health, and love. God sends problems, sickness & pain to correct the children he loves the most (Jer 31:20 & Heb 12:6) from our wrong ways of life as we read in the book of Joel. *When people sincerely repented for their sins by fasting & praying God says;* "I will give you back what you have lost in years when swarms of locusts ate your crops. It was I who sent this army against you. Now you will have plenty to eat and be satisfied. You will praise the Lord your God, who has done wonderful things for you. (Joel 2:25-26) ***Yes, our loving & caring God corrects us by sending sickness and filling our body with pain. (Job 33:19) In his mercy, God teaches us through suffering and uses the distress to open our eyes. (Job 36:15)***

LET US OBEY GOD AND RENEW OUR FAITH.

If you understand Lord's ways and live a changed life, he will make everything to go well with you, because: God says "Obey faithfully in everything I have commanded you, and all will go well with you and your descendants forever, because you will be doing what is right and what pleases the Lord your God".(Duet 12:28) *Further our Lord promises; "But for you who obey me, my saving power will raise on you like the sun and bring healing like sun rays. You will be as free and happy as calves let out of the stall". (Mal 4:2)*

So, my brother/sister, when something goes wrong in your life, all that we need to do is; introspect/reflect on your life to understand whether you have lived righteous life in the past, and are you presently living a life that pleases God, in order to discern; 'how much you have drifted away from God's sacred Commands'. *For he says; When we suffer, we must sit alone in silent patience; we should bow down in submission, for there may be still hope. Though beaten & insulted, we should accept it all. God is merciful and will not reject us forever. He may bring us sorrow, but his love for us is sure and strong. He takes no pleasure in causing grief or pain. (Lam 3:28-33)*

Let us remain in God's words and protect our faith.

A person who is trying to solve his problem by going to tantrik /astrologer/fortune teller/counsellor or through by means of other faith, will ruin his faith in the living God. His soul will be dead for God

and it will get separated from God due to satanic bandage which will ruin his spiritual life, and destroy every blessing that God has showered on him. God who created us has given a promise that; *"There is no magic charm, no witch craft that can be used against the nation of Israel"*. (Num 23:23). This means; if we are faithful to God, no magic charm or witch craft will have any effect /power upon us because God's the protection will be over us always. He will burn around us as a wall of fire us to protect us from all evils. (Zech 2:5)

Our God gives the following promises to protect us from all such dangers:

- *The protector of Israel never doses or sleeps. The Lord will guard you. He is by your side to protect you. The sun will not hurt you in day nor moon during night. The Lord will protect you from all dangers and he will keep you safe. He will protect you as you come and go; now and forever". (Ps 121:4-7)*
- *As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord will surround his people and protect them forever."*(Ps 125:2)
- *The Lord has promised that he himself will be a wall fire around the city to protect it and that he will live there in all his glory. (Zach 2:5)*
- *The Lord says; 'I will take up your cause and make your enemies pay for what they did to you'. (Jer 51:36)*
- *Finally, the Lord Promises; "You will succeed, not by military might or by your own strength, but by my Spirit. Obstacles as great as mountains will disappear before you. You will rebuild your Temple" (Zach 4:6-7).*

NEVER LET GOD'S WORDS TO GET AWAY FROM YOU!

Further, the Lord has promised to be our Good Shepherd in Ezekiel 34:11-31 & Psalm 23:1-6. He will be our Protector as we read in Psalm 91:1-16. Believers are advised to read these promises every day, morning and night, (Sowing the seeds twice- Eccl 11:6) remind God of his promises, (Is 62 :6-7) and his faithfulness to his promises. (2Tim 2:13) You are to claim God's promises through Jesus, who is Yes for all God's promises. (2 Cor 1:20) So my dear believers, in times of distress be faithful to God & remain in his words by reading and meditating on his words, so as to gain wisdom and insight. (Sir 6:37) This wisdom and in-sight in God's words will help you to experience his saving power through his promises. It will greatly strengthen you and help you to be sure in your faith and not allow us to turn away in faith that you received by hearing the Good News.

The Bible says; the world and entire universe is held to gather & sustained by the power that dwells in God's Words". (Heb 1:3) The Lord who sustains the whole universe by the power of his word, will he not sustain you in this world by the power of his words in all your problems? Surely, he will sustain you in all your problems', because he promised; Mountains may crumble, hills may depart, but my love shall never depart from you. (Is 54:10) Israel "I have loved you with an everlasting love." (Jer 30:3) Because of my everlasting love, "I will never leave you, nor will I forsake you". (Hebrews 13:5)

Further, the Scriptures says;

- *Has the Lord ever disappointed anyone who put his hope in him?*
- *Has the Lord ever abandoned anyone who held him in constant reverence?*
- *Has the Lord ignored any who prayed to him"? (Sir 2:10)*

Yes, our Lord never forsakes us or never leaves us alone in our distress. It is we who turn away from him in our distress because we fall in grace (2 Cor 12:9) to remain faithful to him in our trials & tribulations. The Lord never ignores us or abandons us, or he does not disappoint his children, for his word says; "Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed." (Rom 10:11) The Lord will never leave us alone in our problems, for he says; "Even if a mother should forget the child she bore, I will never forget you." (Is 49:15).

Further, our loving God says; "Israel, you are my dearest son, the child I love the best. Whenever I mention your name, I think of you with love. My heart goes out to you. I will be merciful." (Jer 31:20) The only way to experience this love and the power of this love in our life is; "we should never let Words of the Lord to get away from our mind", for the Lord says: "Pay attention to what I say my son. Listen to my words. Never let them get away from you. Remember them and keep them in your heart. Because, they will give life and health to those who understand them. (Prov 4: 20-22)

Dear believers in Christ, never let Word of God to get away from your attention for the following reasons:

- *We were created the power in God's Words. (Gen 1:26-31)*
- *We live everyday by God's Words. (Mt 4: 4)*
- *We receive God's life-giving Spirit through his Words. (Jh6:63)*
- *We receive healing through God's Words. (Ps 107:20)*
- *We are delivered from evil through God's words (Heb 4:12)*
- *We receive forgiveness through God's Words. (Jn 8:11)*
- *We receive eternal life through God's Words. (Jn 11:25)*
- *We win victory in this world through Faith. (1 Jh5:4)*

NEVER TRY TO SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS BY ANY MEANS OUT SIDE WORD OF GOD.

When problems surround people, when their life is in a mess, when things go out of control, when they do not know what to do & which direction to go, they seek advice from worldly people, instead of taking advice from a Priest (or) Preacher of Word of God (or) attend a retreat to get themselves counselled by Word of God. People of this world advice such persons that; they will find peace / rest, and forget their problems/sufferings by consuming liquor or drugs and introduce them to such sinful bondage. To forget their problems, people of this world also introduce them to sinful entertainments such as pornography, reading sinful literature and sinful relations. Such practices are bound to destroy the foundation of believer's faith.

Further believers who are introduced to these practices get habituated to; liquor/drugs/ sinful entertainments/ sinful relations and become a slave for such sinful practices/relations. Instead of finding peace and joy in this new way of life, they find themselves in deep misery and their problems get compounded. Because such new sinful practices are bound to cause unrest in the family. There is bound to be family discord. Now, they are in a worse condition than what they were before, as St Peter speaks about it in 2 Pet 2:21-22.

Liquor/drugs/sinful relations and entertainments will sink us deep in our problems

No liquor or drugs have ever given answer to man's problems or does it give peace to his mind. To such people God; "Come to me all you who are heavily laboured/burdened. I will give you rest". (Math 11:28) Yes, God says; Do not get drunk with wine, but get drunk in the Holy Spirit. (Eph 5:18) Which means; we should get ourselves enriched in the life-giving words of Jesus. (Jh6:63) Because, Word of God will deliver us from all our bondages, give answer to all problems & will comfort us in distress. In the presence of God there is only joy, peace & deliverance. St Paul said; 'Wherever Spirit of God/Word of God is there, there is freedom', (2 Cor 3:17) from bondages which are holding us as captive/refugee. (Is 50:1-2)

Dear brothers/sisters when you are lost in distress due to various problems/situations; do not try to solve them by worldly means, which will make you to fall in faith. Also, it will make you a slave for sinful habits, sinful relations & take you far away from God. Every kind of worldly ways to overcome problems such as; drinking,

drugs, sinful relations/entertainments, sinful literature, Astrology, Zodiac signs, witchcraft/Blackmagic are the traps that are laid by the Satan to make you slave for sinful bondages without you realising it.

Hence, my dear brothers/sisters be wise to know that God who created you knows all your problems. He is waiting to comfort you in distress & give solutions to all your problems. Yes, when you are not able to proceed further in your trials & tribulations, he will provide you a way out to overcome distress. For God says; "every test that you have experienced is a kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to test, he will give you strength to endure it, and so provide you a way out. (1 Cor 10:13) **Yes, in our distress God expects us to return to him with repentance.** The Lord who waits for us says: "All day long I held out my open arm to welcome a disobedient and rebellious people." (Rom10:22) Yes, in distress do not run away from your God.

DO WE SHARE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST IN OUR TROUBLES?

St Paul said; "I am happy about my sufferings for you, for by means of my physical sufferings I am helping to complete what remains of Christ's sufferings on behalf of his body, the Church." (Colossians 1:24) Further, he said; "We are believers in Christ not only by having faith in Christ, but also by suffering with him. (Philippians 1:29) St Peter said; "Be glad that you are sharing Christ's suffering, so that you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed. Happy are you if you are suffering as Christ followers. This means that; the Glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God is resting on you." (1 Peter 4:13-14) This is how God speaks about people whom go through perpetual suffering. Because he has called them to share his sufferings. In their suffering they glorify God. (1Corinthians 6:19-21)

Sufferings are foundations stone on which faith is built:

The message which Scriptures conveys us through these words is; God chooses some people for himself, gives them sufferings to draw them close to him. In their sufferings God communicates with them, gives them revelations which is to be shared amongst believers. Thus, God uses them as his instruments for salvation. **So, we as believers in Christ should not follow worldly practices while enduring bad times to solve problems in any means; trying to solve problems outside Word of God. Such practices will destroy our faith in Christ.**

In our sufferings and distress we should remain with Christ (Lem 3:28-33) *by reading his life-giving words, spend more time in fasting, prayer and in meditating rosary to fill ourselves with the graces with the intercession of Mother Mary. This practice will help us to grow deep in faith. We should introspect our life, change the way we live and fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit to receive fruits of the Spirit, (Gal 5:22) and Gifts of the Spirit. (1 Cor 12:7-11) Our sufferings will bring us closer to God, help us to grow in spirit & faith, because, sufferings are the foundation stone for faith.*

ARE YOU STANDING FIRM IN FAITH?

So my dear believer in Christ, when you are going through deep suffering/distress in life, which may be due to; chronic sickness, (or) prolonged pain in heart due to strained relations, (or) broken relation, (or) having deceived by loved one,(or) having betrayed by someone, (or) having lost your legitimate right, (or) having deprived of justice, (or) due to unexpected death of loved one (or) having rejected by the loved ones, (or) having alienated in the society (or) having falsely accused by someone which has damaged your reputation and destroyed life, (or) any problem which can't be shared with, **make all efforts to remain united with Jesus thinking of his sufferings on the Cross. The memories of Christ's suffering will energise you, give courage & grace to face challenges and sufferings.**

At the same time, mediate on God's words day & night. (Sir 6:37) Never let God's promises to go away from you! Yes, you must remember God's promises and remind him of his promises, day and night, (Is62:6-7) & claim God's faithfulness for his promises through Jesus, (2 Tim 2:13) for, Jesus is the fulfilment for God's promises. (2 Cor 1:20) If you humble yourself {(like how Mary humbled herself before God, and said; 'Let it happen to me according to thy will' (Lk1:38) or like how the Centurion humbled himself and said to Jesus; Lord, I am not worthy to have you under my roof. But say a word from here. My servant will be healed' (Mt 8:8-13)} and obey God in all things in total surrender {like how Zacchaeus surrendered his sin & said; Lord I will restore all payments in four times to any one whom I have cheated. (Lk19:8-10)} then, you will experience fulfilment of God's promises in you. Because God is faithful to his promises, (Ps145:13) for, he cannot be false to himself. (2Tim 2:13) Such spiritual encounter with Jesus will bring change in your thinking, your words, your actions, your personal relation with others. Further, Jesus will change your orientation in spiritual life and give you Sure Foundation in faith, so that you will grow deep in Faith. (1Peter 5:10)

HOW TO WALK WITH THE LORD IN OUR DISTRESS?

If you establish such personal relation with Jesus, he will transform you inwardly with a complete change of mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God, what is good & is pleasing to him and is perfect. (Rom12:2) *This experience will bring you closer to God & you will realise that God is speaking to you in your sufferings through his words, (2 Cor 12:7-10) through visions, (Ezek 40:2 & Hos 12;10) through dreams, (Job 33:14-15) through signs, (2 Chr 32:24) and through inspired messages. (Lk 12:12 & 1 Thes 5:19-21) It will be a face-to-face encounter with Jesus. Yes, it will be one-to-one encounter with Jesus. And, you will realise; 'Christ's life-giving words (Jn 6:63 & 68) are guiding you in all your thoughts & actions', (Is30:20-21) because; 'Jesus will be in all your thoughts'. (Wis 6:16)*

Jesus will not allow you to take any decision on your own for he would have taken full control over you. The Word of God "I stand at the door and knock; if any hear my voice and open the door, I will come into their house and eat with them, and they will eat with me" (Rev 3:20) would be fulfilled in you. You need to consult the Lord in everything. He will guide you in important decisions like how he guided David when he fought the Philistines and won victory as we read in 1 Chr 14: 8-16. *This is how you walk with the Lord in distress.*

Prophet Isaiah spoke about this unique experience. He said; "The Lord will make you go through difficult times, but he himself will be there to teach you. You will not have to search for him anymore. If you wander off the road to your right or left, you will hear his voice from behind you saying; "Here is the road. Follow it". (Is 30:20-22) *Yes, you will experience God's hand upon you, (Is 51:16) and Jesus will never allow you to astray in your path.* When you are in doubt or confused about which way to go, Jesus will counsel you/advice you to take right decision, for St John said; As for you, Christ has poured out his Spirit on you. As long as his Spirit remains in you, you do not need anyone to teach you. For his Spirit teaches you everything. What he teaches is true, not false. Obey the Spirit's teaching and remain in union with Christ. (1 Jn 2:27) *Such unique experience with Jesus will strengthen your foundation in faith, (1 Pet 5:10) because; you will realise; 'all decisions taken in prayer will turn out to be right, for the decisions you take will come from Jesus himself'. (Duet 1:17)*

This spiritual experience will increase your endurance & hope during times of trials & tribulations. *You will become very firm in your faith like a house built on rock. Worldly attractions, troubles*

or satanic tricks will not have power to deceive you in your faith in Christ. (Is 54:17) No power on this earth can separate you from love of Jesus (Rom 8:35) because, Christ who is the keeper of our souls (1Pet 2:25) will be your protector and Shepherd. (Ezkl 34:11-31) He never dozes or sleeps. Yes, Jesus will guard you; he will be on your side to protect you. The sun will not hurt you in day nor the moon by night. The Lord will protect you from all danger and keep you safe. He will protect you as you come & as you go, now & forever. (Ps 121:7-8) Yes, like how God the Father preserved the disciples in faith by the power in the Name-Jesus, (Jn 17:11-12) you will be kept safe from the evil one by Jesus, lest you fall in faith. (2 Thes 3:3) This is how you will be preserved in faith by Jesus and walk with him in faith, in spite of all trials/tribulations and become a conqueror. (Rom 8:37)

CAN ANY ONE TAKE AWAY OUR FAITH IN CHRIST?

St Paul answers this question. He says; If Christ is for us, who can be against us. (Rom 8:31) Who can then take away our faith in Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship, or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger of death? (Rom 8:35) Nothing of this world can separate us from Christ or take away our faith in Christ. Neither death, nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below—**there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from Christ or Rob our faith in Christ.** (Romans 8:38-39)

Having known the truth that Christ is the living God, (Mk 12:18-27) who is the supreme ruler & spiritual authority, (Col 2:10) King of all kings & Lord of all lords, (Rev 17:14 & 19:16) who is the Son of God (Mk 9:7 & Mt 3:17) and source of life, (Jn 1:4 & Col 1:18) and that; he created this universe (Jn 1:1-3 & Col 1:15-17) and lived as a man among mankind, (Jn 1:14) and sacrificed his life to redeem the fall mankind (1 Pet 3:18 & Heb 9:23-28) and yet, if you do not believe him who is the Creator, but believe and worship things that are created, (heavenly bodies, man-made idols, human beings, animals, reptiles and birds) **you are deceiving yourself in faith & denying salvation, because; Salvation is found only in Jesus. In all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us. (Acts 4:12) If you do not believe in Jesus, you are deceiving yourself!**

Dear believers, do not be deceived by allowing troubles of this world cause you to give-up your faith in Christ to repose faith in things that are created. Watch out for the Satan, who is roaming around like lion, waiting for an opportunity to make you to fall in

faith. (1 Pet 5:8) The Satan will disguise himself to look like an angel to deceive believers and destroy their faith in Christ. (2Cor11:12-15)

God will fill you with Grace to remain firm in faith.

You may ask; if God who created man to live happily with all blessings, why this world is full of pain, suffering, sickness and God does not heal sickness in some cases? Well, if you read 2 Cor 12 you will find an answer. St Paul who was very close to Christ was suffering from chronic illness which was hurting severely. He asked Jesus thrice to heal him. Jesus did not heal him, but said; My grace is all you need & my power is the greatest when you are weak. (2Cor 12:9)

Yes, Jesus did not heal Paul's sickness. But he said, I will give you grace to endure your sickness and pain because, in this sickness & suffering you share my suffering for salvation of mankind as we read Col 1:24. Paul said; "I am happy about my suffering for you (Church) for by means of my physical suffering, I am helping to complete what still remains of Christ's suffering on behalf of his body the Church". This is the answer Jesus Christ gives for those who are righteous, still live in chronic sickness and sufferings.

Jesus who has called you to share his sufferings will fill you with abundance of grace to remain firm in faith in all trials & tribulations!

If God has chosen you to go through trials & tribulations, he will fill you with his grace. Yes, out of the fullness of his grace Christ will bless you, giving you one blessing after another. (Jn 1:16) Yes, Christ he has chosen you out of his grace, not on what you have done. For, if Christ's choice were based on what you do, then his grace would not be real grace. (Rom 11:6) Because you are chosen to experience Christ's power and grace in trials and tribulations, if you remain with determination & conviction without losing hope on your call, whatever may be the suffering that you endure, God's peace which is far beyond your understanding will keep your heart & mind safe in union with Christ. (Phil4:7) **And Christ promises that his love will give you a new life every day, (Zeph 3:17) and his Spirit will renew your faith day-by-day. Yes, he said; 'though your physical being is gradually decaying, yet your spiritual being (i.e., your faith) is renewed day after day'. (2Cor 4:16)** Christ will make his home in your heart and renew your faith every day. From the wealth of his glory, Christ will give you power by his Spirit to be strong in your inner-self to remain firm against all trials/tribulations. (Eph3:16-17)

Yes, if you believe in Christ's love, your faith will be renewed every day. Isaiah said; Christ will strengthen you who are weak and tired. You may even grow weak and fall exhausted. But if you worship Christ every day before sunrise, (Wis 6:12-21) you will find your faith renewed day-by-day. You will rise on wings like eagles; you will run and not get weary; you will walk and not grow weak. (Is 40:29-31)

This is true a statement, and it will be a reality in your life because; Jesus will fill you with grace from abundance of his wealth. (Phil 4:19) You will be enriched in grace to face all conditions and do all things with Christ who will strengthen you. (Phil 4:13) Christ who has called you, will do it for you, to demonstrate extraordinary greatness of his grace. **It is by his grace you are saved through faith. It is not by your own efforts, but it is by God's great gift. (Eph2:7-9) So, be strong in faith through grace which Christ gives. (2 Tim 2: 1)**

St Paul said; Do not worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, with a thankful heart. And God's peace which is far beyond human understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ. (Phil 4:6-9) Yes, Christ will keep your heart & mind safe from being lost in faith because of his promise: "May the God who gives peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being; spirit, soul and body free from fault-lest you fall in faith, at the coming of Jesus Christ. He who called you will do it, because he is faithful. (1 Thes 5:23-24) **The suffering what you endure will give sure foundation in faith, as St Paul said; After you have suffered a little while, the God of all graces who calls you to share his eternal glory in union with Christ, will himself perfect you & give firmness, strength, and Sure Foundation" in faith. (1 Pet 5:10)**

It is a very big blessing to receive sure foundation in faith, because; you will become a proud and confident soldier of Christ to fight the holy war against the powers of darkness. (Is 13:3) Jesus said; "Heaven and Earth will pass away; but my Words will not pass away." (Mt 24:35) Yes believers, if you retain God's Words in mind and meditate on them day & night, (Sir 6:37) Jesus will give you insight, understanding & heavenly wisdom. (1Cor 2:6-10) Also, he will give discernment on his plan for you. (Jer 29:11) This insight, understanding & wisdom will protect you from all your weaknesses & it will never allow you to fall in faith. ***The Sure Foundation in faith will give you confidence, conviction & authority to walk on snakes & scorpions (trials & tribulations) and overcome them. Your trials and tribulations will not have power to make you fall in faith. (Lk 10:19)***

WHEN DO WE SIN IN PRACTISING OUR FAITH?

In faith we believe that Christ is the one & only foundation and there is no other foundation for salvation, because, God has already placed Christ as the one & only foundation and no other foundation can be laid. (1Cor3:11) And in faith we believe; the Bible was written on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, (2 Tim 3:15-17) and words written in the Bible is truth, because Jesus in his prayer to his Father proclaimed that; Word of God is truth. (Jn 17:17) Also Jesus proclaimed; I am the way, the truth and the life, (Jn 14:6) and when a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only but the one who sent me. (Jn 12:25) So, undoubtedly, we believe in existence of God, his unlimited power to do great wonders & miracles. We also believe that God has glorious future for us in earthly life according to his plan, (Jer 29:11) and after death, we will share God's glory in eternal life, for which we are awaiting in Christ. (Jn 11:25 & Col 1:27)

A person whom God has called to practice Christian faith is not only expected to know God's words. But he is also expected to practice Christian faith by putting his faith/what he believes in to action to see God's power to work in what he does. St Paul said; Put into practice what you learned and received from me, both from my words and from my actions. And the God who gives us peace will be with you and his power will work in you! So, it is very important for a believer to understand that; 'faith does not mean, we only believe in God's Words, but in faith God calls us to put into action what we believe', for God said; 'Put my Words to test to see the power at work'. (1Thes 5:21) Further he said; **"Do not deceive yourself by just listening to my words; instead, put it in to practice,"** (Jas 1:22) because; **"Faith without action is dead",** (Jas 2:26) and **"it is by his action a person is put right with God & not by faith alone".** (Jas 2:24)

A person who puts faith into action with conviction & courage will witness God's Words working in him & his power moving things. Jesus said; I assure you, if you have faith as big as a mustard seed, you can say to this hill, 'Go from here to there!' and it will go. You could do anything! (Mt 17:20) We are called to practice faith without doubt! But while practicing faith, if you doubt your actions, then you are doubting God's power which is at work. (1Thes 2:13) **If you doubt your faith, you are doubting the power of Jesus who created the universe by the power that dwells in his word. (Gen1:1-31) Also, you doubt Jesus who sustains this universe by the power that dwells in his word.** (Heb 1:3) Thus it is discerned; a person who doubts his faith, doubt the power of Christ & declares Christ is a power less God!

When you doubt your faith and your actions; You doubt the power in God's words by which he created the universe & established in useful order (Wis 8:1) and you doubt Jesus, who is Word of God (Jn 1:14 & Rev 19:13) When you doubt Jesus you doubt your Creator who created the whole universe. (Jn 1:3 & Col 1:15-17) Thus, you Jesus who is the source of life (Jn 1:4) and power in his words by which the whole universe is held to gather and sustained. (Heb 1:3) **Therefore, if any believer doubts his faith in Christ, commits sin against his Master,** because; by doubting his faith, he reduces Jesus as a God who has no power. Thus, he commits sin in practicing his faith. St Paul said; Because his actions are not based on faith he commits sin, for any action not based on faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

IS YOUR MIND RULING OVER YOUR FAITH?

We are living in the modern world of Artificial Intelligence where everything is preset and programmed. *The present-day life gives little room for man to think and use his reasoning, because; everything is available readymade for people to use.* People enjoy the luxury of using readymade dress, readymade house, readymade food, readymade entertainment programmes, agencies available to programmes any functions including funeral, readily available living-in partners to satisfy sexual desires, matrimonial sites to find life partner, readily available carrier counselling, educational counselling, tour & travel counselling and finally readymade lab grown human organs & organ donors to replace sick/failed human organs & so on.

The above being the truth, people do not wait upon God to receive anything from him, according to his will, (Sir11:14-15) because; everything is available to them instantly through telephone. They only need money to buy things of their desires. So, people are keen to earn huge money, very quickly! The world is after money, least realising; money is the source of all evil. (1Tim 6:1-10) To make quick money, they compromise on everything. Yes, they compromise on love, fidelity, moral values, self-respect, integrity, human values, & compassion. They also do not hesitate to compromise on faith in living God to amaze wealth. This is how human beings have changed in this modern world. Yes, human beings are sold out for money! And money takes precedence over their parents, their children and life partner. Consequently, money takes precedence over faith and God!!

When money takes precedence over God, obviously people compromise on faith. Consequently, man lives by whims & fancies of his mind. Thus, man lives against God's word; "Man live by every

word spoken by God". (Mt 4:4) If man live by his own thinking, his mind rules over faith in God's word; 'Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember God in everything you do, and he will show you the right way'. (Prov 3:5-6)

Dear believers, it is time now to introspect very seriously to understand; Is our mind ruling over our Faith in God? If it true, then we have been deceived by the Satan. Jesus says; the Satan is a liar/deceiver. (Jn 8:44) From the beginning he has been deceiving people in faith. They do not believe, because, their minds are kept in the darkness by the evil god of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light of Christ shining on them. (Is 60:18-19 & Eph 5:14) It is the light that comes from Good News about the glory of Christ who is the exact likeness of God. (2 Cor 4:4) Jesus said if you believe, you will see God's glory. (Jn 11:40) People fail to see Christ's glory shining on them, because they are deceived in faith. This is how people's mind rule over their faith in Christ. Consequently, they fail to receive blessings promised to them, especially forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament of Confession. (Jn20:20-23) Thus, they lose Eternal Life which is promised to those who believe in Jesus. (Jn 11: 25-26)

Yes, our mind rules over faith in Jesus. That is why we do not receive the promised blessings and progress in spiritual life. Because our mind rules over faith, we are not able to surrender our mind to receive promised blessing and become God's instrument to harvest souls. But God said; 'You are the chosen race, kings' priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim wonderful acts of God to harvest souls. (1 Pet 2:9) God has offered us promise that; we may receive blessings. So, let us take care, then, that none of us will be found to have failed to receive the blessing that are promised. Because, St Paul said; "We have heard the Good News, just as they did. They heard the message, but it did them no good, for when they heard the Good News, they did not accept it with faith". (Heb 4:1-3)

Do not be deceived by your mind which is influenced by happenings in this world. There are people who say; in olden age people lived by God's Words. But we live in the automated world of modern age where modern amenities, entertainments & luxuries are basic necessity. People say; the world revolves around money & so it is not possible to live with meagre income earned honestly trusting God's word. So, they justify earning money compromising honesty, morality, human values & their faith in Jesus. They also say living-in relation, abortion, gay/lesbian marriage, pornography, divorce, free sex, drinking are the accepted norms of modern living and thus they

compromise on the teachings of Bible. They justify themselves saying God knows us; he understands our situation in the modern world and also accepts us. And so, we will live according to worldly standards. Consequently, they compromise their call-in faith. **All such thoughts come from the Evil One to deceive our mind in faith.** Because, whatever may be the time or the season, God's Word which guides us to live holy life do not change, for God himself do not change. (Mal 3:6) He is the same God yesterday, today and tomorrow. (Heb 13:8)

Our God says; those who live as their human nature tells them to, have their minds controlled by what human nature wants. Those who live as the Spirit tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants. To be controlled by human nature results in death; to be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace. (Rom 8:5-6) And you have an obligation, but it is not to live as your human nature wants you to. For if your mind rules over faith to live according to human nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death your sins, you will live. (Rom 8:12-13) *Our God is an unchanging God he reigns forever. (Dan6:26) His words endure forever. (Is 40:8) And after death we all will be judged by God's words. (Rev20:11-15)*

So, do not let you mind to rule over your faith and lose eternal life which is God's free gift through Jesus. (Rom 6:23) Whatever it may cost you, never give-up faith in Jesus. Do not get deceived and compromise on your faith in Jesus and on his life-giving, living and active words which offers you love, peace, forgiveness of sin and of course eternal life, for which you are called through Faith in Christ.

If your mind is filled with worldly thing, then the Satan will easily deceive you in faith. But if your mind is filled with God's Words, then his words will lead you in path of holiness. (Sir50:28-29 & Is35:1-10) Set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. You have died for the world and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ. When he appears, you too will appear to share his glory!" (Col 3:1-4) Jesus calls you to receive eternal life through faith in him. (Jn 11:25-26) Yes, if you have faith in him, you will see God's glory. (Jn 11:40) Those who have faith, will not be disappointed. (Rom 10:11)

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So then, dear believers in Christ, try even harder to make God's call and his choice of you a permanent experience; if you do so, you never abandon your faith. (1 Pet 2:10)
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QUESTION NO-22

HOW TO GROW DEEP IN FAITH?

Having understood; What faith is, it is important for us to live a true Christian spiritual life, by practicing our faith by putting in to action what we believe! Because the Bible says; "Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to God's words; instead, put it into practice. If you listen to God's words, but do not put it into practice, you are like people who look in a mirror and see themselves as they are. They take a good look at themselves and then go away and at once forget what they look like". (Jas 1:22-24) Further, the Bible says; "It is by your action you are put right with God and not by your faith alone. As a body without spirit is dead, so also faith without action is dead". (Jas 2:24 & 26) **But we cannot practice our faith in truth and spirit, unless we are convinced about what we believe. Yes, we cannot be convinced in our faith unless we encounter spiritual experience in personal life.** Now we will make attempt to understand:

- **How to grow deep in faith?**
- **What are God's promises to strengthen us in faith?**

Importantly we will learn 'spiritual exercises' by which we can grow deep in faith & be convinced, so that we may not fall in faith when we encounter evil tricks, for the Satan is trying to deceive us in faith. (1Pet 5:8) Because in spiritual life, we are not fighting against human beings, but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities & cosmic powers of this dark age. (Eph 6:12)

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR FAITH?

God placed Jesus Christ as the one & only foundation for faith, and no other foundation can be laid. (1 Cor 2:11) Hence, Jesus Christ is our foundation stone. We firmly believe that Jesus Christ is the foundation stone because of the following reasons:

- *Through faith; we accept Jesus Christ is Son of God, (Lk 5 :24) and he is the Supreme Spiritual Ruler and Authority. (Col 2:10)*
- *Through faith; we accept all that is written in scriptures is true, because Jesus said; 'Father your words are truth'. (Jn 17:17)*
- *Through faith; we accept God's promises are truth (Is 55:10-11) and we claim; his promises through Jesus, (Is 62:6-7 & 2 Cor 1:20) and God's faithfulness for his promises. (2 Tim 2:13)*

- *Through faith; we receive God's blessings, which are; fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. (Eph 1:18, Gal 5:22 & 1 Cor 12:7-11)*
- *Through faith; we receive God's authority to walk on snakes and scorpions and overcome the power of the enemy. (Lk 10:19)*
- *Through faith; we receive power to heal the sick, perform miracles and drive out the evil spirits. (Mark 16:17-18)*
- *Through faith; we receive God's forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of Confession. (Jn 20:21-23)*
- *Through faith; we are healed of sickness in our body and wounds in our spirit & soul. (Ezek 34:16 & Lk 17:11-17)*
- *Through faith: we accept God's plan for a prosperous life and good future in the earthly life. (Jer 29:11)*
- *Through faith: we accept the purpose of our existence on the earth, which is; to glorify God in life. (Is 43:7, 1Cor 6:18-20)*
- *Through faith: we hope in Christ for eternal life. (Jn 11:25-26)*

Through faith, we accept God's plan for us to complete our work in salvation, (Phil 2:12-13) which is to; harvest souls for Jesus to fulfil God's eternal plan. In eternal plan, we become a member of one family in heaven with Jesus as head. Yes, Christ will gather us as one flock as our Shepherd. (Ezek 34:22-23, John 10:16 and Eph 1:7-11)

WILL WE BE INSTRUMENTS IN THE HANDS OF GOD?

God chose some people as his Prophets and spoke to them:

- **To Isaiah God said;** I make a covenant with you. I have given you my power and my teachings (my words) to be yours forever, and from now on you are to obey me and teach your children and your descendants to obey me for all time to come. (Is 59:21) And Isaiah said; I will go Lord, send me. (Is 6:5-7)
- **To Jeremiah God said;** Today I am giving you authority over nations and kingdoms, to uproot and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." (Jeremiah 1:10)
- **To Ezekiel God said;** Mortal man, go to the people of Israel and say to them whatever I tell you to say. But none of them will be willing to listen to you; they will not even listen to me. All of them are stubborn & defiant. I will make you as stubborn & as tough as they are. I will make you as firm as a rock, as hard as a diamond; don't be afraid of those rebels. (Ezekiel 3: 4-9)
- **Form these words, it is very clear that; God is looking for someone who will reach out to people to harvest souls.** If you purify yourself from all sins and offer yourself as thanks giving sacrifice to God (Rom12:1) he will give power & authority and use you as his instrument in the work of salvation. (2 Tim 2:21)

The power and authority which God gives will help you to fight against the kingdom of Satan and harvest souls for Christ. Yes, Christ has called us for this purpose, for he said; 'The harvest is plenty, but the gardeners are few'. (Lk 10:2 & Mt 9:37) When we work to harvest souls, the trials/tribulations that we face will come from the evil one. For, St Paul said; 'We are not be fighting against human beings but against wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world; the rulers, authorities & cosmic powers of this dark age'. (Eph 6:12) **Yes, in this spiritual life, we are fighting against the ruling spirits of the universe, (Gal 4:3) the wicked spirits, which are losing their powers. (1Cor 2:6)**

If we work for the kingdom of God to harvest souls the Satan will bring all kinds of troubles & tribulations on us so that we may become weak in spiritual life and give-up faith. He will cause such serious problems to the extent that it will drive people to abandon faith. For this very reason, God has given promises to fight for us, so that we may not lose faith, but fight till end, hold ground and win in this hard fight. (Eph 6:10-13) **God who called us to harvest souls for him has promised to give victory in our trials & tribulations. He said;**

- I will go with you and to give victory. (Ex 33:14)
- I will lead you and protect you on every side. (Is 52:12)
- You will succeed, not by military might or by your own strength, but by my spirit. Obstacles as great as mountains will disappear before you. (Zach 4:6-7)
- My word is alive & active sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through to where your soul & evil spirit meet and it will deliver you from the power of the wicked. (Heb 4:12)
- I will burn around you as a wall of fire to protect you from the powers of darkness. (Zach 2:5)
- **God has given armour to protect us. Viz; Truth, Salvation, Faith Righteousness, Good news & his Word as sword. (Eph 6:10-18)**

When we go in his name to do his work in the field of salvation our Lord promises that; he will break the mountains & hills, (Is 45:2) open up the sea, (Is43:16) open our eyes for faith (Lk 24:13-31) and lead us in the roads that we have never travelled and make the rough country road smooth before us. (Is 42:16) **This is how our God will protect us when he uses us as his instrument in the work of salvation.**

WHAT ARE THE SPIRITUAL EXCERCISES AND GOD'S PROMISES THAT WILL HELP US TO GROW DEEP IN FAITH?

We will receive God's protection through these promises if only we are sure & convinced in our faith and do the work of salvation without fear & doubt. Because, the Satan always puts doubt in our

mind which causes fear in heart so that we may doubt our faith & fail in our mission like how Peter doubted his faith to walk on water on seeing strong wind in the sea and drowned in water! (Mt 14:28-30)
Fear and doubt do not allow us to go forward to do God's work and grow strong in spiritual life. To overcome fear, we must grow in faith.

➤ *How do we grow deep in faith?*

➤ *How to become strong in our spiritual life?*

Well, believers are advised the following Spiritual Exercises to grow deep in faith, to become strong in spiritual life and receive the gift 'sure foundation' in faith so as to become soldiers of Christ. (Is 13:3)

"Spiritual Exercises"- 1: Read Word of God & Meditate on it:

Every day utilise your free time to read God's Words and meditate on it to gain wisdom & insight. (Sir 6:37) If you meditate on God's words day & night, Jesus will make his home in your heart through faith and open your eyes for faith. (Lk 24:25-32) Also he will open your mind to understand Bible. (Lk 24:39-44) If show curiosity to know; what God has spoken about you & what is God's call for you, and spend more time in reading Bible, Jesus will give you heavenly wisdom to understand the spiritual truths in Bible, (1Cor 2:6-10) and enlighten you on God's call. (Is 61:1-4) Further, he will reveal God's plan for you in faith. (Jer 29:11 & 1 Tim 1:4) ***You will come close to Jesus, know the magnitude of his love & grow in faith. (Eph3:17-19)***

"Spiritual Exercises"- 2: Search for Wisdom before sunrise:

The Bible refers Jesus Christ as Wisdom and advocates believers to worship Jesus in the early morning before sunrise, i.e., from 3 to 6 AM. God promises to bless anyone who seek wisdom-Jesus, and worship him before sunrise. (Sir 32:14) ***If you sacrifice your early morning pleasurable sleep to seek wisdom / to worship Jesus, you will encounter presence of Jesus in your worship.*** Because; his life-giving words, (Jn 6:63) his active words, (Heb 4:12) will come alive, (Jn 6:68) and flow in you to give life. (Ezek 47:8-9) Jesus will take delight in you and his words will renew your body, soul & spirit to give you 'New life'. (Zeph 3:17 & Is 40:30-31) Also, Jesus will bless you with heavenly wisdom & peace of mind and he will be with you in every thought. (Wis 6:12-16) Jesus will take control of you & guide you as a shepherd in the light of the Lord. (Is 60:19 & Sir 50:28-29)

The Spirit of Wisdom - the Spirit of Jesus will prepare you to rule the kingdom of the Satan! Yes, to those who worship Jesus before sunrise, he gives spiritual strength to overcome their sinful-desires, weaknesses and worldly attractions which lures them to sin. (Acts 3:20 & Wis 6:20-21) This is what Jesus promised; 'you can

walk on snakes & scorpions and overcome power of the enemy'. (Lk 10:19) **Most importantly, Jesus will fill you with the spirit of courage which will empower you to overcome all your fears that are causing you to fall in faith!** If you seek Jesus before sunrise, he will give you courage to walk on all fears, like how Jesus walked on the water. You will not drown in fear losing faith, but you will raise in courage with conviction in faith by the power of grace Jesus gives. (Is 40: 30&31)

"Spiritual Exercises"- 3: Accept God's Words and obey them:

When you read Bible, do not read it as a novel, or like a magazine, or like any other book, or like a newspaper. Because; our Father in heaven speaks to his children (i.e., you) through Bible. If you worship Jesus before sunrise, you will hear the voice of your heavenly Father.

Accept his words, as words spoken by the father to the son.

*Ask the heavenly Father to open your mind to understand what you read. (Lk 24:40-46) Take help of the Holy Spirit, who is your helper & counsellor. (Jn 14:16-26) The Holy Spirit being the author of the Bible, (2 Tim 3:16) will explain the meaning of words you read. **Plead to God to shower on you the spirit of obedience so that you obey the teachings of Bible.** Because, without obedience to God, you cannot enter in to spiritual life & you will not grow in faith. (James 1:22-25)*

"Spiritual Exercises"- 4: Say this prayer before reading Bible:

Father, I thank you for choosing me (Jn 15:16) and for your call, today. (Is 43:1-5 & Ps 50:14) Here I am Lord, your son (Jer 31:20), wanting to hear your voice. Speak to me Lord, your servant is listening. (1 Sam 3:10) Father, while you speak, open my mind for Scriptures (Luk 24:40-46) to understand spiritual truths. (Col 2:3) Give me a gift to retain your words deep in my heart so that your life-giving Spirit (Jn 6:63) will continue to flow in me, (Ezek 47:8-9) cleanse my soul, (Jn 15:3) heal my body & soul and bring life in me. (Prov 4:20-22) Give me wisdom and insight to understand the inner meaning of your words (Sir 6:37) so that, your words may live in my heart with all its glory, (Col 3:16) and fill me with fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) and gifts of the Holy Spirit.(1 Cor 12:7-11) Make me an Iron pillar and Bronze wall against my enemy (Jer 1:18-19 & Jer 15:19-20) and teach me how to use your words as powerful sword (Eph 6:17) to fight against the kingdom of darkness. (1 Tim 1:18) Father God, help me to live a holy life (1 Pet 1:15) so that I may glorify your Spirit in my body. (Is 43:7 & 1Cor 6:19-20) Give me "Sure Foundation" in faith (1Pet 5:10) so that I become a "Loyal Soldier" of Christ. (Is 13:3) Give me the grace to complete the work in salvation (Phil 2:12-13) so that, "I may live life in all its fullness", (Jn 10:10) and gain the promised eternal life. (Jn 11:25-26) **Amen!**

"Spiritual Exercises"-5: Systematic reading of Scriptures:
Make it a habit to read Bible every day in the morning and at night.

For God said; 'Do your sowing in the morning and in the evening, too. You never know whether it will all grow well or whether one sowing will do better than the other'. (Ecc 11:6) Therefore, read Bible twice a day. Read at least one Chapter in the Old Testament, New Testament, Psalms, Sirach, Proverbs and letters written by Apostles.

"Spiritual Exercises"- 6: Marking Word of God in coloured ink:

As you read the Bible, underline those Words in the Bible which gains your attention with blue ink and red ink according to your intuition.

"Spiritual Exercises"- 7: Write those Word of God you have

marked: Keep a separate Note Book and keep writing the Words of God which you have marked in blue ink & red ink and under different group heading such as: Faith, Love, Suffering, Endurance, Wisdom, Temptation, Forgiveness, Sin, Repentance, fear of God & Wisdom etc.

"Spiritual Exercises"-8: Create a Word Bank:

As you progress day-by-day, the group headings as mentioned Spiritual Exercise: 6 will continue to increase and the number of verses in each group will also increase. Progressively, you will be creating a Diary of God's Words which is called 'Word Bank'. This Diary will be a compilation of God's Words concerning many subjects. And it will serve as a ready reckoner of Word of God for different occasions & various situations.

"Spiritual Exercises"-9: Make it a habit to read verses in the

Word Bank regularly: And make attempt to memorise as many verses concerning various headings, say; Fear or Repentance or Faith etc. When you memorise God's words, those words are not written with ink on stone tablets, but they are written with the Spirit of the living God on your heart. (2 Cor 3:3) When you memorise Word of God under different group headings, it will help you to remember them always and you can meditate on them in free time to gain wisdom and insight. (Sir 6:37) Also, those words will counsel you in your depression or doubt or spiritual distress, because the Holy Spirit will remind you the right choice of Word for the right occasion (Prov 15:23) and deliver you. Further, with the help of Word Bank, you can counsel those who are in doubt, depression and spiritual distress. (2 Cor 1:4-6) Yes, the Holy Spirit will remind you the correct choice of words for right occasion to fight the Satan when you go through trials & temptations. The Scriptures says; Jesus used the right choice of Word to overcome temptations when he was tempted by the Satan. The Satan could not stand before Jesus when Jesus gave word of God in reply to temptations, for the Satan fears Word of God. (Mt 4:1-11)

"Spiritual Exercises"-10: Allow God to circumcise your heart:

If you read Bible before sunrise & accept that; God the Father has written all those words only for you to live a good life by obeying them with all your heart, without questioning God's will, surrendering your mind, then God's power which dwells in his words will transform you inwardly. For the Bible says; Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God, what is good & pleasing to him and is perfect. (Rom 12:1-2)

When you obey God's Word, it acknowledges your surrender/humbleness to God. Such obedience and humbleness will build your relation with God gradually, as Father and Son. (Ps 2:7-8 & Jer 31:20) The Lord will be highly pleased with you and he will reveal himself to you, because; you are obedient, humble & repentant, for he said; "I am the high and holy God, who lives forever. I live in a high and holy place, but I also live with people who are humble and repentant, so that I can restore their confidence and hope. (Is 57:15)

When your relation with God grows as Father & son, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, will convict you in all your wrong doings, (Jn 16:8) constantly remind your sinfulness and lead you to repent. (Rom 2:4) So, your conscience will not permit you to live in sin. Also, the Spirit will reveal how to worship God in truth & spirit (Jn 4:24) and correct your wrong doings/wrong belief in worship. (Phil 3:3) *Because God's immortal spirit is dwelling in every one of us, he gently corrects us when we sin and reminds us of our sinfulness. He warns us about it, so that we may abandon our evil ways & put trust in him. (Wis12:1-2) Thus, his Spirit will cleanse you from all sins. (Is 6:4-6)*

Yes, Jesus will fill you with grace and give spiritual courage to surrender all sins. (Acts 3:20) *It may be an instant spiritual process like how St Paul was changed. (Acts 9:1-19) Or, it may be a gradual process in which you will receive spiritual strength which will help you to surrender your sins one-by-one. You will understand what is God's will for you, and his Spirit will teach you how to worship God in truth & spirit. (Jn 4:24) Yes, he will teach you what he wants you to do; you will walk in the paths he has chosen, for the LORD's teaching comes from Jerusalem; from Zion he speaks. (Mic 4:2) God will discipline you, which he calls as merciful-disciplining. (Wis 11:8-10) Such discipling is a tough process where you will think you cannot go any further and want to give-up. But God will not give-up on you.*

At first, God's Spirit will lead you along difficult path. But his Spirit will be there on every side to instruct you to walk in the path that you should follow. (Is30:20-21) His Spirit will make you so afraid that you will think you cannot go on. The discipline he demands will be tormenting, and he will put you to the test with his requirements until he trusts you completely. Then he will come to you with no delay, reveal his secrets to you, and make you happy. (Sir 4:17-18)

In this spiritual process Jesus will give you a new heart and a new mind. He will take away your stubborn heart of stone and give you an obedient heart. (Ezkl 11:19 & Ezek 36:25-27) **It is a gradual spiritual process of purification, where Jesus will cleanse your soul like how he cleansed the disciples by his words.** (Jn 15:3) When you go through this process, you will realise God's promises (Ps 91) for protection, his guidance, (Is 42:16) his blessings, (Jer 32:38-39) spiritual fruits, (Gal 5:22) and spiritual gifts (1Cor 12:7-11) are being fulfilled in you, because; God does not withhold good things to people who obey him. (Ps 84:11) It is a process of transformation of your inner being. It is an inwardly transformation of heart & mind. In this way God will circumcise your heart & mind. (Col 2:11, Rom 8:27-28)

"Spiritual Exercises"-11: Pray to Jesus for Spiritual blessing: Now spend more time in personal prayer before sunrise. In prayer, do not recite prayers printed in prayer books. Your prayer must raise spontaneously from your heart. It should be a one-to-one personal dialogue between you & Jesus. In prayer remind the Lord of his great love, his mercies and his invincible power by which he rescued the Israelites from Egypt & led them through the desert. You must learn how to pray from prayers raised by prophets & man of God as below:

- Prayer of Hagar. (Gensis 12:1-14)
- Prayer of Aron. (Wisdom 18:20-25)
- Prayer of Daniel. (Daniel 9:1-19)
- Prayer of Jeremiah. (Jer 3:16-26)
- Prayer of Solomon. (1 Kings 8:22-61 & 2 Chr 1:1-12)
- Prayer of David. (Psalm 51:1-19)
- Prayer of Mary, Mother of God. (Luke 1: 46-56)

When you pray, ask Jesus to give you fruits of the Holy Spirit. (Gal 5:22) Without fruits of the Spirit you can't win over temptations. And ask for gift of faith & gifts of the Spirit to witness Jesus. (1 Cor 12:7-11) Pray to Jesus for fulfilment of God's promises, for he is 'Yes' & fulfilment of God's promises. (2 Cor 1:20) **Ask for spiritual blessing not material blessing.** If you cleanse your soul and do God's work, material blessings will flow without you asking. (Wis 7:11-14) More importantly, ask for 'Gift of Wisdom' which is 'fear of God'. (Sir1: 14)

"Spiritual Exercises"-12: Pray for 'Wisdom' and 'Knowledge'.
God appeared to King Solomon and asked him; What would you like me to give you? Solomon said; give me 'Wisdom & Knowledge' to rule the people for whom you made me king. And God replied: You have made the right choice. Instead of asking for wealth or treasure or fame or death of your enemies or even for long life you have asked for wisdom to rule over my people. I will give you wisdom. And in addition, I will also give you more wealth, treasure and fame, more than any king ever had before, or ever will have again." (2 Chr 1:7-12) King Solomon pleased God by praying for Wisdom & Knowledge.

Yes, God blesses people who are concerned about doing his will. He said I will bless a person whom I chose. (Jer 27:5) And Jesus said, I have chosen you to bear much fruits, the kind of fruits that endures forever. (Jn 15:16) Yes, Jesus has chosen us to bear much fruits according to his plan. (Jer 29:11) Wisdom & Wealth is given to those who honour God above all things & are desirous of doing his will. God chooses such people, blesses them according to their desires.

Therefore, make sure that you live as obedient child of God. Also, it should be your endeavour to do God's will at all cost! God will bless you with all things you need to live a prosperous life. (Phil 4:19) That's why Jesus said; Search the Kingdom of God above all things; rest all will be added unto you. (Mt 6:33) So, pray with a thankful heart, (Col 4:2 & Eph 5:20) claiming God's promises. (Is 62:6-7) In prayer, ask God to give you humbleness and wisdom, to understand God's will and for his grace to do his will all costs. Such prayer will please God. And God who sees your heart will bless you with all things more than you can ask for or think of, (Eph 3:20) because he is God who gives generously & graciously to all. (Jas 1:5)

When you pray, pray with God's word suiting the occasion and requirements. (Pro 15:23 & Sir 51:22) When you pray with Word of God suiting the occasion, you will experience God's life-giving words (Jn 6:63) will come alive in the situation (Jn 6:68 & Heb 4:12) and work in you to do things for what that Word is planned and sent by God. (Is 55:10-11) **Such spiritual encounter with God's Words & his power will give you conviction in faith & help you to grow in faith!**

Now we will understand - How to pray with God's Word suiting relevant situation?

1. When you fear that something adverse may happen (Or) you are not sure whether the events that is likely to happen will be in your favour or not, then, pray with words: "Do not fear, for I am with you.

*I am your God let nothing terrify you. I will make you strong and help you. I will protect you and save you". (Is 41:10) **Avoid sin in all its forms and observe fasting as the Spirit leads you.** God will change everything in your favour, as we read in the Book Esther, (The Greek Version) where God answered people's fasting & prayer. **He said "My Nation is Israel which cried out to God for help was saved. The Lord saved his people! He rescued them from all evils and performed great miracles & wonders that have never happened among other nations.***

This is because God prepared one destiny for his own people and the other for other nations. Then came the day and the hour when these two destinies were to be decided. Time had come for God to decide about the nations. God remembered his chosen people and gave the verdict in their favour. (Esther 10 F 6-9) This is how God will show favour to you! Further, you should pray to the Shepherd of our souls (1Pet 2:25) claiming his promises given in Ps 23, 91 & 121. ***His promises will come alive to deliver you from all fears.*** You will experience peace Jesus offers. For he said; "Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid. (Jn 14:27)

2.When there are obstacles coming on your way to stop progress, claim these promises for victory. "I will go before you and give you victory". (Ex 33:14) "You will win victory not by your military might or by your own strength, but by my Spirit. The obstacles as great as mountains will disappear before you. (Zacharia 4:6-7) I will fight for you; you do not need to do anything. (Ex 14:14) ***And God said; Victory in the battle does not depend on who has the largest army; it is God's power that determines the outcome."*** (1 Maccabees 3:19)

Further, God assures; Listen to me, you that know what is right, who have my teaching fixed in your heart. Do not be afraid when people taunt/insult you; they will vanish like moth-eaten cloth! But the deliverance I bring will last forever; my victory will endure for all time. (Is 51:7-8) ***I will send my angels who will sweep-down over the obstacles & enemies obstructing your progress and give you victory. I will defend you and protect you for the sake of my honour & because of the promise I made to my servant David. (Is 37:33-35)***

3. When you are suffering due to sickness, claim God's promises to overcome your sickness. ***God has promised; Purify yourselves today, for I will work wonders tomorrow. (Josh 3:5) Yes, God is warning you to repent & turn away from sins to heal your sickness. After repenting and turning away from sin, claim the following promises for healing:***

- *If you will obey me completely by doing what I consider is right and by keeping my commands, I will not punish you with any of the diseases that I brought on the Egyptians. **I am the LORD, the one who heals you.** (Ex 15:26)*
- *If you worship me, the LORD your God, I will bless you with food and water and take away all your sicknesses. In your land no woman will have miscarriage or be without children. I will give you long life. (Ex 23:25-26)*
- *We are healed by the punishment he suffered, and made whole by the blows he received. (Is 53:5)*
- *By His wounds we are healed. (1Pt 2:24)*
- ***No medicine or ointment cured them. They were restored to health by God's Word, the Word which heals all humanity. (Wis 16:12) And God sent forth his Word & healed them. (Ps 107:20)***
- *Finally, God said; 'My son, pay attention to what I say. Listen to my words. Never let them get away from you. Remember them and keep them in your heart. They will give life and health to anyone who understands them. (Proverbs 4:20-22)*

If you accept these promises in faith, depend on them to give life & healing, remember them in heart and purify yourself from all sins, then you will experience God's life-giving words (Jn 6:63) and his active words (Heb 4:12) working in you and healing you, for God said; "But for you who obey me, my saving power will rise on you like the sun & bring healing like the sun's rays. You will be as free, happy as calves let out of a stall. On the day when I act, you will overcome the wicked, and they will be like dust under your feet". (Mal 4: 2 -3)

God said; "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit where God lives." (1Cor 3:16) If you purify yourself & turn away from sins, God will perform mighty miracles and heal you, (Josh 3:5) because; **"When you embrace holiness in your body, soul and spirit, God will be faithful to all his promises (Ps 145:13) and heal all your sickness".**
Faith in God's words & obedience plays major role in healing.

4. **When you are weak to fight the evil spirits, use God's words as your weapon to fight, for St Paul said;** We are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. (Ephesians 6:12) It is true that we live in the world, but we do not fight from worldly motives. So, in this fight the weapons we use are not the world's weapons but God's powerful weapons, which we use to destroy strongholds. We destroy false arguments; we pull down every proud obstacle that is raised against the knowledge of God. We take every thought captive & make it obey Christ. (2 Cor 10:3-5)

So, we are called to use God's powerful weapons given below:

- *Today I am giving you strength to resist them; you will be like fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall. They (evil spirits) will not defeat you, for I will be with you to protect you. I the Lord have spoken. (Jer 1:18-19)*
- *I will make you like a solid bronze wall as far as they (evil spirits) are concerned. They will fight against you, but they will not defeat you. I will be with you to protect you and to keep you safe. I will rescue you from the power of wicked and violent man. I the Lord have spoken. (Jer 15:19-20)*
- *Now I will make you as stubborn and as tough as they are. (The evils spirits are) I will make you as firm as a rock, as hard as a diamond; don't be afraid of those evil spirits." (Ezek 3:8-9)*
- *God has given his Armour to shield ourselves and fight against the evil spirits. They are; Truth, Righteousness, Salvation, Faith, Word of God, Good News & Prayerful life. (Eph 6:13-18)*

You are called to be determined & confident when you fight the evil spirits who bring trials and tribulations to weaken your faith. Yes, God warned Joshua thrice and said; Be determined & confident and read scriptures in the Morning & Evening worship, so that you can overcome the challenges while leading the Israelites to the Promised Land. (Josh 1:5-9) God says; read my words twice a day and use them as sword (Eph 6:17) and as your weapons (1Tim 1:18) in order to fight well against the evil spirits in your spiritual journey. If you do it sincerely, you will experience God's Spirit strengthening you in your weakness, sinful desires & worldly attractions which are causing you to sin repeatedly and you can walk over them, for Jesus promised; I have given you authority to walk on snakes & scorpions and overcome power of enemy, nothing will harm you. (Luke 10:19)

5. When you fear that someone may have done black magic or witchcraft against you/your family you must rely on following words:

- *There is no magic charm, no witchcraft that can be used against the nation of Israel. (Num 23:23)*
- *No weapon will be able to hurt you; you will have an answer for all who accuse you. I will defend my servants and give them victory. (Is 54:17)*
- *The LORD Almighty says, "I will appear among you to judge, and I will testify at once against those who practice magic. (Mal 3:5)*
- *No witchcraft or magic will not have power on you & your family, for God has promised to burn around you as a wall of fire and protect you from all dangers. (Zech 2:5) Yes, you will be surrounded by God's glorious presence. (Baruch 5:9)*

6. When you are confused, disturbed, lost and looking for guidance: remain with Christ and use his powerful words which says; "But as for you, Christ has poured out his Spirit on you. As long as the Spirit remains in you, you do not need anyone to teach you, for the Spirit teaches you about everything and whatever he teaches you is true, not false. Obey the Spirit's teaching then and remain in union with Christ. (1 Jn 2:27)-Yes, the Lord will make you go through hard times, but he himself will be there to teach you, and you will not have to search for him anymore. If you wander off the road to the right or to the left, you will hear his voice behind you saying, "Here is the road. Follow it." (Is 30:20-21) **In all sincerity, if you remain with the Lord in your distress, you will experience Spirit of the Lord giving you the enlightenment and wisdom on those issues on which you need guidance. In the deepest of the darkness, Jesus who is your shepherd will be your light in your path & he will guide your feet. (Ps 119:105)**

7. When you are being confronted and attacked by people, use these words, where God says: Have you forgotten the LORD who made you, who stretched out the heavens and laid the earth's foundations? Why should you live in constant fear of the fury of those who oppress you, of those who are ready to destroy you? Their fury can no longer touch you. (Is 51:13)_Their weapon will not hurt you. You will have an answer for all who accuse you. I will defend my servants & give them victory. I the Lord have spoken (Is 54:17) I will fight against whoever fights you & I will rescue you. I will make your oppressors kill each other; they will be drunk with murder & rage. Then all people will know that I am the LORD, the one who saves you and sets you free. They will know that I am Israel's powerful God." (Is 49:25-26)

Yes believers, you must remember God's Promises and pray with the right choice of God's Promise (Prov 15:23) suiting your requirement. Also, claim God's promises in the morning and at night through Jesus. You must remind God of his promises in your prayer, and claim them day & night as Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 62:6-7.

The promises given by our God are true, for he said; My word is like the snow and rain that come down from the sky to water the earth. They make crops to grow & provide seeds for sowing and food to eat. So also, will be the Words that I speak. It will not fail to do what I plan for it; it will do everything I send it to do. (Is 55:10-11) **Further, God says; Turn to me now and be saved, people all over the world! I am the only God there is! My promises are true & it will not be changed. I solemnly promise by all that I am: Everyone will come, kneel before me and vow to be loyal to me. (Is 45:22-23)**

"Spiritual Exercises"-13: When you pray, pray with a thankful heart and believe in your prayer without doubting. Let your soul be thanking the Lord for all mercies & goodness he has shown to you and for all the blessings that God has bestowed upon you. (1 Thes 5:18, Eph 5:20 & Col 4:2) King David said; there is no bigger sacrifice on earth than to thank God for all his goodness, (Ps 50:14) because; "The Goodness of the Lord and his glorious presence are always with all Israelites for ever." (1 Esdras 5:61) **And when you pray 'Do not doubt your prayer. Believe that you have received what you have asked for'. (Jas 1:6) Because Jesus said; when you pray and ask for something, believe that you have received it. (Mk 11:24)**

"Spiritual Exercises"-14: Whatever you have learnt from the Bible, put them to test. Yes, if you put God's Word to test, you will realise God's power working in you. Because God said; "put my word to test". Yes, he said; "Put all thing to test, (1Thes 5:21) because; God is at work in you who believe". (1 Thes 2:13) And Jesus said; "Believers are given power to perform miracles. They will drive out demons in my name. They will speak strange languages. If they pick up snakes or drink any poison, they will not be harmed. They will place their hands on sick people who will get well. (Mark 16: 17-18)

Dear Brother/Sister, do not just read Bible & say it is nice and good to read. Put God's Words to test! Practice all teachings written in Bible and you will realise how God works in you and through you! **When you put God's words to test and do it without doubting your action, i.e., when you practice your faith; say, by laying hands on sick people and pray, you will see healing taking place, for Jesus said; "If you have faith, you will do greater miracles than me". (Jn 14:12)**

"Spiritual Exercises"-15: Be vigilant that pride does not set in your mind: When you realize that God's power is working in you while practicing faith, never get too delighted and be proud about it. *When you practice your faith, God will test your faithfulness as we read in; Ps 66:10-12, Is 48:10, Jer 17:10 & Sir 4:17. If you pass all trials and remain faithful to God enduring them, God will raise you to a higher platform in his Ministry. This is how God will strengthen your faith. Yes, God will expose you to more & more difficult times, not to destroy you. These difficult times are sent on you only to make you firm in your faith and to remove all your fears, so that you gain Sure Foundation in faith to do the work in salvation. God said; "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all graces who called you to share his eternal glory in union with Christ, will himself perfect you and give you firmness, strength and sure foundation. (1 Peter 5:10)*

Through sufferings we are made perfect in faith. St Paul said; Jesus was made perfect through sufferings. (Heb 2:10) God says; every person who has been given the gift of faith and have received Sure Foundation should watch out and pray continuously to remain firm in faith, because; the Satan will deceive him any time to make him fall in faith. And God said; **"Whoever thinks he is standing firm, better be careful that he does not fall", (1 Cor 10: 12) because; the devil is roaming like a lion to deceive God's chosen children. (1Pet 5:8)** To survive in this sinful world, your faith should endure. Or else, you will be dead for God. For God warns us by saying; **'If your faith does not endure, you will not endure in spiritual life'. (Is 7:9)**

The day on which you experience power of God working in you, it will be the turning point in your spiritual life. Your firmness in prayer, your wisdom & understanding on Word of God, and your faith in Christ will grow like a mountain. It will multiply like how the two fish and five bread multiplied when Jesus blessed them. Yes, Jesus will bless you and you will soon realise; how God is using you for his work. You will experience how the Lord is sharing his glory with you, for the Lord has given following promise to share his glory:

- **Those whom God has chosen; he has called. Those he called he has set aside and shared his glory with them. (Rom 8:30)**
- **You must thank God at all times for God has chosen you as the first to be saved by the Spirit's power, and made you as his holy people by your faith in the truth. God called you to this through Good News preached to you. He called you to possess your share of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thes 2:13-14)**
- **God's divine power has given us everything we need to live truly a religious life through our knowledge of the one who called us (Jesus Christ) to share his own glory and goodness." (2 Pet 1:3)**

About faith St Paul said;

Keep yourself in training for a godly life by growing deep in faith. Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise - faith is valuable in every way, because it promises life both for the present and for the future. (1 Timothy 4:7-8)

QUESTION NO: 23

HOW TO KEEP THE FIRE OF FAITH BURNING ALWAYS?

WHY DID GOD GIVE US THE GIFT OF FAITH?

God said; I have chosen you from the ends of the earth, (Isaiah 41:9 & Jn 15:16) and given you the gift of faith. (Jas 1:17) It is by grace you have been saved through faith. It is not result of your own effort but, it is God's gift. (Eph 2: 8 -9)

Yes, God gave the gift of faith to us for the following reasons:

- 1.** *By having faith in God's Words, we become righteous in the eyes of God. (Rom 4:13)*
- 2.** *Through faith, we are given the privilege to serve God. (Phil1:29)*
- 3.** *Through faith, we are called to complete the work of salvation. (Phil 2:12-13 & 1 Pet 2:9)*
- 4.** *Through faith, we receive abundance of grace to face trials & tribulations, (Phil 4:13) and to endure insults & humiliation, so that we do not abandon the Lord in distress. (Sir 2:3-4 & 2 Cor 12:9-11)*
- 5.** *Through faith, we receive conviction to trust God in all our troubles (Gal 3:14) and also, we receive God's help to overcome trials & tribulations. (Ps 121:1-8 & Wis 19:22)*
- 6.** *Through faith, we will experience Lord's hand upon us in times of difficulties & distress and realise that he has not abandoned us or disappointed us. (Sir 2:10, Heb 13:5 & Rom 10:11).*
- 7.** *Through faith, if we enrich ourselves in Word of God with all its richness, (Col 3:16) we will enjoy fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22) which will deliver us from bondages & encourage us in our distress.*
- 8.** *In faith, if we put God's words to the test, (1 Thes 5:19) we will experience his power working wonders in us. (Mk16:17, 1 Thes 2:13)*
- 9.** *If we put our faith in to action (Jas 1:22-24) we experience freedom from all fears & bondages. (2 Cor 3:17, Heb 4:12, Heb 4:2)*
- 10.** *Through faith, we receive God's forgiveness of all our sins through Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of Confession. (Jn 20:20-23)*
- 11.** *Through faith, we receive life in all its fulness. (Jn 10:10)*
- 12.** *Through faith, we understand that God puts us to test when we serve him, (Sir 2:1-6) so that we become strong in spiritual life, (Jer 1:18-19 & Jer 15: 19-21) and our faith keeps burning like a fire.*
- 13.** *In faith, we experience freedom from all worldly things. (Gal 5:1)*
- 14.** *In faith we share glory of God. (Rom 8:29-30 & 2 Thes 2:13-14)*

God gave 'Gift of faith' to us so that; in faith we will receive saving knowledge of Christ, (i.e., to believe Christ's birth, death, resurrection and his second coming) (1 Tim 2:1-3) and come to know the truth, (Jn 8:31-32) to enjoy life in all its fullness on the earth (Jn 10:10) & also receive eternal life after our body dies. (Jn 11:25-26)

SO, THEN WHAT IS TRUTH?

The Bible gives us a clear/definite understanding on truth. The Word of God explains that Truth is;

- *That; man lives by God's Word day-by-day. (Mt 4:4 & Jn 6:63)*
- *That; Word of God is alive & active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It delivers our soul from evil spirits. (Heb 4:12)*
- *That; Word of God has power to save all mankind. (John 5:24)*
- *That; Word of God endures forever. (Is 40:8 & Mt 24:35)*
- *That; through faith we establish relation with our heavenly Father as 'Father and son'. (Ps 2:6-7, Jer 30:20 & Jn 1:12)*
- *That; through this relation with heavenly Father, we inherit all blessings he has kept for his children. (Lk 15:31 & Gal 4:6-7)*
- *That; through faith, we inherit spiritual powers which Jesus has promised to perform miracles. (Jn 14:12)*
- *That; through faith we receive authority over evil spirits. (Mt 18:18 & Mark 16:17)*
- *That; through faith we receive authority to walk on snakes & scorpions and overcome the power of the enemy. (Luke 10:19)*
- *That; Jesus is the Son of God who has authority to forgive sins of mankind. (Mt 28:18 & Lk 5:24)*
- *That; Jesus gives eternal life to those who believe in him and obey him. (Jn 11:25-26 & Lk 11:28)*
- *That; we are receive full life in union with Jesus and Jesus Christ is supreme over every spiritual ruler and authority. (Col 1:10)*
- ***That; Kingdom of Christ reigns for ever. (Daniel 7:14) For he is King of all kings and Lord of all lords. (Rev 19:16)***

IS THE SATAN WORKING TO DESTROY OUR FAITH?

A VERY IMPORTANT TRUTH IS; THE SATAN IS CONSTANTLY WORKING TO DESTROY OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

Yes, Jesus said; The Satan is a liar and a deceiver (Jn 8:44 & Rev 12:9) He is the enemy, who roams around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour and destroy their faith in Jesus. (1Pet 5:8) That why Sy Paul said; "We are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world,

*the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age.” (Eph 6:12) Yes, the Satan keeps people’s mind in darkness lest they come to know the truth that the light of Jesus Christ is shining on them, (Is 60:19-20, Jn 9:5) the light that comes from the Good News about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. (2 Cor 4:4) The Satan also disguises himself to look like an angel of light, to look like servants of righteousness to deceive children of God. (2 Cor 11:14) **Yes, the Satan does everything possible to deceive us in faith!***

Keeping our faith alive and burning is a continuous spiritual exercise. We know to keep the fire burning in a furnace, we feed fuel at regular interval. Similarly, to keep our faith burning, we must enrich ourselves in God’s Words and in his grace! Since we are fighting against evil spirits in spiritual life, we need God’s powerful weapons to destroy strongholds & false arguments of evil and to pull down proud obstacles that are raised against the saving knowledge of Christ. (2 Cor 10:3-5) That is why God said to Joshua when he was given the task to lead the Israelites in the desert, that; he should read the Book of Law-God’s Words, in the Morning worship & in the evening worship. (Josh1:5-9) Also King Solomon said sow the seeds - God’s Words twice in a day to reap the best. (Ecc 11:6) Reading & obeying God’s Word will enrich our faith & help us to fight well against evil spirits by using God’s words as powerful weapons. (1 Tim 1:18) We learn this truth from Jesus who chased the Satan away by using God’s Words when he was tempting Jesus in the desert. (Mt 4:1-11)

My dear believers, we understood how to receive faith and also grow in faith in the earlier chapters. To remain in faith is very, very difficult in this sinful world, because; the Satan is roaming around to deceive us in faith and to destroy our faith in Christ. (1 Pet 5:8) **We may have faith and may also grow deep in faith. But to keep the fire of faith burning all time is very difficult. To keep faith burning vigorously is even more difficult, because, the Satan will disguise himself as an angel of light to deceive us in faith. (2 Cor 11: 14 - 15)**

The Satan will disguise himself and bring the following in our life to destroy our faith!

1. **The Satan will bring friends who will engage us in entertainments, party/programmes & other attractive worldly events to keep us busy in worldly affairs, such as; golfing in the morning, visiting bar in the evening and other entertainments in week-ends which will take away our precious time in the early morning & at night that can be spent in useful manner for growing in spiritual life. People of this world fail to understand that the Satan brings friends to **destroy our quality time that we can otherwise spend in prayer, reading Bible, praise and****

worship along with family which is very important for a healthy family life & faithful spiritual life, without which we can't grow deep in faith.

2. Through friends the Satan will bring new religious practices such as; Occult, pagan worship, satanic worship, satanic healing, healing practices outside scriptures such as acupuncture, puranic healing and reiki healing etc, which are harmful to our spiritual life, because such practices will destroy our faith in Jesus who is the healer. (Ex 15:26)

3. Through friends the Satan will introduce us to forbidden sexual relations / practices such as; gay/lesbian relation, adultery, incest, swapping of life partner, group sex/orgy, child sex, sex with animals etc. These sexual relations are against scriptures where God says that; conjugal relation in marriage is holy & anyone who abuse this relation will invite God's anger. (Heb 13:4) These sinful sexual relations will destroy our faith in Jesus & take us far away from God to destroy us.

4. Through friends the Satan will introduce our spouse & children in to sinful practices such as; pornography, fornication, self-abuse, virtual sex, toy sex & incest and destroy the holiness in spiritual life.

5. Through friends the Satan will introduce us to Money Multiplying Chain / Business & Gambling. The present trend in the world is On-line gambling & Joint Ventures in business, which offer various tours, fun & entertainments that make people slaves for money & fun. Such ventures will bring greed for money in people, which eventually will bring all kind of evil to destroy their family & faith. (1 Timothy 6:10)

6. The Satan will bring many electronic devices (TV, computer, internet, mobile phone, gaming gadgets, robots) to keep us engaged in it at all time. God has given these devices to use them effectively and spread the message of Christ and glorify God. But the present-day children, teenagers & adults have become slaves for these devices. They spend all their time on various fun/programmes and entertainments forgetting their spiritual life. These electronic gadgets take away people's time for prayer, church activities, and for reading & meditating Scriptures to grow in faith. (Sir 6:37) Because their faith is shallow, they always live in anxiety, fear & spiritual distress. Because they are weak in faith, they are lost for spiritual strength/authority (Lk10:19) which Jesus gives to overcome problems and spiritual distress. (Mt 18:18) People are lost for faith in God's Words because the Satan uses all electronic devices and destroys their faith.

7. Further, through electronic devices (internet, mobile phone) the Satan will bring new and unwanted relations/friends through; Dating App/ Chatting App/ Friendship App in the disguise of friendship & fun,

which will lure people in to forbidden worships, sinful habits, sinful entertainments, sinful relations & forbidden relations to destroy their spiritual life & family life. Many families have been broken/destroyed, and many young children have ruined / spoiled their good future because of sinful relation built through internet. Yes, people are lost for faith & living as slaves for evil relations, satanic /pagan worship.

8. To destroy faith, the Satan will inflict people with satanic disease which cannot be healed through medicine. However, people will spend all their money & time for treatment without any benefit. Since they find no respite, they will venture in to spiritual healing outside the teachings of Church, such as; reiki healing, puranic healing, black magic & witch craft etc. Also, for their healing they will indulge in pagan worship/ Occult / Satanic worship. They will not hesitate to give-up their faith in Christ. And thus, it will destroy their faith and make them slaves for such sinful practices and grope in the darkness.

9. The Satan will bring false preachers (2 Cor 11:14-15) who will take away our faith in R Catholic Church. They will destroy people's faith in One Lord, One Faith & in One Baptism given by the Catholic Church. (Eph 4:5-13) Also, they will destroy people's faith in the Sacraments administered by RC Church. False preachers will speak against Holy Eucharist & adoration of Holy Eucharist. They speak against meditation on rosary, protection given by Mary to the Church as its guardian, intercession of saints for the faithful, (Rev 19:15 & Heb 10:25) faith in the Sacrament of Confession, (Jn 20:21-23) and offering Holy Mass in memory of the dead. (Sir 7:32, 2 Esdras 2:31, 2 Macc 5:12-23) They will proclaim false messages to destroy faith in the Ministry established by Jesus which is practiced by RC Church.

10. The Satan will bring false preachers who will destroy people's faith in Jesus by saying that; we have to pray to Father in heaven directly and not through Jesus Christ. Such false faith is against the teachings of Jesus who said; No one can go the Father directly except through me. (Jn 14:6) God the Father has placed Jesus as the only source for our salvation, because there is no other name given to us in heaven or on earth for salvation. (Acts 4:12) If you are deceived by this false teaching, firstly; your sins will not be forgiven, because; God the Father forgives sins of mankind only through Jesus Christ in the Sacrament Confession instituted by Jesus after resurrection. (Jn 20:20-23) Secondly; by believing only in God the Father, you are rejecting Jesus. And by rejecting Jesus, you are denying your own salvation. Because, Jesus said: I am the resurrection & the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; and those who live and believe in me will never die. (Jn11:25-26) Also, it is said, wage

for sin is death; but God's free gift is Eternal Life in union with Jesus Christ. (Rom 6:23) This is how the Satan will try to destroy our faith in Jesus thorough false preachers so that we will lose our eternal life.

11. Satan will bring difference of opinion in faith between spouse, among family members and thus cause division in family so that the husband and wife will keep fighting always and will not grow in faith & in Spirit. We should be wise to understand the satanic tricks and avoid such differences/quarrels to remain in peace and grow in Spirit.

12. The Satan will use all our weaknesses, such as; anger, greed, lust, loose talk, pride, arrogance, stubbornness and disobedience to destroy harmony in members of family, through hurting/ wounding words, abusive language, physical altercations, pride, greed, and gossip etc. This will bring enmity between families/among family members. Sometimes greed, anger and enmity go beyond control and people lose faith in love that Christ preached. Hence, they go to the extent of killing other, destroy families and destroy themselves. Thus, the Satan will use our weaknesses and make us to fall in faith.

From the above we understand that; the Satan enters our life through friends, social media, electronic gadgets and through our weaknesses. The Satan uses all available resources destroy our relation in family, children's life. Further he destroys our faith in Jesus Christ & in eternal life promised by him. Yes, this is what exactly the Satan will cause to happen in our life, because Jesus said: "The thief (the Satan) comes in order to steal (our faith) kill (our happiness and good relation in family) and destroy. (Our physical life, spiritual life and our soul) (John 10:10) Believers are advised remain firm in Word of God and faith in Jesus so that they do not lose promised blessings.

HOW DO WE KEEP THE FIRE OF FAITH BURNING ALWAYS?

We understood that; we fall in faith because we rely on our own understanding to overcome trials & tribulations, instead of trusting in God's word. (Prov 3:5) When we rely on our mind & trust on our own understanding, we depend on the human strength to overcome trials and tabulations. But God says; human power is no use at all to meet spiritual challenges/to fight evil spirits. So, we need God's Power. King David said; More than once I heard God saying 'Power belongs to him'! His power is Constant love. (Ps 62:11) And God's Love comes to us through his Spirit, which is Word of God.

And Jesus said; What gives life is God's Spirit; human power is of no use at all. (Jn 6:63) Jesus said so; because in this world, we are not fighting against human beings, but against the wicked spiritual forces

in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities & cosmic powers of this dark age (Eph 6:12) which are constantly fighting against us (1 Pet 5:8) to destroy our faith in Jesus and in his life-giving words, so that we may fall in faith, be lost in sin and lose eternal life. (Jn 11:25-26)

When we rely on our understanding & strength which is of no use at all to fight evil spirits, we fail in this spiritual war. Consequently, fear sets in our mind, and fear brings doubt in us. This combination Fear & Doubt causes to lose hope and so we fall in faith.

Therefore, it is paramount important for us to make "God's Presence" as a permanent experience in our life; so that we will be always guided by the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:26) on how to fight and overcome trial & tribulations, win victory and hold ground / remain in faith till the end. (Eph 6: 13) That's why St Peter said; *"My Brothers, try even harder to make God's call and his choice of you as a permanent experience; if you do so, you will never abandon your faith. In this way you will be given the full right to enter in to the eternal Kingdom of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Pet 1:10-11)*

HOW CAN WE MAKE GOD'S PRESENCE AS A PERMANENT EXPERIENCE IN OUR LIFE?

You can make God's call, 'his choice of you' and his presence within you as permanent experience (2 Pet 1:10) by practicing the following spiritual exercises.

Excercise-1: Study the Lord's Commandments & devote your time to meditate on them. (Sir 6:37) God said to Joshua; "Be sure that the Book of Law is always read in your worship. Study it, day & night. Make sure that you obey everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous & successful. (Josh 1:8) *Dear believer, if you read Bible in the morning & evening worship, (Ecc 11:6 & Wis 6:12-18) and obey Word of God, (Lk 11:28) Christ will open your mind for Scriptures (Lk 24:36-45) and will fill you with Spirit of wisdom which will make you wise. Wisdom's Spirit will help you & guide you in your fight against trials & tribulations to overcome them. (Wis 19:18-22)*

Excercise-2: Christ's Words must live in your heart with all its richness. (Col 3:16) *If Christ's words live in you with all its richness, you will enjoy fruits of the Holy Spirit within you at all time. (Gal 5:22) The fruits of the Spirit; Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Humility and Self-control will work in you and transform your inner-being. (Rom 12:2) Fruits of the Spirit will fill you with God's graces and give spiritual strength to remain firm in faith against all trials & tribulations. (Acts 3:20) Because you build*

your life on God's powerful words (Jer 23:29) his power will remain in you. (Ps 62:11) **Your life will be built on rock and the tabulations & trials you face will have no power to make you fall in faith**, as Jesus said to Peter; You are a rock. On this rock foundation I will build my Church. Not even death will ever be able to overcome it. (Mt 16:18)

Excercise-3: Always sing psalms, hymns & sacred songs with thanks giving in heart. (Col 3:16) If you make it a habit to sing God's praises every day in worship, and allow your mind to dwell on those sacred hymns during the course of the day, you will experience God's continuous presence in you to deliver you. So, you will continue to enjoy freedom from all fears & doubts which are making you to lose hope & fall in faith. God's presence which dwells in your praises (Ps 22:3) will end the power of the Satan over you & break the Chains that bind you. (Nah 1:12-13) Yes, God will break the bondage of fear in you. The Power of Praise will break strongholds of all fear & give you freedom. (Josh 1-20) **When you sing God's praises, you will be surrounded by angels and God's Spirit will move around you.** (Zech 2:5) **And wherever the Spirit of God is, there is freedom from all evil infliction & bondages.** (2 Cor 3:17) **This is how singing God's praises will help to overcome all fear/doubts which makes you to fall in faith.**

Excercise-4: Do everything in the name of Jesus. (Col 1:17) When you do everything in the name of Jesus, he will bless all your actions, as God blessed Abraham in everything he did. (Gen 24:1) When you honour Jesus in all your actions, you glorify him. (1Cor 6:19-20) When you glorify Jesus, you will always experience his hand upon you. Because he said; you are my people! I have given you my teachings and I will protect you with my hand. (Is 51:16) **Jesus will renew your faith every day and you will soar like an eagle in faith.** (Is 40:29-31) **He will fight for you, for this battle belongs to the Lord.** (1Sam 17:45-47) **Jesus will protect your faith and keep you safe from the evil one who is trying to deceive you in faith.** (2 Thessalians 3:3)

Excercise-5: Avoid sin to gain Lord's favour: Joseph gained God's Favour by rejecting sin when his master's wife tried to seduced him. Though he was jailed, God was with him & raised him to become the Governor of Egypt. (Gen Chap 39-41) When you sin, you invite evil spirits in body & soul. (Jer 7:5-11) They come to destroy your blessings, for Jesus said; the thief comes in order to steal, kill & destroy. (Jh10:10) By sinning, you go away from the saving presence of God. (Rom 3:23) Your sin becomes a barrier between you & God, for he said; "Don't think that the Lord is too weak to save you or too deaf to hear your call for help. It is because of your sins that he

doesn't hear you. It is your sin that separate you from God when you worship him. You are guilty of lying, violence & murder. (Is 59:1-2) **Therefore, if you sin, you will lose God's presence in you. When you lose God's presence the evil spirits which enter you through your sins will cause fear in you to make you fall in faith. If you repent & reject sin, you will please God & gain his favour.** (Joel 2:12-28, Jon 3:1-10)

Excercise-6: Honour Wisdom - Jesus Christ, so that you can make his presence as a 'Permanent Experience with-in you'!

How to honour Wisdom-Jesus Christ?

The Scripture teaches us how to honour Jesus. It says:

1. Give first place to Jesus in life! It means; to worship Jesus before sunrise. The Bible says; Seek Jesus Christ / Kingdom of God above all things. All other things will be given to you. (Mt 6:33, Wis 6:12-21) If you seek Jesus before sunrise, times of spiritual strength will come upon you, which will strengthen your faith (Acts 3:20) and Jesus Christ will bless you with sure foundation in faith. (1 Pet 5:10)

2. Obey Jesus - Word of God & inspired the messages, without doubting. For Jesus said 'blessed is the one who hear the word and obey it'. (Lk 11:28) St Paul said; Do not restrain the Holy Spirit. Do not despise the inspired messages. Put all things to test; keep what is good and avoid every kind of evil. (1 Thess 5:19-22) Jesus calls for obedience in all thing so that you will enjoy his presence, always.

3. Consult the Lord in important decisions: Try to understand God's will in important matters to please him in all things you do! King David consulted God in all major decisions. Before he attacked Philistines, twice he consulted the Lord & the Lord gave him victory. (1 Chr 14:8-17) Fast & pray before you decide on important issues. God will guide you to take right decision pleasing him. The peace that Jesus gives will guide you to take decisions (Col 3:15) & the decision you take in this manner will come from the Lord himself. (Duet 1:17)

If you live life in this manner, you will experience freedom. Because God's presence will always surround you. (Baruch5:7-9) His splendour will pass before you. (Ex 33:19) **If you honour Jesus, he will take delight in you & his love will give you 'New life'.** (Zeph 3:17) The old life has gone and you will be given new life in Christ. (Col 3)

If you live in this manner, you will experience permanent presence of Christ in you. In his presence, there will be continuous deliverance from evil inflictions (fear, doubt & anxiety) which makes you to fall in faith & you will enjoy freedom from all sinful bondages, because your inner-being will be renewed day-by-day. (2 Cor 4:16) This continuous spiritual renewal will help you to grow strong in faith.

God will defend you like a wall, (Is 60:18) burn around you as wall of fire to protect you and he will live in you in all his glory.

(Zech 2:5) *By burning around you as a wall of fire, by his presence God will deliver you from all fears, doubts and anxiety which are causing you to fall in faith.* They will come back to you to make you fall again in faith, but they cannot make you fall, because; God will make you like a solid bronze wall as far as they are concerned. They will fight against you, but they cannot defeat you, because God will be with you to protect you & keep you safe. Yes, God will rescue you from fear, doubts, anxiety & you will be firm in faith. (Jer 15:20-21)

St Peter conveys that; God is calling us to observe purity in our whole being. In our body, soul and spirit so that God's Glorious presence in our body, which is Temple of the Holy Spirit, is preserved in holiness and not desecrated by sin. (1 Cor 3:16-17) If we respond positively to the voice of the Lord (Heb 3:7) God will give wisdom & insight to realise how precious we are in the eyes of God. (Is 43:4 & Is 62:3) Such realisation will give understanding that; "God wants to dwell in our body in all his glory," (Zech 2:5) so that we may Glorify God's Spirit in Body. (1Cor 6:19-20) Dear believer, if you understand this spiritual truth and yield for God's call, God's presence will be made permanent in you. His presence will be made complete in you.

Then, you will experience God's Spirit flowing in you continuously. When the Spirit flows in Dead Sea (when God's Spirit flow in you) it replaces the salt water of dead sea with fresh water. (It will take away your fear which causes you to fall in faith & it will give you sure foundation in faith) Wherever the Spirit flows, there will be all kind of animals & fish. (Presence of God in you will produce fruits & gifts of the Holy Spirit; Gal 5:22 & 1 Cor 12:7-11) God's Spirit will make the water of the Dead Sea fresh. (The Spirit of God which flows in you, will continuously renew your spiritual life. - 2 Cor 4:16) Wherever the God's Spirit flows, it will bring new life. (Ezek 47:8-9)

If you enrich yourself with the Spirit of God / Spirit of Wisdom, you will enjoy the Life-Giving Spirit of Jesus, (Jn 6:63) which will strengthen your faith in all trials and tribulations. (Phil 4:7) You will never fall in faith. You will live life in all its fullness. (Jn 10:10)

Put into practice what you learned and received from Scriptures. And the God who gives us peace will be with you. (Phil 4:9) If you practice your faith without doubting, God will bless your actions (Lk 17:6) and your faith will continue to grow by the power of Holy Spirit! (Rom 15:13) It is only by actions faith grows!

QUESTION - NO: 24

HOW DO WE PROTECT OUR FAITH?

“The Satan’s aim is to destroy our faith in Christ”.

Having understood how the Satan will deceive us through our friends and people around us to make us fall in faith, now we will understand how we can protect ourselves from all these satanic tricks, so that we may not fall in faith but grow strong & deep in faith.

A believer should know the spiritual truth about; what the Satan is looking for in believers and in their spiritual life? All that the Satan wants is; we should lose faith in Word of God. He wants to remove the life-giving Words of Jesus (Jn 6:63) from our mind and keep us in darkness. (2 Cor 4:4) Yes, ‘the Satan comes to destroy our faith in Jesus Christ (Jn 10:10) so that we will be lost in this sinful world & lose our eternal life’.

WHY THE SATAN WANTS TO DESTROY OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST?

The Satan wants to destroy our faith in Jesus Christ for the following reasons! About Jesus the Bible reveals the following spiritual truths:

- That; The Word became a human being (Jesus), full of grace & truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only Son. (Jn 1:14)
- That; Jesus is the incarnation of Word of God. (Rev 19:13)
- That; It is through Jesus everything that exists were created. (Jn 1:1-3 & Col 1:15-17)
- That; His word brings God’s life-giving spirit in us. (Jn 6:63)
- That; Jesus have come in order that we may have life in all fulness. (Jn 10:10)
- That; Only through Jesus Christ God forgives our sins in the Sacrament of Confession. (Jn 20:21-23 & Jas 5:16)
- That; If you believe in Jesus & obey him you will receive eternal life. (Jn 11:25-26)
- That; By the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, sins of mankind are forgiven. (Heb 9: 23-28)
- That; It is only through Jesus we receive Salvation. (Acts 4:12)
- ***This is the saving knowledge about Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2: 3-6)***

If you are lost for faith in Jesus, his life-giving words, his love & God’s forgiveness of sin through Jesus, then you are lost for the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Therefore, you will lose eternal life.

If you are lost for faith in Jesus Christ then you become an easy target for the Satan. He can easily destroy your body & soul because faith in Jesus & his words is a shield for us against the Satan. St Paul said; at all time carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Satan, and use the life-giving words of Jesus as sword to fight the Satan. (Eph 6:16-17)

WILL A SINNER WITH FAITH IN JESUS ESCAPE JUDGEMENT?

However great sinner a person may be, he will escape judgement if he has faith in Jesus & in his words and believes:

- **that;** Jesus Christ came for the sinners, (Mt 9:13)
- **that;** Jesus Christ died for our sins, (Jn 3:16)
- **that;** Spirit of Christ gives him grace to repent, (Wis 12:1-2)
- **that;** In true repentance he will receive God's forgiveness for his sins through Jesus Christ, (Mt 4:17)
- **that;** in true repentance, if he returns to God he will be accepted by God as his son, (Lk 15:18-24 & Rom 10:21)
- **that;** Christ will not condemn anyone who repents, (Rom 8:1)
- **that;** Salvation is found only in the name-Jesus (Acts 4:12) and if he truly repents for his sins, then, he will escape judgement.

If a sinner believes that; Jesus is Son of God and accepts his words as truth (Jn 17:17) and truly repents & turns away from sins, (Mt 3:2) he has passed from judgement to eternal life, (Rom 6:23) because, Jesus said; those who believe in Son of God are not judged; but those who do not believe have already been judged, because they have not believed in God's only Son. This is how the judgment works: the light has come into the world, but people love the darkness rather than the light for their deeds are evil. (John :18-19)

From the words of Jesus, we understand this spiritual truth: "Faith in Jesus & true repentance for all sins will help us to pass from Judgement to Eternal life"! A sinner will pass from death to life! Jesus confirmed this truth when he was hanging on the Cross. One of the two thieves who were crucified along with Jesus truly repented for his sins. He acknowledged that Jesus is the true Son of God and asked forgiveness for all his sins from Jesus. On seeing his repentant heart, Jesus did not reject him. (Ps 51:17) Instead, Jesus took pity on him as a lost sheep, (Lk 15:11-32) and gathered him with compassion. (Is 54:7) Jesus accepted his repentant heart, did not reject him or forsake him because of his sins (Heb 13:5) but forgave his sins. (Lk 19:10) Then, Jesus replied him saying; To-day you will be in paradise with me. (Lk23:39-43) This sinner passed judgement for God's free gift eternal life is received through Jesus. (Rom 6:23)

IS THERE COMDEMNATION IN CHRIST JESUS?

There is no Condemnation in Christ Jesus! Yes, Jesus said to the Pharisees; tax collectors and prostitutes will reach heaven before you. (Mt 21:31) He said so, because; they accepted Jesus Christ as Son of God, believed in repentance & forgiveness of sins offered by Jesus. (Jn 4:1-29) So, they repented, confessed their sins & believed in forgiveness given by Jesus. Yes, Zacchaeus repented for his sins & asked for forgiveness from Jesus. Seeing his repentant heart, Jesus said to him; "Salvation has come to this house today". (Luke19:1-9)

If a sinner does not have faith in forgiveness Jesus offers, and does not return to him asking for forgiveness of his sins, but lives with a thought that; 'there is no forgiveness for his sins at all' and dies in this wrong belief, the Satan will gain his soul. **Yes, if we lose faith in forgiveness Jesus offers to sinners who repent, (Is 1:18, Heb 8:12) then we will lose our soul to the Satan.** After betraying Jesus, Judas repented for his sin. But he did not return to Jesus to ask for forgiveness. He felt unworthy to live & hence committed suicide. (Mt 27:3-5) Therefore, his soul was condemned. (Jn 17:12 & Acts 1:25)

However sinful we are, if we have faith in Jesus; that he will forgive our sins, and if we truly repent & confess our sins to a Priest in Roman Catholic Church, and receive absolution for our sins, and make all-out efforts not to commit that sin again, then we will receive eternal life ultimately, because God has given the following promises:

- *There is no Condemnation for those who have faith in Christ Jesus. (Rom 8:1)*
- *However red your sins are, I will wash your sins and make you as white as wool. (Is 1:18)*
- *Whoever believes in Jesus will not be disappointed. (Rom10:11)*
- *Whoever believed in him will not be put to shame. (Is 54:4, Is 45:17, Ps 25:3, 1 Pet 2:6, & Is 49:23)*

DO WE RECEIVE FORGIVENESS BY PRACTICING OUR FAITH?

By returning back to God in true repentance and confessing sins to a Priest in Roman Catholic Church, in fulfilment of the words spoken by Jesus after resurrection, we are cleansed from all our sins. **Yes, after resurrection Jesus said to his disciples; "Receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive the sins of people, they are forgiven."** (Jn 20:21-23) In honour of this promise, the Sacrament of Confession was instituted by the R C Church and it is being practiced now. (Jas 5:16)

By practicing this faith, we receive God's forgiveness of sins through Jesus in the Sacrament of Confession. **The Satan is trying to**

destroy our faith in Repentance & forgiveness of sin offered by Jesus in the Sacrament of Confession. That is why he plants doubts in mind on forgiveness that Jesus offers in the Sacrament of Confession. He has deceived many sects of Christians to turn away from faith in the Catholic Church. Hence, they are at loss for forgiveness of sins given by Jesus in the Sacrament of Confession. (John 20:21-23 & Jas 5:16)

WILL FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES PROTECT US FROM SATAN?

God said; Grass withers and flowers fade, but the word of will endure forever. (Is 40:8) ***Further, God said; My word is like snow & rain that comes down from the sky to water the earth. They make the crops to grow and give seeds for sowing & food to eat. So also, will be the words that I speak-it will not fail to do what I plan for it; it will do everything I send it to do.*** (Is 55:10-11) ***Jesus said; Heaven & earth will pass away, but my word shall not pass away.*** (Mt 25:35)

The above Words spoken by God acknowledges the power in his Words & that; his words will endure forever. As God's Word endures forever, our soul which God has placed in us (Ezkl18:4 & Ecc 12:7) will safely endure in the earthly life from snares of the Satan & it will also endure in eternal life, if we believe in Jesus and obey his words. (Lk 11:28) About endurance of our soul in the eternal life, Jesus promised; I am the resurrection & life; whoever believes in me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives & believes in me will never die. (John 11:25-26) **If God's Words lives in your soul with all its richness (Col 3:16) the Satan will not have power over your soul.**

The meaning of these words is; If God's ever enduring Words remain our soul with faith and if we obey him, then our soul will endure in this earthly life from all trials, tribulations and temptations. Further, when we die, our soul will endure in the Kingdom of God forever. That's why the Satan is fighting to remove "Word of God" and "our faith in the Word of God" from our soul so that he can gain our soul.

Dear believers, so long Word of God remains in us, and if we meditate on it with faith & obey it, our faith will continue to grow by the power of his Spirit, because: Jesus said; "I have come in order that you may have life; life in all its fullness". (Jh10:10) When Jesus speaks about life; it refers to a life in faith, life in obedience, life in Spirit & our faithfulness to God.

Believers are advised to read Rom Chap-8 which speaks about 'Life-in-Spirit', Col Chap-2 which speaks about 'Fullness of Christ', 'Dying & Living with Christ' and Col Chap-3 which speaks about 'Old life & New Life' to understand more about 'Life in all its Fulness'. (Jn 10:10)

HOW TO PROTECT OUR FAITH?

TEN DISCIPLINE THAT WE NEED TO OBSERVE TO PROTECT FAITH!

Discipline-1: Give up pride. Yes believers, when we grow in faith, God will bless us with spiritual gifts as St Paul speaks in 1 Cor 12:7-11. Apart from those gifts spoken by St Paul, there are other spiritual gifts only a believer will come to know in his spiritual life. When we receive spiritual gifts, at the same time the Satan will inflict our mind with pride about these gifts. We know that pride has destroyed many people, and we will not be an exception if we do not realise this truth. Pride is from the Satan, because one-third of the angels in heaven rebelled against God out of pride. They questioned God; why should they worship him, because they are also like God in heaven? Pride has its beginning when you abandon God – 'your creator'. (Sir 10:12)

The Lord has overthrown kings and put humbler people in their place. He has destroyed some so completely that they are not even remembered any more. The Creator never intended any one to be proud and conceited. (Sir 10:14-17, Lk 1:52) The Lord hates pride & arrogance. (Sir 10:7, Pro 8:13) He warns them that their pride will be their downfall, (Prov29:23) and their pride will not go unpunished, (Prov16:5) because God has no use of conceited people. (Prov 3:34)

To put it in simple words, if we are swollen with pride, we are inviting Satan in our life. When he comes, he will do what is natural to him. Yes, the Satan will destroy our faith and our spiritual life, for Jesus said; "The thief comes in order to steal, kill and destroy." (Jh10:10) That's why Jesus said; "Be on guard, and do not let anyone to deceive you". Jesus repeated this word; "Be on Guard," four times in the Gospel of Mark. (Mark 13:5,9,23&34) He clearly warns that Satan will deceive us to destroy our faith and spiritual life.

The first step to protect our faith is; we should give up our pride & live in humble fellowship with the Lord, because, what the Lord requires is this: "To do what is just, to show constant love and to live in humble fellowship with our God." (Micah 6:8) Further, about humbleness, God said; I live with people who are humble and repentant, so that I can restore their confidence & hope". (Is 57:15)

Discipline-2: Humble yourself in obedience.

Mary humbled herself before God when angel Gabriel gave the Lord's message about birth of Jesus. She said I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done according to thy will. (Lk 1:38) Because of Mary's humbleness, God honoured Mary by giving her a status

above all women and thus she became 'Mother of God'. God says; Humble yourselves before God. He will lift you up. (Jas4:10,1Pet 5:7)

To protect our faith, we must meditate on Word of God & allow the Holy Spirit to work in us. The Spirit will fill us with his fruit – 'humbleness', which will teach us live a life pleasing God. (Jn 14:26 & Eph 5:10,17) With help of the Holy Spirit, our faith will continue to grow. The Satan can't make us fall in faith, for God's Word says; *"Our physical body is gradually decaying every day, but our spiritual being (our faith in Jesus) is renewed day-after-day (growing day-by-day) by the power the Spirit"*. (2Cor 4:16) It is very difficult to keep the fire of faith burning high at all times because the Satan is roaming like a lion to deceive even God chosen children in faith. (1 Peter 5:8)

Therefore, God says; you have to keep on working (read God's words) to complete the work of salvation by enduring in faith with fear & trembling, (by obeying his Words) because, God is always at work in you to make you willing and able to obey for his own purpose. (Ph 2:12-13) Yes, in obedience (Humbleness) you will receive God's favour. When people received God's warning through Prophets, in obedience they humbled themselves by fasting and praying as we read in the books Joel 2:12-28 and Jonah 3:1-10. On seeing how they acted in humbleness; God showed them favour. Yes, God did not bring disaster which he said he would, but blessed them.

Discipline 3: Faithfully endure trials & tribulations, because sufferings are the stepping stones that helps to grow in faith.

In spiritual life, we will go through many trials & tribulations.

Yes, believers if we turn away from sin once for all, the Satan will inflict us with more & more troubles, difficulties and create awkward situations to discourage us so that we may renounce faith in Jesus. Since we hope to share God's glory in eternal life, we must remain humble, patient and endure troubles. Our hope should keep us joyful & patient in all troubles and we must pray at all times. (Rom 12:12)

Yes, we must be patient in all our troubles because, God says;

"In everything we do, we show that we are God's servants by patiently enduring troubles, difficulties and hardships". (2 Cor 6:4) *Because, this small temporary trouble we suffer will bring in a tremendous and eternal glory much greater than the trouble"*. (2 Cor 4:17) *St Paul said; while enduring troubles and hardships we should not lose focus on our call for Salvation/ Eternal life, which has been promised to us. Yes, he says; "We fix our attention not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen can last for a time, but what can't be seen last forever"*. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

When Christ came to this world, he clearly gave warning that; *“There will be pain and suffering for you in this world, because you are my followers.”* Further, Jesus gave us assurance for victory by saying “Remain united with me, for I have conquered this World”. (Jn 16:33) God says; *Trust in the Lord to receive his help.* (Sir 2:6) We should consider ourselves fortunate when all kinds of troubles come in our way, for we know that when our faith succeeds in facing such trials, the result is the ability to endure in faith. (James 1: 2-3)

The trials & tribulations we endure are the stepping stones to strengthen our faith. We should remain firm & surefooted in times of trials by being united with Jesus through his words as David said; *He is God who makes me strong and makes my path safe. He makes me sure-footed as a deer & he keeps me safe on the mountains. He trains me for war, so that I can use the strongest bow.* (Ps18:32-34)

In trials if we remain united to Jesus with determination & conviction, we will be made perfect, complete & lack nothing. (Jas 1:4) *After enduring sufferings we can boast of our troubles because, trouble produces endurance and endurance brings God’s approval which creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, but will strengthen us in faith.* (Rom 5:3-5) St James said; *if any one of you lack wisdom to endure troubles, he should pray to God who will give it to him; for God gives generously & graciously to all.* (Jas 1:5)

4: Never lose attention on God’s words in times of trials: When we encounter trials & tribulations, darkness will surround us. *In such time, we tend to rely on our mind rather than focusing our attention on the power that dwells in God’s words to redeem us from troubles. If we rely on our understanding, fear will set in mind. So, we will lose hope and we will give-in for fear and fall in faith.* But God says; amidst all adversities, trust in my words with all your heart. Never rely on your own understanding. Remember God in everything you do, he will show you the right path. (Prov 3:5-6) The Bible says; *“The Lord will make you to go through hard times, but he himself will be there to teach you, and you will not have to search for him anymore. If you wonder off the road to your right or your left, you will hear his voice behind you saying; “Here is the road. Follow it.” (Is 30:20-22)*

In times of trouble/distress, we are filled with anxiety & fear, which makes us to lose faith. We cry to the Lord; why have you let us down? Why have you abandoned us? But the Lord says; *I will never forsake you & I will never abandon you.* (Heb 13:5) *I will fight for you by my Spirit,* (Ex 14:14) *and protect you with my hand.* (Is 41:10&13) *Yes, we abandon God’s ways to find easy solution to our problems, **because; “we rely on our mind, not in Word of God”.***

The Word of God says:

- *Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed. (Rom 10:11)*
- *Has the Lord disappointed anyone who put his trust and hope in him?" (Sir 2:10)*
- *Has the Lord ever abandoned anyone who held him in constant reverence? (Sir 2:10)*
- *If you have reverence for God, you will be successful any way. (Ecc 7:18)*
- *Has God ever ignored anyone who prayed to him? (Sir 2:10)*
- *God does not reject humble and repentant heart. (Ps 51:17)*
- *God is merciful and kind. He forgives our sins and keeps us safe in our troubles. (Sir 2:11)*

So, dear believers, in times of troubles, in times of distress let us trust in God's words, without losing attention on the power that dwells in his Words to save us. Because, every test that we are experiencing is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise. "He will not allow us to be tested beyond our power to remain firm. At the time we are put to test, he will give us the strength to endure it and provide us with a way out". (1Cor10:13)

"Let us understand the Power that dwells in Word of God"

Word of God says; Jesus is reflecting the brightness of God's glory and is the exact likeness of God's own being. "He is sustaining the whole universe with his powerful Word." (Heb 1:3) *The message is: "If Jesus is sustaining the whole universe together by the power that is dwelling in his Word, wouldn't Jesus not hold us, sustain us and protect us in our trials & tribulations"? Surely, he will sustain us & protect us in all problems, because; Jesus is 'Yes' for all God's promises. (2 Cor 1:20) That's why God said; "Pay attention to my Words - my Son. Never let them get away from you. Remember them & keep them in your heart. My word will give life (it will fill you with grace, (Jn 1:14 & 16) sustain you in faith) and health (give sure foundation in faith) to those who understand them. (Prov 4:20-22)* **Dear believers, meditate on this spiritual truth to receive power. Do not lose your attention on the power that is dwelling in God's Words.**

Discipline - 5: Meditate on Word of God. Jesus said; "So long you live in this world, there will be troubles which will make you to fall in faith. If you remain united with me, you can overcome your troubles. (Jn 16:33) **So, how to remain united with Jesus?** God says; *"Devote all your time studying the Lord's Commands and thinking about him. He will give you insight & wisdom that you are looking for. (Sir 6:37)*

We can remain united with Jesus Christ by reading his words, retaining them in mind & meditating on them at all time. If you

make it a practice to meditate on God's words in leisure time, you will experience presence of Jesus around you always. He will protect you, guide you and to lead you in the light of the Lord, (Is 60:18-20, Is 35:1-10) and give insight and wisdom on heavenly kingdom. This insight and wisdom will reveal you secrets of the heavenly kingdom, which are spiritual truths hidden from worldly people. (1 Cor 2:7-14)

- **This insight & wisdom** will enable you to understand the length, berth & depth of Christ's love. (Eph3:17-20) This understanding will renew your faith (Is 40:29-31) and give new life. (Zep 3:17)
- **This insight & wisdom** will make you to understand that; Word of God which comes from the heavenly throne (Wis7:25) will do everything for what it has been planned and sent. (Is55:10-11)
- **This insight & wisdom** will counsel you in all your problems, (Is 9:6-7 & 1 Jn 2:27) and give peace in all situations. (Phil 4:6-7) Also, it will guide you in all decisions that you make. (Col 3:15)
- **This insight & wisdom** will deliver you from your fears, anxieties, bondages & doubts that makes you to fall in faith. (Is 51: 6-8)
- **This insight & wisdom** will give you light in your path and guide your feet (Ps 119:105) for, the Lord himself will be your eternal light (Is 60:19) and Shepherd you in the deepest dark hours when you pass through the valley of death, (Ps 23:3-4, Ezkl 34:11-31) because he is our father & we are his sons. (Ps 2:7)
- **This insight & wisdom** will give understanding that; God is with you and his power is transforming you as wall of bronze against evil spirits that are destroying your faith, and God will give you victory in this hard fight against the evil spirits. (Jer 15:19-21)
- **This insight & wisdom** will prepare you to rule the kingdom of darkness (Wis 6:20-21) and guide you to accomplish God's plan (Jer 29:11) which God will reveal to you in faith. (1Timothy 1:4)
- ***This insight & wisdom will help us to understand God's words are alive & active Words, (Heb 4:12) and living Words (Jn 6:68) It will deliver our captive soul from the power of the evil spirits***
- ***This insight and wisdom will help you to understand that; God's power will work in you, if you believe. (1 Thes 2:13) "Also, you will understand that; it is the same as mighty power, which God used when he raised Jesus Christ from death". (Eph 1: 18 - 20)***

If Christ's body was raised from death & if Lazarus body was raised back to life by the power in God's Words, we who are created in God's image will also be renewed, strengthened, protected in faith by the Power that dwells in Word of God. Therefore, let us meditate on Word of God to gain this insight and wisdom and protect our faith.

Discipline - 6: Use the help which the Spirit of Wisdom - Spirit of Jesus gives. *The wisdom which we talk is not the wisdom of this world. It is the Wisdom from above; it is 'Wisdom of Jesus'! Where &*

how we can find this Wisdom? Solomon said; to find Wisdom, every day you must read Word of God in the early morning, before sunrise. **Yes, to know more about Jesus & to remain with him in our trials, we must sacrifice our sleep between 3 & 6 AM, read God's words to know the secrets of God's Kingdom & the power that dwells in God's Word.**

King Solomon said; Wisdom is the Light of Christ that shines bright & never grows dim; those who love the Light of Christ and look for it, can easily find it. Wisdom – Christ is quick to make himself known to anyone who desires him. Get up early in the morning to find him, you will have no problem. You will find him sitting at your door. (Rev3:20) To fasten your attention on Wisdom-Christ is to gain perfect understanding. Every day, if you search for Christ before you begin your day, you will soon find peace of mind. (Wisdom 6:12-15)

Yes, if you sacrifice early morning sleep to encounter Jesus, God who sees your heart will send the Spirit of Jesus upon you. And Jesus will strengthen you in all your weaknesses & make you firm in faith. The Spirit Jesus will transform you as a wall of bronze against all your weaknesses. Your weaknesses will fight against you, but they cannot defeat you, because; Jesus will be with you to protect & keep you safe. He will rescue you from the power wicked (all weaknesses) which cause fear in you and makes you to fall in faith. (Jer15:19-21)

Every day, if you search for Jesus before sunrise, his Spirit will take control of you (Ezkl 20 :37-38) and give power to rule over your weaknesses that are causing fear to make you fall in faith. But the desire to know the power of Jesus will prepare you to rule a kingdom. (to rule over your weaknesses/temptations) So then, you that rule the nations (you that who gain power to rule over your weaknesses) if you value your throne (if you reject sin and keep your body, soul and spirit pure & holy) and symbols of authority (if you preserve the "Anointment of the Holy Spirit showered on you" when you received the Sacraments in the R C Church), honour Wisdom, (Obey Jesus) so that you may rule forever. (At all time, you will rule over weaknesses that are making you to fall in faith) (Wis 6: 20-21)

This Wisdom - Spirit of Jesus, will give sure foundation in faith (1Pet 5:10) and guide you to live holy life. (Is 35:1-10) Also, it will give understanding on your weaknesses and enlighten you to use right Word of God (Prov 15:23) to fight against your weaknesses and overcome them. It is like how Jesus used the right Word of God against the Satan who was tempting him in the desert after fasting. (Mt 4:1-11) Thus, you will be transformed in your inner-self by the power of wisdom and become strong in your inner being, (Rom 12:1-2) and you will not fall in faith. **If you are sincere and determined to**

remain with Jesus in all circumstances, trials & tribulations, he will uphold you with his right hand (Is 51:16) and give victory in all your weaknesses & temptations that are making you to fall in faith. Your victory is final, (Is 51:6) & your deliverance is sure founded. (Is 51:7)

Discipline-7: Live a life that pleases God. Learn what pleases God. St Paul said; No one can please God without faith. (Heb 11:6-8) Abraham was called as righteous, because; he pleased God by reposing faith in his promise, in which God promised Abraham at the age 74; I will bless you with a descendant. (Rom 4:13) Though he was old to father a child, yet Abraham believed in the promise! God kept his promise, blessed him with a child at the age 100. (Gen 21:5)

God is highly pleased with people who repose unquestionable faith in him. St Paul said; Try to learn what pleases God. Don't be fools then, but try to find out what God wants you to do. (Eph 5:10 & 17) God gave Ten Commandments to guide us to live a life that pleases him. (Ex 20:1-17) Ezekiel spoke on how to live life to please God. (Ezkl 18:5-9) King David spoke about life that pleases God. (Ps 15:1- 5) Isaiah spoke on what kind of life pleases God. (Is 58:1-12)

Jesus said; God is highly pleased with righteous people who hear his Word and obey it. (Lk 11:28) Yes, God is highly pleased with the righteous and he will be faithful to them in all his promises; to protect them from all dangers as we read in the book: Wisdom of Solomon. God assures to fight for the righteous in trials, tribulations/ to protect/preserve them. *They will be protected in faith & in spiritual life. Their body, spiritual blessings (Fruits/Gifts of the Spirit) and their material blessings will be protected.* To understand how the Spirit of Wisdom will fight to protect the righteous, please read Wis 5:15-23.

Discipline-8: Never astray in faith during trials & tribulations: When you realize power in God's words, it will draw you much closer to God and help you to grow deep in faith. At this stage, you will go through more temptations & tribulations, for it is how God will test your faith, for he said; Even gold, which can be destroyed is tested by fire; and so, your faith which is much more precious than gold, must also be tested, so that it may endure. (1 Pet 1:7) God tested Job's faith as we read in Job-Chapters 1&2. *At times when your faith is tested, if you astray in spiritual life by doing things that displeases God, you cannot expect his protection!* For, God said; Be sure that you do everything that I have commanded. Do not disobey my laws. Obey them all, so that all will go well with you. (Duet 5:32-33)

God expects believers to live a holy life in times of distress. *In times of trials & tribulations, you should never turn away in faith and*

indulge in worship of idols, pagans & satanic worship to find solution for problems and sin against the Ten Commandments, which says; "I am the God who brought out of Egypt, where you were slaves. Worship no other god, but me. Do not make yourselves image of anything in heaven or on earth or in water under the earth. Do not bow to any idol or worship it, because I am the Lord your God. I tolerate no rivals." (Ex 20:1-4) So, never turn away from your God!

Some believers abandon faith in times of testing & distress. They go to astrologers, palmist, tantric, consult spirits of dead, depend on zodiac signs, study movements of stars & planets to find solution for their problems. God hates such practices. **By losing faith in living God, we commit grievous sin against faith. (Rom 14:23) By reposing faith in such practises, we defile ourselves in holiness.** We are called to live a holy life, as Jesus said; "You must be holy-just as your Father in heaven is holy." (Mt 5:48, 1 Pet 1:15) God wants us to be holy, for; our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit where God lives, (1Cor 3:16-17) and God wants to dwell in us in all his glory. (Zecharia2:5) So, never abandon God in times of trials & tribulations.

God is highly pleased if we live holy life. If we make attempt to live holy life, our helper the Holy Spirit will help & fight for us to protect our faith. Isaiah said; The LORD goes out to fight like a warrior; he is ready & eager for battle. He gives a war cry, a battle shout; he shows his power against his enemies. (Is42:12-13) **On the contrary, if you try to find solution for problems outside the teachings of Scriptures, you will displease God and he will abandon you to your sinful ways. (Rom 1:28) Therefore, be cautious that you do not turn away from faith you received through the Saving knowledge of Jesus.**

Discipline 9. God's Words must live in you with all its richness. *St Paul said; Christ's message in all its richness must live in your hearts, (Col 3:16) because; his message is like a fire & like a hammer that breaks rocks in to pieces. (Jer 23:29) If Christ's message lives in you with all its richness, his active & living words (Heb 4:12 & Jn 6:68) will destroy strongholds of the Satan in you & pull-down all his works, for Christ's words are God's powerful weapons. (2Cor10:4-5)*

To get delivered from fear & anxiety which makes you to fall in faith, you must enrich yourself with the message of Christ with all its richness. *It means; just knowing Word of God without realising the richness and power that dwells in it is no good. The richness in the message of Christ refers to; "Fruits of the Spirit and Gifts of the Holy Spirit," which dwells in his words". Fruits of the Spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control. (Gal 5:22) The gifts of Holy Spirit are:*

wisdom, knowledge, faith, power to heal, power to work miracles, gift of speaking God's message, ability to tell the difference between gift that come from the Spirit and those that are not, ability to speak strange language, and ability to explain what is said. (1Cor 12:8-11)

You are called to enrich yourself in God's words with all its richness and use the right choice of words as sword (Eph 6:17) for the right occasion (Prov15:23) to fight temptations & tribulations. *To experience power in Word, God said; use my words as weapons to fight well against evil. (1Tim 1:18) If you do it with faith, you will realise fruits/gifts of the Spirit to work in you to give victory in trials. The richness in God's words will help to overcome your weaknesses that makes you to fall in faith.* Your faith will continue to grow by the power of the Spirit. The practice of using the right choice of Word to experience its power in trials & tribulations will help you to grow deep in faith & build strong relation with God as Father & son. (Ps 2:6-7) *If you use fruits & gifts of the Spirit in daily life to fight tribulations & trials, your faith will be strong as a house built on rock. (Mt 7:24-27) And God will bless you with sure foundation in faith. (1Pet 5:10)*

DISCIPLINE 10-NEVER DOUBT THE POWER IN GOD'S WORD!

God said; Is there a limit to my power? (Num 11:23) **I am the Lord of impossible.** (Jer 32:27) **There is nothing that I can't do!** (Lk 1:37) *I am the God who live in my Word, (Jn 1:1, Rev19:13) and my Word will not fail to do what I plan for it. It will do everything I send for it to do. (Is 55:10-11) My Words endures forever! (Is 40:8)*

You are called to accept and believe in God's Words. *If you do not accept God's words & believe in the power that dwells in it, then God will not reveal his power to you, because; God reveals himself only to those who believe! When Paul and Silas were bound in chains and imprisoned in jail for their faith in Jesus, they were praising God at midnight. Jesus revealed his power by breaking their chains & prison gate and set them free. (Acts 16:16-31) Cornelius believed in Jesus and worshipped him at 3O'clock in the afternoon and Jesus revealed himself to him. (Acts10:30-32) Yes, without faith, no one can encounter Jesus.* About believing & accepting Jesus, his Words, Paul said; *they heard the Good News, but it did not do anything good to them, because, when they heard it, they did not believe & accept it with faith". (Heb 4:2) Faith in God's words will make us realize that; "Kingdom of God is not a matter of words; but of power". (1Cor 4:20)*

Power in God's Word will strengthen your faith and give grace to give-up every worldly thing which you hold as important. *Yes, the Spirit of Jesus will cleanse your mind from all worldly things,*

like how Jesus Christ cleansed his disciples. (Jn 15:3) And God's Words will enrich you in the 'Saving Knowledge of Christ'. (Eph 1:13-14) About gaining the Saving Knowledge of Christ, St. Paul said; "All those things that I might count as profit, I now reckon as loss for Christ's sake. Not only those things; I reckon everything as complete loss for the sake of what is so much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have thrown everything away; I consider it all as mere garbage, so that I may gain Christ and be completely united with him. I no longer have a righteousness of my own, the kind that is gained by obeying the Law. (Philippians 3: 7-9)

I now have the righteousness that is given through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God which is based on faith. All I want is; to know Christ and experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death. (Phil 3:9-10) ***This saving knowledge will help you to die for this world and live only for Christ (Phil 1:21)*** That's why saints gave-up worldly ways of living and came closer to Christ. Yes, people have given-up drinking, consuming drugs, sinful entertainments, sinful relations, sexual sins, late night entertainments & worldly things that hinder them to seek Jesus. ***Yes friends, if you believe in God's words as written in the Book - Wisdom of Solomon (Wis 6:12-21) and, take God's words seriously and every day give-up your pleasurable early morning sleep to worship Jesus Christ, he will reveal himself to you!***

Words of Jesus; 'If you believe & have faith, you will do more miracle than me' (Jn 14:12) will be a reality in your life when you reach this stage in faith; for, Jesus said; everything is possible for a person who has faith. (Mk 9:23) So, do not doubt the power in God's Words. Only believe, (Jn 14:1) then you will see God's glory revealed to you! (Jn 11:40) When Lazarus died, Martha did not believe in Jesus who said; Lazarus will raise to life. (Jn 11:23) Due to her disbelief, Jesus rebuked her saying; ***Did not I tell you that; you will see God's glory, if you believe?*** (Jn 11:40) Then, Jesus gave a command to Lazarus's dead body; "Come Out!" Life returned to Lazarus's dead body, because power dwells in his words. (Jn 11:38-44) ***Jesus healed the paralysed, sick, blind, lame, crippled & did many miracles by the power that dwells in his word. So, never doubt the power that dwells in God's Word. We win victory in the world by our faith. (1 Jn 5:3-4)***

Yes, dear believers, all that the Satan wants to remove from us is; not 'our Church fellowship' or 'our Church worship' or 'Our Prayers'. Martha had fellowship with Jesus, but she did not believe in his words when Jesus said; "Lazarus will come back to life"! The Satan is not keen to destroy our daily prayer, praise & worship,

or other spiritual exercise we do, such as; our Church activities, (or) reading Bible, (or) attending prayer meeting, (or) taking part in the Holy Mass. Because we may be doing all these as our obligations (or) as rituals (or) as religious custom without having faith in what we do (or) without having faith in Jesus and in his words. **All that the Satan wants to steal from us is 'Our faith in Jesus', 'Our faith in his Word' & 'Our faith in the richness/power of God's Word which are fruits & gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Satan wants to destroy our faith in Jesus because Salvation is found only in Jesus Name, (Acts 4:12) and we receive forgiveness of sin-eternal life only through Jesus. (Rom 6:23)**

WITHOUT FAITH IN JESUS, NOTHING WILL WORK!

Faith of blind men. When two blind men came to Jesus asking him to heal them, Jesus asked them "Do you believe that I can heal you"? They answered; Yes Sir! Then Jesus touched their eyes and said; "let it happen according to your faith!" Their sight was restored. (Mt 9:27-30) **Their sight was restored because of their faith in Jesus.**

Faith of people: A paralysed man was brought to Jesus by believers who had faith in Jesus that; his words will heal him. They could not enter the house where Jesus was preaching because of crowd. **Those believers did not lose faith.** They climbed the house, opened the roof and lowered the paralysed man for Jesus to touch & heal him. Jesus was greatly moved by their faith. **Because of those believers' faith in Jesus & in his words, Jesus healed the paralysed man. (Lk 5: 17-20)**

Faith of the Roman officer: A Roman Officer prayed Jesus to heal his sick servant at home. Jesus said; let us go to your house to heal him. The Officer said; Lord I am not worthy to have you under my roof. But say a word from hear, my servant will be healed. On hearing these words, Jesus was amazed about faith the Roman Officer had. Jesus said; "I have never found any one in Israel with faith like this". Then he said; "Go home; what you believed will be done for you!" At that very moment his servant was healed at home. (Mt 8:5-13) **Jesus sent forth his word and healed the sick man at home. (Ps 107:20) It was by faith, the Roman Officer gained favour of Jesus Christ.**

Faith of a Canaanite Woman: A Canaanite woman came to Jesus, and begged him to heal her daughter who was possessed by the evil spirits. Jesus said to her; "Is it right to take children's food and throw it to dogs? But the woman answered; "that's true Sir, but even dogs eat the leftovers that fall from the master's table". **Jesus was amazed by the woman's faith and said to her; Woman, your faith is great; what you want will be done for you. Her daughter was delivered from possession of spirits and healed at that very moment. (Mt15:21-28)**

From the instances quoted from the Gospel, we discern; People won God's favour by having faith in Words spoken by Jesus. They received God's favour, because; in faith, they believed that Power dwells in Jesus's words. If you believe, you will also see God's glory! (Jn11:40)

"IS FAITH OUR ULTIMATE WEAPON AGAINST THE SATAN?"

The Satan is roaming to destroy our faith in Jesus, (1 Pet 5:8, Jn 10:10) plunder spiritual life & plunge our soul in darkness so that we may lose eternal life. If we lose faith in Jesus who is Word of God, (Jn 1:1,14) who reflects the brightness of God's glory and is the exact likeness of God's own being, (Heb1:3) we will lose God's life-giving Spirit in us. (Jn 6:63 & 68) Also, we will lose God's blessings (1Pet 3:9) and favours (Gen 39:4,21& Is 38:1-9) which we receive in faith!

If the Satan destroys our faith in Christ's Word, we are merely flesh without the Spirit of Jesus. In flesh we are weak. (Mt 26:41) So, the Satan will enslave us as captives & refugees. (Ezkl 12:11-12) If we do not accept words of Jesus in faith, we will be dead for God and his promises, for Jesus said; wherever there is a dead body (soul without faith) vultures (Satan) will feed on them. (Lk17:37) If faith in Jesus dies, we will lose eternal life promised by him. (Jh11:25-26) That's why Jesus said; use armour of God 'Faith' as a shield against all the arrows that are shot by the evil one. So, use faith as a shield to protect spiritual life and win victory over the Satan. (Eph 6:14-17)

"NEVER BE DECEIVED IN FAITH."

Every child of God is able to defeat the world. And we win the victory over the world, by means of our faith. Who can defeat the world? Only a person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. (1Jh 5:3-5) Yes, we win victory over the Satan through faith in Jesus, because God said; "If your faith does not endure, you will not endure" (Is 7:9) If you are lost for faith in Jesus, the Satan will win your soul! If your faith in Jesus endures, you will endure in all temptations & tribulations and gain eternal life. Without faith, you become a slave for the Satan. With faith, you become a soldier of Jesus to fight this holy war. (Is13:3) Use 'Faith as a shield' to win victory over the Satan and gain eternal life promised by Jesus. (Jn 11:25-26)

"God chose poor people of this world to be rich in faith and possess the Kingdom of God."

(James 2:5)

"Jesus said; Blessed are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!"

(Matthew 5:3)

Conclusion.

Dear Believers in Jesus Christ, we had a long discourse on issues which are of serious concern for believers in spiritual life, viz; Forgiveness, Human sufferings, Temptation, Fear & Faith. These are very personal and sensitive issues which cannot be addressed by our spouse, relatives, siblings, friends, and parents, because they are spiritual in nature. If these issues are addressed by human beings, they will apply human wisdom & use human words to console and counsel the suffering individuals. If a suffering individual is counselled by human words in spiritual distress, it may give him; some solace in suffering, little encouragement in times of fear, some hope when he falls in faith. ***But human words have no power to heal wounds in soul, it does not give grace to forgive enemies, it does not restore confidence & courage when we fall in faith. Also, it does not restore broken heart, because, Jesus said; 'Human power/word is of no use at all for overcoming issues concerning spiritual life. (Jn 6:63)***

"Become an Iron Pillar & A Bronze Wall"

To overcome spiritual issues, we need the power from above. Hence Jesus said; What gives life is God's Spirit. Human power is of no use at all. The words I have spoken to you brings God's Life-giving Spirit; which is the power from above. (Jn 6:63) So, remain united with me & I will remain united with you. You cannot bear fruit unless you remain with me. (You can't be useful for Kingdom of God unless you are united with Jesus) I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him, will bear much fruit. (If you are united with Jesus, you will walk on snakes and scorpions which are those spiritual issues troubling you. Lk 10:19) ***You can do nothing without Jesus, (Jn 14:4-5) because; he is the source of life. (Jn1:4)***

The message is; Jesus is the source of our life & all blessings'! (Hos 14:8) Because we were created by words spoken by God, Jesus said; Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word spoken by God. (Mt 4:4) ***Therefore, only God's Words can solve your spiritual & personal problems which are multiplying. So, remain united in Jesus through his life-giving words. Meditate on his words before sunrise to get enriched in the Spirit of Wisdom, (Wis 6:12-21 & 7:22 to 8:1) & become strong in your inner-self (Eph 3:16-17 & Col 1:11) to fight all your personal/spiritual issues with the help of the Holy Spirit. (Jn 14:16-17) If you practice this faith, you can conquer your problems and stand as an Iron Pillar (Jer 1:18-19) and as a Bronze Wall against your problems. (Jer15:19-21) "No trouble will hurt you; you will have an answer for all, and God will defend you & give victory". (Is 54:17)***

"Author's Note"

Dear believers in Christ, the core issues of spiritual life, which are; Forgiveness, Human Sufferings, Fear, Temptation and Faith have been deliberated at length in this book for the readers to understand & accept that these are integral part of Christian life, for Jesus himself said; **"This world will make you suffer. But you will have peace by being united with me".**(Jn16:33, Jn15:1-5) **This Book has specially been authored for believers, so that; they do not to get dejected in their trials & tribulations and turn away from their call to raise in Spirit and have their faith renewed to sore high like eagles** (Is 40:29-31) and experience the everlasting, all-consuming, forgiving and sacrificial love of Jesus, so that; they will continue to remain in faith, and grow strong in Spirit to gain sure foundation in faith. (1Pet 5:10)

Many times, the trials and tribulations that we face will bring set back in spiritual life. But this is how God has designed our spiritual life with ups & downs, so that pride do not set in our mind, (2 Cor 12:7) but we continue to cling on to Jesus in humbleness and walk with him; to understand how broad & long, how high & deep is Christ's love, although we can never fully understand Christ's love! (Eph 3:17-19) But if you make attempt to understand Christ's love by meditating Day & Night (Sir 6:37) on his life-giving words, (Jn 6:63) which are alive & active words,(Heb 4:12) **his living words (Jn 6:68) will work in you who believe (1 Thess 2:13) and reveal you the power in his words to deliver you from the awkward situations, trials & tribulations, there-by, you will understand the truth that; "the Kingdom of God is not a matter of words but of power".** (1 Cor 4:20)

Dear believer, you are called to experience this power-which is Christ's Power, which works through his constant love (Ps 62:11-12) so that you will know what to look for in God's words. In God's words you can look for; Power to Reveal, (Jn 14:16-17) Power to Refute, (2Tim 3:16), Power to Reproduce, (Lk 8:11) Power to Re-Direct, (1Pet 2:25) Power to Revive, (Ps 138:7) & Power to Reward. (Heb 11:6) **Christ's power works through Love, and his power will transform your inner being thereby you will come to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him & is perfect.** (Rom 12:1-2)

This transformation will make you as an Iron Pillar & Bronze wall against trials & tribulations. (Jer1:18-19) **God will make you as a solid bronze wall against all Suffering, Fear & Temptations and your Faith will become a rock. Your sufferings, trials & tribulations, fears will fight against you, but they will not defeat you. Because Jesus will be with you to protect you & keep you safe.** (Jer15:19-20)

This book has been written out of my personal experience. It will help you to encounter the power of Jesus Christ. (Ps 34:8) *We must accept the truth that; in this life we are fighting a lone battle against the evil spirits.* (Eph 6:12) We may have all our dear & near ones around us. But when it comes to enduring suffering, forgiving offenders, overcoming fear & temptations, fighting trial & tribulation, and when we fall in faith, no one around us will be able to help us. **We have to fight it all alone. Jesus said man's power is no use at all to fight this war, (Jn 6:63) because this battle belongs to the Lord. (2Chr 20:15) So, he said; remain united in me & I will remain united in you. If you do, then all things will be possible for you. (Jn15:1-15)**

Jesus knows that we are weak in flesh to fight evil spirits, (Mt 26:41) and hence, he said; **I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice & open the door, I will come into their house and eat with them, and they will eat with me.** (Rev 3:20) Yes, Jesus offers himself to come in your life to enrich you with Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit, (Gal5:22 & 1Cor 12:8-11) so that you are empowered to overcome all spiritual distress that you may encounter in this earthly life. (Acts 3:20) *It is only Jesus who can reach where no one else can reach to help you & deliver you from awkward situations. (Jer 23:23-29) He will make you as firm as a 'Rock' & as hard as a 'Diamond' against the evil spirits which are constantly fighting against you to make you fall. (Ezek 3:8-9) Yes, Jesus lives in his words, (Rev19:13) and his words are God's Powerful weapons against the strongholds of the Satan. His words will pull down all arguments that stands against the Saving Knowledge of Christ and deliver you. (Eph 5:8-9)*

God calls you to enjoy this wonderful experience; to walk with Jesus. When you walk with Jesus holding his hand, you will be able to walk on the Snakes & Scorpions, which are; the sufferings of this world, all kind of fears of this world, temptations, trials & tribulations of this world. **Most importantly, you will walk on anxieties which are causing doubts & fears to make you to fall in faith!** Yes, Jesus gave this promise to mankind; "You can walk on Snakes & Scorpions and overcome the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you! (Lk 19:19)

Friends, you should be determined & confident in spiritual life when you go through spiritual distress. When Joshua was about to lead Israelites in the desert after Moses, God told Joshua thrice; "Joshua, to face all trials & tribulations in your path, you should read the Scriptures in the Morning & Evening Worship and be Determined & Confident to find victory! (Josh1:1-9) With Word of God in our heart and Determination & Confidence in mind we will be more than Conquerors to win victory over our trials & tribulations! (Rom 8:37)

