

Questions Asked By Mid-Schoolers – Part 5
Michael R. Daily, 2012 (updated December 2015)

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The following are questions submitted anonymously by a group of about 30 mid-schoolers who regularly attend church and AWANA club. They were asked to submit at least one question per person.

How did they decide which books to put in the Bible and which not to?

It was not done by a single person or decision making body. It was a series of actions taken by large groups of believers, guided by the Holy Spirit, that continuously validated and strengthened the acceptance of a writing as scripture over time. The process was more like the building of a muscle over time through exercise than an academic decision making event. This is good news. The first type of process is a very robust method of vetting something while minimizing the influence of any one person's error or sin. In comparison an academic decision making process would be much more susceptible to the sinful nature of the small number of people involved. For a detailed account of the process of how the books of the Bible were selected see the book by Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*, Baker Academic, 1999.

First, the writers of the Bible had a strong sense of when they were writing scripture and when they were not. The words, "Thus says the Lord" are used over 400 times in the Old Testament so as the authors wrote these books they were very aware that they were writing the Words of God (**II Ptr 3:1-2, I Cor 14:37-38, Rev 1:1-2**). In addition many of the authors relate that the message they received was accompanied by a powerful experience (**Jer 1:9, Rev 1:9-11**). Although a powerful experience by itself is not meaningful, it provides evidence that the writers were keenly aware of which of their writings were scripture and which were not. Second, the believer's of the time period in which a book was written would accept or reject it as the Word of God through their actions. In many cases a book or writing was immediately accepted as the Word of God (**Ex 24:3-4, 7, Josh 8:30-35, Dan 9:1-2**). Also, God, in His wisdom, generated the written Bible at a time when making copies was difficult and expensive. The writing had to be copied by hand printing the entire document. Because of this people would only make and distribute copies of writings that were considered to be very valuable.

Old Testament: The 39 books of the Old Testament have the same content as the Hebrew Bible used by Jewish people although the Hebrew Bible combines the material of the 39 books into 22 books. The Old Testament books were written over a time period of 1,000 years with the last book completed by 400 BC. From a historical perspective the writings of the Old Testament appear to have been accepted by the body of believers from the moment of their completion as being the Word of God. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus at the end of the first century AD said: *"We do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other. Our books, those which are justly accredited, are but two and twenty, and contain the record of all time. Of these, five are the books of Moses, comprising the laws and the traditional history from the birth of man down to the death of the lawgiver. This period falls only a little short of three thousand years. From the death of Moses until Artaxerxes, who succeeded Xerxes as king of Persia, the prophets subsequent to Moses wrote the history of the events of their own times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life."* The 22 books mentioned here are the same as our 39, each double book (e.g., 1 and 2 Kings) being counted as one, the twelve Minor Prophets being considered a unit, and Judges-Ruth, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Jeremiah-Lamentations each being taken as one book. This agrees with the impression conveyed by the Gospels, where Jesus, the Pharisees, and the Jewish community in general understand the term "Scripture" to refer to some definite body of sacred writings. Keep in mind that the nation of Israel had 1,000 years to continuously test and verify the books of the Old Testament and to ensure their validity. If there was any serious challenge to or deficiency in any of the books they would have been dealt with over this time period (**II Samuel 22:31, Proverbs 30:5-6**).

Well before 90AD the books of the Old Testament had not only been hand copied for wide distribution but had also been translated into Greek (200BC). Their selection for translation, copying, and distribution indicate that the books of the Old Testament were widely recognized as being God's Word. In 90 AD in Jamnia (council of Jamnia), about 500 years after the last Old Testament book had been completed, a group of Jewish scholars met and formally confirmed the books of the Old Testament. However, it is important to keep in mind that this council did not sift through books and decide which ones to include and which ones to discard. The books of the Old Testament had been written, accepted, and continuously validated by the community of believers over hundreds of years. This council just "made it official".

New Testament: The New Testament consists of 27 books all written between 40 AD and 96 AD. The books of the New Testament were widely copied and circulated in the early churches and were quoted by early church writers. For example, Irenaeus (170 AD) quoted from 23 of the 27 books in his writings. Even if all of the ancient manuscripts we currently have of the New Testament (24,970) disappeared tomorrow we could still reconstruct the entire New Testament, except for 11 verses, using the New Testament quotes found in the writings of the early church fathers (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Eusebius) during the first 300 years of Christianity. This is an indication that early Christians viewed these books as more than personal letters or writings but as the Words of God. No one person or group of people selected the books of the New Testament. They were defacto selected by their

use among the community of believers. New Testament Greek scholar Dr. Kurt Aland says that the New Testament, "...was not imposed from the top, be it by bishops or synods, and then accepted by the communities ... The organized church did not create the canon [New Testament]; it recognized the canon that had been created." – Kurt Aland, *The Problem of the New Testament Canon*, London, 1962, page 18.

The community of believers recognized the books that were the Word of God but on what basis?

1. Was the book written, quoted, or referenced by a prophet or apostle of God? (**II Peter 1:20-21, Galatians 1:1-12**)
2. Is the book authoritative? Does the book ring with a sense of, "The Lord says...."? (**Mark 1:22**)
3. Is the book consistent with previous revelation? The gospels and Paul's letters were accepted as God's Word almost immediately. These were then used to test later writings that were not as immediately accepted (such as James, Hebrews, and Revelation) - (**Acts 17:11, Galatians 1:8**)
4. Does the book give evidence of having the power of God to change lives? (**Heb 4:12, II Tim 3:16-17, II Cor 5:17**)
5. Was the book accepted by the people of God? (**Deut 31:24-26, I Thess 2:13, Colossians 4:16, I Thess 5:27**)

So, we see a similar process in the identification of the New Testament books as we saw with the Old Testament books. They were tested and accepted by the broad community of believers. Their validation was demonstrated by the amount of copying and distributing that occurred, something difficult and costly to do at the time.

Apocryphal & Deuterocanonical Books: There are still a few books that some people think should be included in the Old Testament that the majority of Christians and Jews today do not believe are scripture. These books were not included in the Hebrew Bible and are not considered Scripture by Jewish people. In addition, evangelical conservative churches also do not recognize these books. Churches that do recognize these books handle them in different ways.

The Catholic Church recognizes these books as scripture and includes them in copies of Catholic Bibles (Douay-Rheims Bible, New American Bible, New Jerusalem Bible). The books are interspersed among the books of the Hebrew Old Testament. However, even many Catholics don't believe these books are scripture. For example, one of the early church fathers, Jerome, who was also the man who translated the Greek and Hebrew scriptures into the Latin Vulgate Bible (the primary Bible used by the Western European church for almost 1,000 years) did not believe these books were scripture but was overruled and made to put them in his translation by his boss (the Pope). Jerome is also the one who coined the term "Apocrypha" to identify these books as not being part of inspired scripture. The Catholic Church recognizes the following books of the Apocrypha as scripture: Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther (Esther 10:4-16:24), Wisdom (aka Wisdom of Solomon), Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira (aka Sirach or Ecclesiasticus), Additions to Jeremiah (aka Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah), Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Holy Children (aka Daniel 3:24-90), Susanna (aka Daniel 13), Bel and the Dragon (aka Daniel 14), 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees. In the Eastern Orthodox Church these books are viewed as being scripture but having "secondary authority". In addition to the Catholic Apocrypha, this church also adds 3 Maccabees and 1 Esdras to the Old Testament. They also add Psalm 151 and Prayer of Manasses which are considered of even lesser authority and finally 4 Maccabees and 2 Esdras which are often put in an appendix. In the Eastern Orthodox Church these books are referred to as anagignoskomena or "profitable readings" (It is hard to for me to imagine how God's Words could have varying levels of authority. Either they are God's Words or they are not). In the Oriental Orthodox Church the books that are not considered scripture by the majority of Christians are kept together as a group in a section of the Bible between the Old and New Testament that is labeled "Deuterocanonical". In addition to the books mentioned above the Oriental Orthodox Church adds: 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and 1, 2, & 3 Meqabyan. The Anglican Church states that the deuterocanonical books are suitable to be read for "example of life and instruction of manners, but yet doth not apply them to establish any doctrine". The Reformed Church asserts that "All which the Church may read and take instruction from, so far as they agree with the canonical books; but they are far from having such power and efficacy as that we may from their testimony confirm any point of faith or of the Christian religion; much less to detract from the authority of the other sacred books." Two examples of the view that these books have secondary authority.

Most Christian churches do not believe these additional Old Testament books are God's Words. In addition most of the Christian churches that accept these books do so with the understanding that these books have "lesser authority" than the ones we all agree on. Only the Catholic Church accepts these books with the full authority of scripture. For those who believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God it is clear that these books should not be included because: None of the apocryphal books are written in the Hebrew language which was used in the Old Testament, none of the apocryphal writers laid claim to inspiration, the apocryphal books were never acknowledged as sacred scriptures by the Jews, the Apocrypha contains statements which contradict the canonical scriptures as well as themselves, the Apocrypha includes doctrines in variance with the Bible (prayers for the dead, purgatory, salvation by works, use of magical incantations, a sinless Mary), no apocryphal book is referred to by the New Testament (by comparison, the Old Testament is referred to hundreds of times), and there are significant historical inaccuracies in eleven of the Apocryphal books. For more information on this topic see, "Can I Really Trust The Bible?" at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/> (**II Peter 3:1-2, I Corinthians 14:37-38, Revelation 1:1-2, Jeremiah 1:9, Revelation 1:9-11, Exodus 24:3-4, 7, Joshua 8:30-35, Daniel 9:1-2, II Samuel 22:31, Proverbs 30:5-6, II Peter 1:20-21, Galatians 1:1-12, Mark 1:22, Acts 17:11, Galatians 1:8, Hebrews 4:12, II Timothy 3:16-17, II Corinthians 5:17, I Thess 2:13, Colossians 4:16, I Thess 5:27**)

If God really is with us at all times then why does He not do anything about those who get killed or kidnapped?

What makes this a difficult question to answer is that there are multiple reasons why these things happen. In addition, there are complicating factors that make it difficult to determine what the real situation is if you are looking at it as an outside observer. Also, there are some situations where the reason is not clear and may be unknowable in this life. Nevertheless the Bible does talk about some of the reasons that people get kidnapped or killed. To start with, people who choose to live their lives without God have no claim to His protection. So, if a person is a nonchristian, God does not make any promise to protect them from the actions of evil men (**Isaiah 59:1-2**).

Second, if a person is a Christian but chooses to live a life of rebellion against God they will experience disciplinary action from God whose final stage is an early death. God's plan to deal with rebellion in the life of the Christian is to use the discipline of their parents (**Proverbs 13:24**). If this fails the second step is to use the discipline of authority figures in society (**Proverbs 17:11**). If this fails the third step is the permanent destruction of part of the person's life in order to get their attention (**Proverbs 29:1**). If all of these things fail the last stage is the early death of the person. **Proverbs 30:17** says that the person will have birds picking at their eyes. The only way that birds will pick at a person's eyes is if they are dead and unburied – like someone had killed them. This happens occasionally but not that often.

The main reason Christians die is because, like all men, we are appointed to die once (**Heb 9:27**). Death is our final enemy (**I Corinthians 15:26**) and there is no good way to die. But God has a purpose in the death of a Christian. Our deaths are of great value and are extremely precious in the eyes of God (**Psalms 116:15, Psalm 72:14**). Why? Because He can use our deaths to reach other people. I don't fully understand this myself but I have observed other people and noticed that there are many nonchristians that are deeply affected by the death of a Christian they know. For example, my father never had any interest or time for God until my mother died. Her death shook him so deeply that he genuinely turned to God for the first time in his life when he was in his 60's. If your "early" death was the thing that caused five people to come to Christ and avoid the eternal torment of Hell is that a good tradeoff? Of course it is! Think about it this way. If a Christian dies at age 15 instead of age 75, for example, they get to spend those 60 years living in paradise instead of spending those 60 years in a decaying body and living in a world that is drenched in sin (**Job 15:16**) and under the control of satan himself (**I John 5:19**). It's a win-win! If you could talk to those people in heaven and they had the option of coming back to live on the Earth how many of them would do it? None! They would say, "Are you crazy? I'm living in paradise with God. I'm not going back down there!" Nevertheless, the emotional sting of death is real and its OK to feel sad about a person's death. Just remember that even in death God is in control and He loves us (**Rom 8:35-39**).

Let's talk about kidnapping. Before his conversion Paul kidnapped Christians (**Acts 22:1-5**) and delivered them over to be killed. These experiences heavily shaped the ministry of Paul as a major writer of the New Testament (**I Cor 15:9**). Examples of kidnapped people in the Bible include, Joseph, Daniel, and Esther. Joseph was kidnapped by his brothers and sold into slavery. Later he was accused of attempted rape and put in prison and forgotten about. But God used all of this to put Joseph in a position to save Israel from annihilation due to starvation. Daniel was kidnapped by the Babylonians. Daniel and his friends were used by God to save Israel from extermination at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. Esther was used by God to save Israel from extermination at the hands of the Medes and Persians. Was saving Israel from destruction worth being kidnapped? I suspect all three would say, "Yes!" Sometimes there are bigger things at stake than our personal happiness and comfort. Having said all of that there are kidnappings and murders of Christians that occur whose purpose is hard to see. Nevertheless the Bible clearly states that God is in control and has a purpose for these things – even though we may not always be able to see that purpose in this life.

Another thing to keep in mind is that when observing these things as a bystander we rarely can see the full story. For example, April 15, 2012 was the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. The story of the sinking of the Titanic is very famous and has been made into an award winning movie. Nevertheless, the most important things that happened during the sinking of the ship are not well known. For example, Pastor John Harper was on the Titanic on his way to America to accept the pastorate of Moody Church in Chicago (founded by Dwight L. Moody) when it sunk.

According to CBN News (<http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2012/april/titanic-pastors-last-cry-unsaved-to-the-lifeboats/>)

"When the Titanic struck an iceberg, Harper put his 6-year-old daughter in a lifeboat but refused to get in himself, even though he was her only living parent. He then went among the passengers telling them about Jesus Christ. When one man refused the offer of salvation, Harper offered him his own life jacket. "You need this more than I do," he said. As the ship began to sink, Harper was heard to cry: "Women, children, and the unsaved to the lifeboats!" Even after the ship went down, Harper managed to swim to as many people as he could, begging them to give their lives to Christ. One survivor later told how he turned down Harper's offer for salvation once, but gave himself to Christ minutes later when the preacher swam back to tell him again, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved." The man was rescued by a returning lifeboat and later shared his story at an Ontario church, telling the crowd, "I am the last convert of John Harper."

(Isaiah 59:1-2, Psalm 32:10, Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 17:11, Proverbs 29:1, Proverbs 30:17, Hebrews 9:27, I Corinthians 15:26, Psalm 116:15, Psalm 72:14, Job 15:16, I John 5:19, Romans 8:35-39, Hebrews 11:35-39, Acts 22:1-5, I Corinthians 15:9, Genesis 40 & 45, Exodus 21:16, Deuteronomy 24:7, I Timothy 1:9-10)

In what ways does God speak to us?

First, the ways that God speaks to us today are different than in the Old Testament. **Heb 1:1-4** says that God revealed Himself to Israel through the prophets but in these last days He has spoken to us in His Son. In addition, God speaks to us today not as a master to slaves but as a personal friend (**John 15:12-17**). This is what it means to have a personal relationship with God – to be friends (**I Cor 1:9**). Why? Because God likes you! (**Jer 31:20**). In terms of mechanics there are some things that are different when it comes to being friends with God because God is Spirit (**John 4:24**)

The majority of what God wants to say to you He wants to say to everyone so He had it written down in the Bible (that is so efficient!). This is why we spend so much time and effort studying the Bible – most of what we need to know is already in there (**II Timothy 3:16-17, Acts 17:11**). In fact God will never speak to you in any other way and say something that contradicts the Bible. If it ever seems that way, ignore the other message and go with what the Bible says.

Sometimes God will speak to us through other Christians. Depending on the time period and culture you live in the Bible may not directly address specifically what you should do in certain situations. Even in cases where the Bible does not give specific instructions on an issue (example: video games) it usually provides guiding principles. Nevertheless, it is helpful to learn from other Christians what God has taught them in terms of how to handle these types of issues and to imitate them (**I Cor 4:14-17, I Cor 11:1, I Thess 1:6-7**). It is best if the guidance they give you is given with the support of scripture so you can be sure it is not in conflict with the Bible. If it is, we discard their guidance and go with the Bible.

God also speaks to us through His Spirit (Holy Spirit). His Spirit guides us and reveals things to us that we need to know (**John 14:26, John 16:13-15**). When I'm working on a Bible study I ask God to show me what we should do with the study and He will give me an idea, call to mind a particular verse, or provide an angle for the study that had not occurred to me before. This is the Holy Spirit speaking. Another example is when a pastor or teacher shares a lesson with a group of people and each person walks out afterward with something different having stood out to them as being most important. They all heard the same message but some parts seemed more important to one person, other parts to another. This is the Holy Spirit pointing out to each person what they most need to hear at that point in time.

Another way God speaks to us is through prayer. What? I thought prayer was me talking to God, not the other way around! It is, but it also results in God speaking back to us (**James 4:8**). How does that work? There are some issues in life where God's Word and the example of other Christians is not enough to know what to do. For example, you may have two job offers, both of which seem good and neither violates the commands or principles of scripture. There may be a committed christian you are considering marrying. In these cases there is no obvious right or wrong answer but the stakes are high. How do I know what God wants me to do? In these situations it is good to spend an extended time in prayer. You may need to spend an hour or more talking to God about the situation. Some people also fast (don't eat anything) all day while they pray over the decision (**Neh 1, Dan 9, Matt 6, Acts 14**). Something about this clears our minds and hearts and helps us be more sensitive to the Holy Spirit. I don't fully understand this but I have experienced it. At some point a decision that seemed difficult, confusing, and stressful slowly becomes obvious. The decision becomes clear and you have a sense of peace and confidence about what God wants you to do (**Phil 4:6-7**). But it doesn't happen right away and it doesn't happen with a quick, casual prayer (**Isaiah 66:2**). For example, there have been times when I spent an entire day praying about a decision and reading the Bible. It wasn't until about 5 hours that I began to see God's will for me. Sometimes it won't even happen that day but a few days or weeks later His will slowly becomes obvious.

Another way that God reveals His will is through circumstances. However, this type of guidance is never subtle. In other words don't try to read more into circumstances than is there. God uses circumstances primarily to shut doors that we might otherwise go through that he doesn't want us to go through. For example, if God had made me more handsome I might have spent my life as a male model instead of an engineer and Bible teacher. But God in his wisdom closed that door so I would not waste time going down that path! He also closed the recording artist (can't sing), fighter pilot (bad eyes), Yankee's shortstop (can't hit), and a few other doors for me also (**Romans 9:20-21**). In addition there are some decision options in life that I just don't have the money for (Malibu vacation home) so those doors are closed also. Although this type of guidance doesn't feel too good (doors closing) it actually is a very effective way for God to direct your path – just don't over think it. But, He also will open doors for you to go through (**I Cor 16:8-9, Colossians 4:2-4**).

Lastly, God speaks to all men through Creation. **Romans 1** says that God has revealed His invisible attributes, His eternal power, and His divine nature to all men in the physical universe that He made. Before he became a Christian my Dad used to tell us kids and Mom that as we headed to church he was heading to the golf course because he could worship God there through nature as well as we could at church! Sorry. No. That's not what Romans 1 means. Creation reveals God to men so that they have no excuse for not going to church and worshipping God His way!

(Hebrews 1:1-4, John 15:12-17, I Corinthians 1:9, Jeremiah 31:20, John 4:24, II Timothy 3:16-17, Acts 17:11, I Corinthians 4:14-17, I Corinthians 11:1, I Thessalonians 1:6-7, John 14:26, John 16:13-15, James 4:8, Nehemiah 1:3-6, Daniel 9:1-3&20-23, Matthew 6:16-18, Acts 14:23, Philippians 4:6-7, Isaiah 66:2, Romans 9:20-21, I Corinthians 16:8-9, Colossians 4:2-4, Romans 1:18-20)

In Revelation do the 7 churches in Asia represent the churches on the 7 continents today?

The continents don't really have anything to do with it. These seven churches represent two things. First, at the time John wrote Revelation, there were Christians living in seven cities that were located in a province of the Roman Empire known as Asia Minor. Today, this area is part of the nation of Turkey. These seven cities were Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (If you visit the locations of these cities today you will notice that there are no longer many Christians living in this area. This is because of the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922. This war resulted in an agreement in August 1925 that provided for the simultaneous expulsion of Christians from Turkey to Greece and of Moslems from Greece to Turkey). Also, keep in mind that when Revelation talks about the "Church at Ephesus", for example, it is referring to all of the Christians that were living in that city at the time.

Second, these seven churches are examples of the situations any group of Christians (a church) can get themselves into. The Bible makes it clear that there is no unusual temptation that is not common among humans (**I Corinthians 10:11-13**). In other words, human weaknesses and temptations are quite predictable. In addition, even non Christians have noticed a correlation between the strengths that certain people have and weaknesses that tend to go along with them. For example, many people who are really good at doing detailed tasks by themselves are often not the most outgoing people. Combining these things together, various types of people have a natural tendency to drift toward a particular set of strengths and weaknesses. With that in mind we can use the examples of the strengths and weakness of the seven churches to evaluate our own lives. How are we doing? Which of the seven churches do we tend to be like? What does God say is good about them (us). What corrective actions do they (we) need to take? In addition, groups of Christians tend to take on the strengths and weaknesses of the majority group. If most of the members of a church are like the "Church at Ephesus" then that church will have similar strengths and weaknesses.

The church in Ephesus was a group of Christians that worked very hard at serving Christ even when it was difficult. They were also very good at making sure their doctrinal beliefs were Biblical and they removed false teachers from their midst. Unfortunately, the people of this church were so focused on their activities that they let their personal relationship with Christ atrophy (**Revelation 2:1-7**).

The church in Smyrna was a group of Christians that was experiencing severe persecution. They were stripped of their property and money, they were verbally attacked by everyone for their faith in Christ, and they were about to be thrown into prison and then killed for their faith. Christ has nothing to say against them (**Revelation 2:8-11**).

The church in Pergamum was a group of Christians that were a minority living among a people who followed another majority religion that was hostile toward Christ. They were faithful in their personal relationship with Christ and publicly represented Him, to a point. Unfortunately, this church was not strong in understanding and protecting their doctrinal beliefs. As a result they tolerated false teachers and false beliefs and allowed worldly values to enter the church. If the church at Ephesus was one extreme (doctrinally strong, relationally weak), the church at Pergamum would be at the other extreme (doctrinally weak, relationally strong). (**Revelation 2:12-17**)

The church in Thyatira was a group of Christians that were faithful in their service to Christ and they also were faithful in their relationship to Christ. However, some of them started following a woman who was essentially leading a cult within the church yet the leaders of the church did not take strong action against her. This is similar to situations where someone stirs up trouble in a church and, because it is not quickly dealt with, it can cause a split in the church (**Revelation 2:18-29**)

The church in Sardis was a group of Christians that were spiritually dead. They had no passion for anything – not doctrine, not service, not relationships, not faith, nothing. These are the "Pew Potatoes" planted in the pews of the church. They show up, listen, and then go back to what they were doing without the Word of God having any impact on how they live their lives (**Revelation 3:1-6**).

The church in Philadelphia was a group of Christians that were spiritually alive. They were the opposite of those at Sardis. They had passion for all the things of God – His Word, obedience, faith, service, relationships, doctrine – everything. Jesus had nothing to say against them (**Revelation 3:7-13**).

The church in Laodicea was a group of Christians that were spiritually mediocre but they had a lot of money and property. This church is the opposite of the church at Smyrna. The church at Smyrna felt poor but they were rich. The church at Laodicea felt rich but they were actually poor. This church was experiencing no persecutions yet it was weak and powerless, having no impact on the world. The Christians of Smyrna lived for the next world. The Christians of Laodicea lived for this world (**Revelation 3:14-22**).

(I Corinthians 10:11-13, Revelation 2:1-7, Revelation 2:8-11, Revelation 2:12-17, Revelation 2:18-29, Revelation 3:1-6, Revelation 3:7-13, Revelation 3:14-22).

What was Jesus doing between the time he was 11 in the temple and the time He was grown?

The Bible does not say much directly about what Jesus was doing during this time. However, we know that as the Son of God He would have lived a life in perfect harmony with the scriptures. With that in mind we can use the scriptures to determine some of the things He was doing during His teen and young adult years. For example, we know that Jesus was increasing in wisdom and stature (people's respect for His behavior) and in favor (people's approval of His behavior) with God and men (**Luke 2:40-52**). We know that He honored His father and mother and loved His brothers and sisters (**Matthew 19:19**). We also know that He studied the Old Testament scriptures, particularly the book of Proverbs (**I John 2:14, Proverbs 1:1-4**). We know that he got regular haircuts (**I Corinthians 11:14-15**) and dressed and acted in a manly way (**Deuteronomy 22:5, I Corinthians 16:13-14**). We know that He worked hard (**Lamentations 3:27, Colossians 3:23**) and served others in His family and in the community (**Matthew 20:25-28**). He feared God and kept His commandments (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**). He was excellent in his speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity (**I Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:6-8, Titus 3:1-2**). He used His time wisely and didn't waste it (**Ephesians 5:15-16**). He treated and spoke to older men and those in authority in a respectful way (**I Timothy 5:1-2, Lev 19:32**) and was subject to them (**I Peter 5:5**). It was this behavior that set the pattern for His life, resulting in people saying, "He has done all things well" (**Mark 7:37**).

(Luke 2:40-52, Matthew 19:19, I John 2:14, Proverbs 1:1-4, I Corinthians 11:14-15, Deuteronomy 22:5, I Corinthians 16:13-14, Lamentations 3:27, Colossians 3:23, Matthew 20:25-28, Ecclesiastes 12:13, I Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:6-8, Titus 3:1-2, Ephesians 5:15-16, I Timothy 5:1-2, Leviticus 19:32, I Peter 5:5, Mark 7:37).

A friend and I had a fight. I forgave them but was still a little mad (I'm over it now). Is it OK to be a little mad?

It depends. Emotions or feelings are things that we can only partially control. We can start a feeling or emotion quickly but rarely can we bring one to a quick stop. For example, if you jump out and scare me I will get scared very fast and my heart will start beating fast immediately. But even though my brain realizes quickly that there really isn't any danger my heart doesn't go back to beating slowly right away. It takes a few minutes for my system to calm back down. That is the way emotions often are. On the other hand if we feed the emotion with incorrect thoughts then it stays with us and doesn't go away. So, when we talk about anger it comes down to this. Why are you getting angry? Is it an anger caused by a sin such as jealousy? If so then the root issue is the sin of jealousy which you need to master (**Genesis 4:3-8**). If your anger is a righteous anger (caused by your sense of right and wrong being violated) that is different. That is just part of being made in the image of God. Even in this situation God says that it is important for your anger to be resolved within the same day (**Ephesians 4:25-27**). God wants us to be like Him, slow to anger and quick to forgive and let the anger go away (**Micah 7:18, James 1:19-20**). So, if your anger goes away by the time you go to bed the same day, you are in good shape. If your anger is lasting beyond a day there is something wrong in your thinking which is feeding the anger. The end result of letting anger reside in your heart is foolishness or rebellion (**Ecclesiastes 7:9**). In other words anger, even righteous anger, can turn into sin. This is why the Bible says to not let the sun go down on your anger (don't go to bed with the anger unresolved). This is also why God says to resolve any disputes with another person before coming to Him – take care of it quickly (**Matthew 5:21-24**).

(Genesis 4:3-8, Ephesians 4:25-27, Micah 7:18, James 1:19-20, Ecclesiastes 7:9, Matthew 5:21-24)

Is Cussing Bad In God's Sight?

Yes. In fact, it turns out that how we talk is a big deal to God (you might want to get out a dictionary for this study). In **Titus 2:6-8** God gives instructions to young men to make sure their speech is "sound and beyond reproach". "Sound speech" is talk that is: *free from flaw, defect, decay, and error, is logically valid, based on truth, and shows good judgment*. Speech that is "beyond reproach" is a style of talking that: *provides nothing that others can disapprove of or use as a reason to discredit what you said*. In **Ephesians 5:1-5** God also says "there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting". Filthy talk is talk that is: *morally unclean, impure, or contaminated with something bad*. Silly talk is talk that: *exhibits a lack of common sense or good judgment*. Coarse jesting is joking around and teasing that is: *crude or unrefined in taste, manners, or language, and done with a tone that is disagreeable, uncomfortable, or painful to others*. Instead our speech is to be gracious (**Proverbs 22:11, Colossians 4:6**). Gracious speech is talk that is: *marked by kindness, courtesy, tact, charm, good taste, and generosity of spirit*. In addition God tells us to avoid abusive speech (**Colossians 3:8**) and to malign no one (**Titus 3:1-2**). Abusive speech is talk that is: *harsh and insulting*. To malign someone means to say things that are: *evil in nature, influence, or effect and that have or show an intense and vicious ill will*. Instead our speech is to be characterized by gentleness (**Proverbs 15:1, Philippians 4:5**). Gentle speech is talk that is: *free from harshness, sternness, or violence*. God also tells us to take into consideration the circumstances of the situation and the feelings of the other person when deciding how to say something (**Proverbs 25:11, Proverbs 16:21**).

OK, Let's recap. God says when we talk, our speech is to show good judgment, be truthful, be free of error or exaggeration, be logical, be morally clean, be consistent with good manners and good taste as defined by the culture we live in, be done with a tone that is agreeable, comfortable, and pleasant to others, using a style that is kind, courteous, tactful, gentle, considers the rights and feelings of others, and delivers the message in a way that enhances its credibility.

Can you do all of this in your speech and also cuss? No. All forms of cussing, cursing, swearing, profanity, blasphemy, taking the Lord's name in vain, vulgarity, and obscene language violate one or more of these commands. Therefore, cussing is bad. But wait! There's more. Its not just the words we use. Its also what we say that can defile us (**James 3:5-10, Matthew 15:10-11, Mark 7:17-23**). Defile means: *to make unclean with something contaminating*.

Cussing & Cursing

Cussing goes beyond using bad words. Cussing is also a slang word for cursing. Cursing means: *to call for harm or injury to come upon someone*. So, if I call for something bad to happen to someone but I don't use any "bad words", guess what? I'm still cussing! Here are some examples of cussing without using bad words: "I hope he chokes on his pizza!" or "I hope you lose your game tonight!" The Bible says that we are not to curse our enemies (**Job 31:29-30**), those who persecute us (**Romans 12:14**), rich people or people in authority (**Ecclesiastes 10:20**), political leaders or God (**Exodus 22:28**), or anybody else (**Matthew 5:21-22**)! There is also a special type of curse called an oath. An oath is a self-curse where a person asks God to inflict punishment on them if they fail to keep the promises they made under the oath. We'll talk more about oaths in the next section.

Swearing

Swearing is the use of obscene language or language that is: *repulsive due to it disregard of moral or ethical principles*. In addition, swearing also means: *to insist a statement is true by appealing to something else to lend value or credibility to the statement or to make a promise under oath*. As in the case of cursing, it is also possible to swear without using any bad words. Some examples are: "With God as my witness I'll never swear again!" or "I solemnly affirm on a stack of Bibles it's the truth" or "Cross my heart and hope to die!" or "I tell you on my mother's grave I didn't do it!" The problem with swearing is it lessens the truth, validity, or weight of all unsworn statements. This is why God tells us to not swear, make vows, or take oaths that we are serious about (**Matthew 5:33-37, James 5:12**) not to mention false ones we don't even mean (**Leviticus 19:12, Matthew 26:69-75**). In fact the only person who has a legitimate right to make vows and oaths is God Himself. Why? Because anything He says will come true 100% of the time, unlike us (**Hebrews 6:13-18**). Vow: *a solemn promise by which a person is bound to an act, service, or condition*.

Profanity

Profanity is profane language. To profane something means: *to treat something sacred with abuse, irreverence, or contempt and to lower its status by an incorrect, unworthy, or crude and offensive use*. So, when someone speaks profanity they are using crude and offensive language to intentionally lower the status of something sacred or of high value. The things of God are sacred and human beings have high value. Profanity is often targeted at both. Once again profanity without "bad words" is also possible. Some examples include: "My teacher is stupid" or using the name of Jesus or God in an exclamation when there is no real intent to call on Him.

Blasphemy

Blasphemy is: *the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God*. When someone speaks blasphemy they are intentionally insulting God. Once again blasphemy can be spoken even without using any "bad words". An example would be saying something like, "God has failed to ensure the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible, it has mistakes in it". That is a direct insult to God's ability to watch over His Word and ensure its trustworthiness.

Taking God's Name In Vain

Taking God's name in vain (**Exodus 20:7, Deuteronomy 5:11**) means to attach His name to something that is: *futile, ineffective, unsuccessful, and without value*. Matthew Henry (1662 to 1714), English Bible commentator & Presbyterian minister, described five categories of actions that constitute taking God's name in vain: 1) Making a profession of God's name, but not living up to that profession; 2) Vow/oath breaking – if one makes promises to God yet does not carry out the promised actions; 3) Rash Swearing; 4) False Swearing; and 5) Using the name of God lightly and carelessly, for charms or spells, jokes or entertainment. Numbers 2, 3, and 4 are forms of swearing using God's name. Number 5 is a combination of profanity and blasphemy using God's name. Number 1 we will discuss now.

When we become Christians we take His name. Just as a wife takes the name of her husband we take the name of Christ when we accept Him as our Savior and Lord. But if we take His name without any evidence of a changed life then we have taken His name in vain. According to **Romans 2:21-24, Proverbs 30:9**, and **Leviticus 20:1-5** one of the things that leads to blasphemy & profanity among non-believers is observing sinful behavior by those claiming to be believers.

The bottom line is, how we talk is as important to God as how we act (**I Timothy 4:12**).

(**Titus 2:6-8, Ephesians 5:1-4, Proverbs 22:11, Colossians 4:6, Colossians 3:8&17, Titus 3:1-2, Proverbs 15:1, Philippians 4:5, Proverbs 25:11, Proverbs 16:21, James 3:5-10, Matthew 15:10-11, Mark 7:17-23, Job 31:29-30, Exodus 22:28, Ecclesiastes 10:20, Romans 12:9-18, Matthew 5:21-22, Matthew 5:33-37, James 5:12, Numbers 30:1-2, Ecclesiastes 5:4-6, Leviticus 19:12, Matthew 26:69-75, Hebrews 6:13-18, Exodus 20:7, Deuteronomy 5:11, Romans 2:21-24, Proverbs 30:9, Leviticus 20:1-5, Isaiah 48:11, I Timothy 4:12**)

What will be in heaven when we go? Will there be animals? Will there be any new creatures?

What makes heaven such an interesting place is not so much what is in it (although the Bible does say a lot about that) but how much we are going to be changed (**I Corinthians 15:50-53**). In heaven we will be made like Christ and will, for the first time in our lives, know what it is like to be pure, just as He is pure (**I John 3:2-3**). Our “old self” will be done away with forever (**Romans 6:5-7**) and we will have a new, resurrected, eternal physical body (**I Corinthians 15:42-44**). Do you understand what this means? Think about it. It means that the desires of our flesh will be in 100% harmony with God’s will! We have never experienced this – ever (**Galatians 5:17**). From the day we were born the desires of our flesh have been at war with God’s commands and will (**Romans 7:14-25**). We were, by our very nature, children of wrath (**Ephesians 2:1-7**). The Bible says that the intent of our hearts is continually evil (**Genesis 8:20-21**) and that the eyes of man are never satisfied (**Proverbs 27:19-20**). What will life be like when everything my heart naturally yearns for also happens to be what God thinks it good, holy, and best for me? It will be paradise (**Luke 23:42-43**)! Instead of constant war it will be constant and complete peace. Instead of unsatisfied desires it will be complete and total satisfaction and fulfillment. And the good news is that every Christian is going to experience this. Now, combine this with having a face-to-face relationship with God Himself instead of seeing Him dimly as we do now (**I Corinthians 13:12**). In addition our relationships with other people will be made perfect. We will be made perfect and so will they, so our relationships with God and people will both be perfect and without misunderstanding or problems.

Moving on - The book of Revelation describes a New Heaven, a New Earth, and a New Jerusalem. The city of the New Jerusalem (**Revelation 21:1-2**) is what we commonly think of as heaven but the eternal creation also includes a new universe (New Heaven) and a New Earth along with the heavenly city. **Revelation 21:25** says that the 12 gates of the city are never closed so you can come and go as you wish and although the Bible says little about the new earth and the rest of the new universe, you can probably visit other places outside the New Jerusalem. Kind of like today – if you want to go visit the Moon go ahead, God doesn’t mind – but the Earth was designed to be your home. That is where you will be most comfortable. That is where you will enjoy yourself the most. In the same way you can visit other parts of the new heavens (universe) but the New Jerusalem is designed to be your home – that is where you will be the most comfortable and will enjoy yourself the most. However, **Luke 16:24-26** mentions one place in the New Heaven that is prohibited from being visited – the Lake of Fire. The New Jerusalem, by the way, is a cubic city 1500 miles long on each side, with walls that are 72 yards thick (**Revelation 21:15-17**). It can easily accommodate tens of billions of people with plenty of room.

We also know that there will be food and drink in heaven (**Luke 22:28-30**). In addition we know from **Luke 24:36-43** that Jesus’ resurrected body was able to eat fish so our new bodies will be able to eat food as well. Nothing in the Bible restricts the type of foods available in heaven so it is reasonable to assume that any of the foods available on the Earth will also be available in heaven and probably some new ones as well. There will also be no hunger or thirst (**Revelation 7:16**). There will be myriads of angels in heaven (**Hebrews 12:22-23**). Angels are beings created by God who are separate from humans. Angels have never been human and humans will never be angels. Angels operate in a way that is similar to a military organization. They obey God’s orders and deliver His messages. Like people they will also praise God in song in heaven. There will be some type of economy in heaven. The Bible says that God gives believers rewards for their service. Think of it like a bank account. Every Christian alive today currently has a bank account in heaven. When you serve God out of faith and devotion to Him He lays up a treasure in your heavenly bank account (**Matthew 6:19-21**). At the judgment you will receive what is in this account (**I Corinthians 3:8-15**). We don’t know the details but apparently these treasures are valuable in the economy of eternity. We will also have a house or mansion to live in (**II Corinthians 5:1, John 14:1-3**) and enjoyable work to do (**Revelation 22:3-5**).

Many people wonder if there will be animals in heaven. We know that there are horses in heaven (**II Kings 2:11, Revelation 19:11-14**). What we don’t know is if these are horses that once lived on the Earth and died or a special type of horse created only for heaven. As far as other animals being in heaven the Bible doesn’t say. It doesn’t say yes and it doesn’t say no (**Ecclesiastes 3:21**). However the Bible says a lot about animals during the Millennial Kingdom. We know that there will be a large variety of familiar animals in the 1,000 year millennial kingdom and that they will behave differently than animals currently do. They will act more like animals did originally, before Adam’s sin (**Isaiah 11:6-9, Isaiah 65:19-25**). But we don’t know if these are animals that once lived on the Earth before the millennial kingdom and died or new animals born during this period. Heaven, or the eternal New Jerusalem, comes after the Millennial Kingdom. So, the bottom line is if you are an animal lover you will have at least 1,000 years to play with your animals, maybe more.

Finally, God has promised us that we can’t even begin to imagine the things God has prepared for us (**I Corinthians 2:9**) and that in His right hand there are pleasures forever (**Psalms 16:11**)!

(I Corinthians 15:50-53, I John 3:2-3, Romans 6:5-7, I Corinthians 15:42-44, Galatians 5:17, Romans 7:14-25, Ephesians 2:1-7, Genesis 8:20-21, Proverbs 27:19-20, Luke 23:42-43, I Corinthians 13:12, Revelation 21:1-2, Luke 16:24-26, Revelation 21:15-17, Luke 22:28-30, Luke 24:36-43, Revelation 7:16, Hebrews 12:22-23, Matthew 6:19-21, I Corinthians 3:8-15, II Corinthians 5:1, John 14:1-3, Revelation 22:3-5, II Kings 2:11, Revelation 19:11-14, Ecclesiastes 3:21, Isaiah 11:6-9, Isaiah 65:19-25, I Corinthians 2:9, Psalm 16:11)

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How Did They Decide Which Books To Put In The Bible & Which Not To?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Peter 3:1-2, I Corinthians 14:37-38, Revelation 1:1-2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Jeremiah 1:9, Revelation 1:9-11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Exodus 24:3-4 & 7, Joshua 8:30-35, Daniel 9:1-2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How Did They Decide Which Books To Put In The Bible & Which Not To?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Samuel 22:31, Proverbs 30:5-6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Peter 1:20-21, Galatians 1:1-12*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Mark 1:22*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How Did They Decide Which Books To Put In The Bible & Which Not To?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Acts 17:11, Galatians 1:8*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 4:12, II Timothy 3:16-17, II Corinthians 5:17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Thessalonians 2:13, Colossians 4:16, I Thessalonians 5:27*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If God is with us at all times why does He not do anything about those who get killed / kidnapped?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Isaiah 59:1-2, Psalm 32:10*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 17:11, Proverbs 29:1, Proverbs 30:17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 9:27, I Corinthians 15:26*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If God is with us at all times why does He not do anything about those who get killed / kidnapped?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalm 116:15, Psalm 72:14*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Job 15:16, I John 5:19*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 8:35-39, Hebrews 11:35-39*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If God is with us at all times why does He not do anything about those who get killed / kidnapped?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Acts 22:1-5, I Corinthians 15:9

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Genesis chapters 40 & 45

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Exodus 21:16, Deuteronomy 24:7, I Timothy 1:9-10

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *In What Ways Does God Speak To Us?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 1:1-4, John 15:12-17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 1:9, Jeremiah 31:20, John 4:24*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Timothy 3:16-17, Acts 17:11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *In What Ways Does God Speak To Us?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 4:14-17, I Corinthians 11:1, I Thessalonians 1:6-7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 14:26, John 16:13-15*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Nehemiah 1:3-6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *In What Ways Does God Speak To Us?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Daniel 9:1-3 & 20-23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 6:16-18, Acts 14:23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *James 4:8, Philippians 4:6-7, Isaiah 66:2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *In What Ways Does God Speak To Us?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 9:20-21*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 16:8-9, Colossians 4:2-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 1:18-20*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *In Revelation do the 7 churches in Asia represent the churches on the 7 continents today?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 10:11-13*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 2:1-7, Revelation 2:12-17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 2:8-11, Revelation 3:14-22*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *In Revelation do the 7 churches in Asia represent the churches on the 7 continents today?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 2:18-29*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 3:1-6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 3:7-13*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *What was Jesus doing between the time he was 11 in the temple and the time He was grown?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 2:40-52*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 19:19, Ecclesiastes 12:13*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I John 2:14, Proverbs 1:1-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *What was Jesus doing between the time he was 11 in the temple and the time He was grown?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 11:14-15, Deuteronomy 22:5, I Corinthians 16:13-14*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Lamentations 3:27, Colossians 3:23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 20:25-28*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *What was Jesus doing between the time he was 11 in the temple and the time He was grown?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:6-8, Titus 3:1-2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Timothy 5:1-2, Leviticus 19:32, I Peter 5:5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 5:15-16, Mark 7:37*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *A friend and I had a fight. I forgave them but was still a little mad. Is it OK to be a little mad?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Genesis 4:3-8, Ephesians 4:25-27*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Micah 7:18, James 1:19-20*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ecclesiastes 7:9, Matthew 5:21-24*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD
JEREMIAH 15:16
THEME: *Is Cussing Bad In God's Sight?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Titus 2:6-8, Ephesians 5:1-4, I Timothy 4:12*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 22:11, Colossians 4:6, Colossians 3:8&17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Titus 3:1-2, Proverbs 15:1, Philippians 4:5, Proverbs 25:11, Prov 16:21*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD
JEREMIAH 15:16
THEME: *Is Cussing Bad In God's Sight?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *James 3:5-10, Matthew 15:10-11, Mark 7:17-23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Job 31:29-30, Exodus 22:28, Ecclesiastes 10:20, Matthew 5:21-22*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 12:9-18*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD
JEREMIAH 15:16
THEME: *Is Cussing Bad In God's Sight?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 26:69-75*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 5:33-37, James 5:12, Numbers 30:1-2, Ecclesiastes 5:4-6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 6:13-18*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD
JEREMIAH 15:16
THEME: *Is Cussing Bad In God's Sight?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Exodus 20:7, Deuteronomy 5:11, Romans 2:21-24*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Leviticus 19:12, Proverbs 30:9, Isaiah 48:11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Leviticus 20:1-5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *What Will Be In Heaven When We Go? Will there be animals? Will there be any new creatures?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 15:42-53, I John 3:2-3, Romans 6:5-7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Galatians 5:17, Romans 7:14-25*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 2:1-7, Genesis 8:20-21, Proverbs 27:19-20*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *What Will Be In Heaven When We Go? Will there be animals? Will there be any new creatures?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 23: 42-43, I Corinthians 13:12*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 21, Luke 16:24-26*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 22:28-30, Luke 24:36-43, Revelation 7:16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *What Will Be In Heaven When We Go? Will there be animals? Will there be any new creatures?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 12:22-23, Revelation 22:3-5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 6:19-21, I Corinthians 3:8-15*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Corinthians 5:1, John 14:1-3*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *What Will Be In Heaven When We Go? Will there be animals? Will there be any new creatures?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Kings 2:11, Revelation 19: 11-14, Ecclesiastes 3:21*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Isaiah 11:6-9, Isaiah 65:19-25*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 2:9, Psalm 16:11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?