

A photograph of a dirt path in a forest. The path starts as a single line at the bottom center and splits into two paths that lead into the woods. The trees are tall and thin, with dense green foliage. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

Teaching Believers To Follow the Right Path

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Table of Contents

Forward		3
Chapter 1	A good student will become a teacher.	4
Chapter 2	God will guide you on life's pathways.	11
Chapter 3	Allow God to speak through you.	14
Chapter 4	Through the law, you know right from wrong.	20
Chapter 5	All Scripture is inspired by God.	24

Forward

Reading God's Word gives us a panoramic view of both the miracles Israel saw and others they didn't see. The lessons from the past, the instructions for the present, and the glimpses into the future give us many opportunities to strengthen our faith in God.

The student who works hard will become like the teacher.

Make sure you're following godly teachers and leaders, because you will go no farther than they do. Look for leaders who will and whose guidance you can trust.

Jesus teaches us that our goodness should be greater than that of the Pharisees.

They looked pious, but they were far from the kingdom of God. God judges our hearts as well as our deeds, for it is in the heart that our real allegiance lays.

Be just as concerned about your attitudes that people don't see as about your actions that are seen by all.

As you view the example of teaching the work of God in this e-book, may you be encouraged to be an effective and spirit led teacher.

Chapter 1



A hard working student will become a teacher

Luke 6:40

A student is not greater than the teacher. But the student who works hard will become like the teacher.

Make sure you're following teachers and leaders, because you will go no farther than they do. Look for leaders who will and whose guidance you can trust.

Correct teaching will remain with the student

Proverbs 22:6

Teach your children to choose the right path, and when they are older, they will remain upon it.

“In the way he should go” is literally, “according to his [the child’s] way.” It is natural to want to bring up all our children alike or train them the same way.

verse implies that parents should discern the individuality and special strengths that God has given each one.

While we should not condone or excuse self-will, each child has natural inclinations that parents can develop. By talking to teachers, other parents, and grandparents, we can better discern and develop the individual capabilities of each child.

Many parents want to make all the choices for their child, but this hurts him or her in the long run. When parents teach a child how to make decisions, they don't have to watch every step he or she takes.

They know their children will remain on the right path because they have made the choice themselves. Train your children to choose the right way.

My words will fall like rain on tender grass.

Deuteronomy 32:2

My teaching will fall on you like rain; my speech will settle like dew. My words will fall like rain on tender grass, like gentle showers on young plants.

Moses was not only a great prophet but also a song leader. After three sermons, he changed the form of his message to singing. Sometimes reciting something in a different form makes it easier to remember. This song gives a brief history of Israel. It reminds the people of their mistakes, warns them to avoid repetition of those mistakes, and offers the hope that comes only in trusting God.

Commit yourself completely to God's word.

Deuteronomy 11:18-19

So commit yourselves completely to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead.

Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again.

Israel had strong reasons to believe in God and obey his commands. They had witnessed a parade of mighty miracles that demonstrated God's love and care for them. Incredibly, they still had trouble remaining faithful.

Because few of us have seen such dramatic miracles, it may seem even more difficult for us to obey God and remain faithful. But we have the Bible, the written record of God's acts throughout history.

Reading God's Word gives us a panoramic view of both the miracles Israel saw and others they didn't see. The lessons from the past, the instructions for the present, and the glimpses into the future give us many opportunities to strengthen our faith in God.

**Those who obey and teach God's laws
will be great in the kingdom of heaven.**

Matthew 5:19

So if you break the smallest commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

God's moral and ceremonial laws were given to help people love God with all their hearts and minds. Throughout Israel's history, however, these laws had been often misquoted and misapplied.

By Jesus' time, religious leaders had turned the laws into a confusing mass of rules.

When Jesus talked about a new way to understand God's law, he was actually trying to bring people back to its *original* purpose.

Jesus did not speak against the law itself, but against the abuses and excesses to which it had been subjected. (See John 1:17.)

If Jesus did not come to abolish the law, does that mean all the Old Testament laws still apply to us today? In the Old Testament, there were three categories of law: ceremonial, civil, and moral.

- (1) The *ceremonial law* related specifically to Israel's worship (see Leviticus 1:2-3, for example). Its primary purpose was to point forward to Jesus Christ; these laws, therefore, were no longer necessary after Jesus' death and resurrection.
- (2) While ceremonial laws no longer bind us, the principles behind them—to worship and love a holy God—still apply. The Pharisees of violating ceremonial law often accused Jesus.
- (3) The *civil law* applied to daily living in Israel (see Deut. 24:10-11, for example).

- (4) Because modern society and culture are so radically different from that time and setting, all of these guidelines cannot be followed specifically. But the principles behind the commands are timeless and should guide our conduct. Jesus demonstrated these principles by example.
- (5) The *moral law* (such as the Ten Commandments) is the direct command of God, and it requires strict obedience (see Exodus 20:13, for example).

Moral law reveals the nature and will of God, and it still applies today. Jesus obeyed the moral law completely.

Some of those in the crowd were experts at telling others what to do, but they missed the central point of God's laws themselves.

Jesus made it clear, however, that obeying God's law is more important than explaining it. It's much easier to study God's laws and tell others to obey them than to put them into practice. How are you doing at obeying God *yourself*?

The Pharisees were exacting and scrupulous in their attempts to follow their laws. So how could Jesus reasonably call us to a greater righteousness than theirs? The Pharisees' weakness was that they were content to obey the laws outwardly without allowing God to change their hearts (or attitudes).

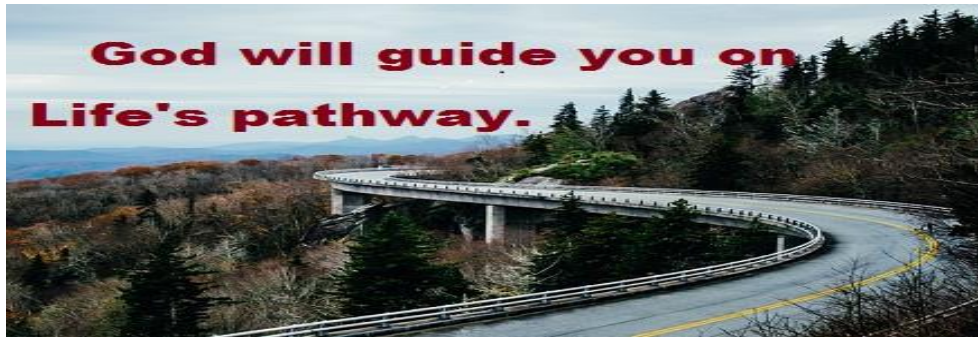
Jesus was saying, therefore, that the *quality* of our goodness should be greater than that of the Pharisees. They looked pious, but they were far from the kingdom of God. God judges our hearts as well as our deeds, for it is in the heart that our real allegiance lays. Be just as concerned about your attitudes that people don't see as about your actions that are seen by all.

Jesus was saying that his listeners needed a different kind of righteousness altogether (love and obedience), not just a more intense version of the Pharisees' righteousness (legal compliance).

Our righteousness must

- (1) Come from what God does in us, not what we can do by ourselves,
- (2) Be God-centered, not self-centered,
- (3) Be based on reverence for God, not approval from people, and
- (4) Go beyond keeping the law to living by the principles behind the law.

Chapter 2



God will guide you on life's best pathway.

Psalm 32:8

The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.

I will advise you and watch over you.

God describes some people as being like horses or mules that have to be controlled by bits and bridles. Rather than letting God guide them step-by-step, they stubbornly leave God only one option. If God wants to keep them useful for him, he must use discipline and punishment.

God longs to guide us with love and wisdom rather than punishment. He offers to teach us the *best* way to go. Accept the advice written in God's Word and don't let your stubbornness keep you from obeying God.

Work hard so God can approve you.

2 Timothy 2:15

Work hard so God can approve you. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.

Paul urged Timothy to remind the believers not to argue over unimportant details (“quarreling about words”) or have foolish discussions (“godless chatter”) because such arguments are confusing, useless, and even harmful.

False teachers loved to cause strife and divisions by their meaningless quibbling over unimportant details (see 1 Tim. 6:3-5). To handle the word of truth correctly, we must study what the Word of God says so we can understand what it means.

Because God will examine what kind of workers we have been for him, we should build our lives on his Word and build his Word into our lives—it alone tells us how to live for him and serve him.

Believers who ignore the Bible will certainly be ashamed at the judgment. Consistent and diligent study of God’s Word is vital; otherwise we will be lulled into neglecting God and our true purpose for living.

In important areas of Christian teaching, we must carefully work through our disagreements. But when we bicker long hours over words and theories that are not central to the Christian faith and life, we only provoke anger and hurt feelings.

Even if “godless chatter” reaches a resolution, it gains little ground for the kingdom. Learning and discussing are not bad unless they keep believers constantly focusing on false doctrine or unhelpful trivialities.

Don’t let anything keep you from your work for and service to God.

Be enthusiastic about the Lord's work.

1 Corinthians 15:58

So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and steady, always enthusiastic about the Lord's work, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

Paul says that because of the resurrection, nothing we do is in vain. Sometimes we hesitate to do good because we don't see any results. But if we can maintain a heavenly perspective, we will understand that we often will not see the good that results from our efforts.

If we truly believe that Christ has won the ultimate victory, that fact must affect the way we live right now. Don't let discouragement over an apparent lack of results keep you from working.

Do the good that you have opportunity to do, knowing that your work will have eternal results.

Be ready to give an answer of your hope.

1 Peter 3:15

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.

Rather than fear our enemies, we are to quietly trust in God as the Lord of all. We must believe that Christ is truly in control of all events. When he rules our thoughts and emotions, we cannot be shaken by anything our enemies may do.

Some Christians believe that faith is a personal matter that should be kept to oneself. It is true that we shouldn't be boisterous or obnoxious in sharing our faith, but we should always be ready to give an answer, gently and respectfully, when asked about our faith, our life-style, or our Christian perspective. Can others see your hope in Christ? Are you prepared to tell them what Christ has done in your life?

Both young and old were selected.

1 Chronicles 25:8

The musicians were appointed to their particular term of service by means of sacred lots, without regard to whether they were young or old, teacher or student.

There were many ways to contribute to the worship in the tabernacle. Some prophesied (1 Chron. 25:1), some led in thanksgiving and praise (1 Chron. 25:3), and others played instruments (1 Chron. 25:6-7).

God wants all his people to participate in worship. You may not be a master musician, a prophet, or a teacher, but God appreciates whatever you have to offer. Develop your special gifts to offer in service to God (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:29-31).

Chapter 3



Allow God to speak through you.

Romans 12:6-7

God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you.

If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching.

Paul uses the concept of the human body to teach how Christians should live and work together. Just as the parts of the body function under the direction of the brain, so Christians are to work together under the command and authority of Jesus Christ (see 1 Cor. 12:12-31; Ephes. 4:1-16).

God gives us gifts so we can build up his church. To use them effectively, we must

- (1) Realize that all gifts and abilities come from God;
- (2) Understand that not everyone has the same gifts;
- (3) Know who we are and what we do best;
- (4) Dedicate our gifts to God's service and not to our personal success;
- (5) Be willing to utilize our gifts wholeheartedly, not holding back anything from God's service.

God's gifts differ in nature, power, and effectiveness according to his wisdom and graciousness, not according to our faith. The "measure of faith" (Romans 12:3) or the "proportion to his faith" means that God will give spiritual power necessary and appropriate to carry out each responsibility.

We cannot, by our own effort or willpower, drum up more faith and thus be more effective teachers or servants. These are God's gifts to his church, and he gives faith and power as he wills.

Our role is to be faithful and to seek ways to serve others with what Christ has given us.

Teachers will be judged with greater strictness.

James 3:1-2

Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for God will judge us who teach with greater strictness.

We all make many mistakes, but those who control their tongues can also control themselves in every other way.

Teaching was a highly valued and respected profession in Jewish culture, and many Jews who embraced Christianity wanted to become teachers. James warned that although it is good to aspire to teach, the teachers' responsibility is great because their words and example affect others' spiritual lives.

If you are in a teaching or leadership role, how are you affecting those you lead?

What you say and what you *don't* say are both important. Proper speech is not only saying the right words at the right time, but it is also controlling your desire to say what you shouldn't.

Examples of an untamed tongue include gossiping, putting others down, and bragging, manipulating, false teaching, exaggerating, complaining, flattering, and lying. Before you speak, ask, "Is what I want to say true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?"

Chosen of God to be a preacher

2 Timothy 1:11

And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of this Good News.

Paul gives a brief summary of the gospel. God loves us, called us, and sent Christ to die for us. We can have eternal life through faith in him, because he broke the power of death with his resurrection.

We do not deserve to be saved, but God offers us salvation anyway. What we must do is believe in him and accept his offer.

God gives gifts to the church.

Ephesians 4: 11-16

He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ.

Then we will no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different or because someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth.

Instead, we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Our oneness in Christ does not destroy our individuality. The Holy Spirit has given each Christian special gifts for building up the church. Now that we have these gifts, it is crucial to use them.

If you don't know, ask God to show you, perhaps with the help of your minister or Christian friends.

Then, as you begin to recognize your special area of service, use your gifts to strengthen and encourage the church.

God has given his church an enormous responsibility—to make disciples in every nation (Matthew 28:18-20).

This involves preaching, teaching, healing, nurturing, giving, administering, building, and many other tasks. If we had to fulfill this command as individuals, we might as well give up without trying—it would be impossible.

But God calls us as members of his body. Some of us can do one task; some can do another. Together we can obey God more fully than any of us could alone. It is a human tendency to overestimate what we can do by ourselves and to underestimate what we can do as a group.

But as the body of Christ, we can accomplish more together than we would dream possible working by ourselves. Working together, the church can express the fullness of Christ

Older women must train the younger women.

Titus 2:3-5

Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that is appropriate for someone serving the Lord. They must not go around speaking evil of others and must not be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good.

These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to take care of their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands.

Then they will not bring shame on the word of God.

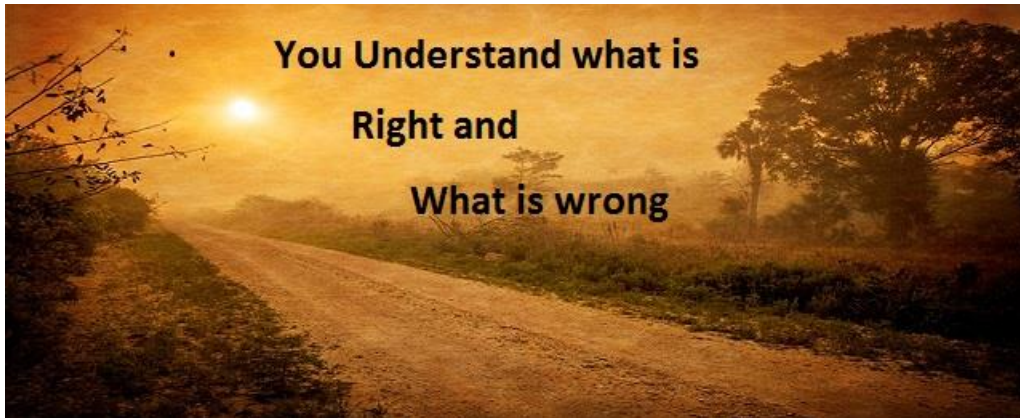
Self-control was an important aspect in early Christianity. The Christian community was made up of people from differing backgrounds and viewpoints, making conflict inevitable. Christians existed in a pagan and often-hostile world.

To stay above reproach, men and women needed wisdom and discernment to be discreet, and to master their wills, tongues, and passions so that Christ would not be dishonored. How's your self-control?

Women who were new Christians were to learn how to have harmony in the home by watching older women who had been Christians for some time. We have the same need today.

Younger wives and mothers should learn to live in a Christian manner—loving their husbands and caring for their children—through observing exemplary women of God.

Chapter 4



Through the law, you know right from wrong.

Romans 2:18-23

Yes, you know what he wants; you know right from wrong because you have been taught his law. You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a beacon light for people who are lost in darkness without God.

You think you can instruct the ignorant and teach children the ways of God. For you are certain that in God's law you have complete knowledge and truth.

Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal?

You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you do it? You condemn idolatry, but do you steal from pagan temples?

You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it.

Paul explained to the Jews that they needed to teach *themselves*, not others, by their law. They knew the law so well that they had learned how to excuse their own actions while criticizing others.

But the law is more than legalistic minimum requirements—it is a guideline for living according to God’s will. It is also a reminder that we cannot please God without a proper relationship to him.

As Jesus pointed out, even withholding what rightfully belongs to someone else is stealing (Mark 7:9-13), and looking on another person with lustful, adulterous intent is adultery (Matthew 5:27-28).

Before we accuse others, we must look at ourselves and see if that sin, in any form, exists within us.

Be an example of good deeds.

Titus 2:7-8

And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good deeds of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching.

Let your teaching be so correct that it can't be criticized. Then those who want to argue will be ashamed because they won't have anything bad to say about us.

When Paul encouraged Titus, and through Titus other young men, to be serious, he wanted them to be reverent and purposeful. Christianity should never be intentionally boring or gloomy. Don’t let the seriousness of the gospel cause you to repel others by your grim disposition.

Paul urged Titus to be a good example to those around him so that others might see Titus's good deeds and imitate him. Paul's life would give his words greater impact.

If you want someone to act a certain way, be sure that you live that way yourself. Then you will earn the right to be heard, and your life will reinforce what you teach.

Paul counseled Titus to be above criticism in how he taught. This quality of integrity comes from careful Bible study and listening before speaking. This is especially important when teaching or confronting others about spiritual or moral issues.

If we are impulsive, unreasonable, and confusing, we are likely to start arguments rather than to convince people of the truth.

Request God's mercy on all people.

1 Timothy 2:1-2

I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. As you make your requests, plead for God's mercy upon them, and give thanks.

Pray this way for kings and all others who are in authority, so that we can live in peace and quietness, in godliness and dignity.

How can someone be strong in grace? Grace means undeserved favor. Just as we are saved by grace (Ephes. 2:8-9), we should live by grace (Col. 2:6). This means trusting completely in Christ and *his* power, and not trying to live for Christ in our strength alone.

Receive and utilize Christ's power. He will give you the strength to do his work.

If the church were to consistently follow this advice, it would expand geometrically as well-taught believers would teach others and commission them, in turn, to teach still others. Disciples need to be equipped to pass on their faith; our work is not done until new believers are able to make disciples of others (see Ephes. 4:12-13).

If you need wisdom, ask of God.

James 1:5

If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking.

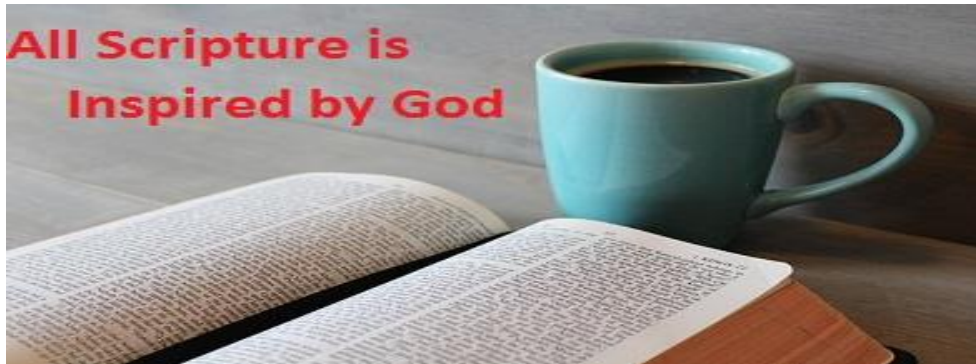
By *wisdom*, James is talking not only about knowledge, but about the ability to make wise decisions in difficult circumstances. Whenever we need wisdom, we can pray to God, and he will generously supply what we need.

Christians don't have to grope around in the dark, hoping to stumble upon answers. We can ask for God's wisdom to guide our choices.

Wisdom means practical discernment. It begins with respect for God, leads to right living, and results in increased ability to tell right from wrong. God is willing to give us this wisdom, but we will be unable to receive it if our goals are self-centered instead of God-centered.

To learn God's will, we need to read his Word and ask him to show us how to obey it. Then we must do what he tells us.

Chapter 5



God inspires all Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right.

The Bible is not a collection of stories, fables, myths, or merely human ideas about God. It is not a human book.

Through the Holy Spirit, God revealed his person and plan to certain believers, who wrote down his message for his people (2 Peter 1:20-21).

This process is known as *inspiration*. The writers wrote from their own personal, historical, and cultural contexts. Although they used their own minds, talents, language, and style, they wrote what God wanted them to write.

Scripture is completely trustworthy because God was in control of its writing. Its words are entirely authoritative for our faith and lives. The Bible is “God-breathed.” Read it, and use its teachings to guide your conduct.

The whole Bible is God's inspired Word. Because it is inspired and trustworthy, we should *read* it and *apply* it to our lives. The Bible is our standard for testing everything else that claims to be true.

It is our safeguard against false teaching and our source of guidance for how we should live. It is our only source of knowledge about how we can be saved. God wants to show you what is true and equip you to live for him. Develop a plan for reading the whole Bible, not just the familiar passages.

God will give inner strength through the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 3:16-19

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will give you mighty inner strength through his Holy Spirit.

And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love.

And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is.

May you experience the love of Christ; though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

God's love is total, says Paul. It reaches every corner of our experience. It is *wide*—it covers the breadth of our own experience, and it reaches out to the whole world. God's love is *long*—it continues the length of our lives.

It is *high*—it rises to the heights of our celebration and elation. His love is *deep*—it reaches to the depths of discouragement, despair, and even death.

When you feel shut out or isolated, remember that you can never be lost to God’s love. For another prayer about God’s immeasurable and inexhaustible love, see Paul’s words in Romans 8:38-39.

“The fullness of God” is fully expressed only in Christ (Col. 2:9-10). In union with Christ and through his empowering Spirit, we are complete. We have all the fullness of God available to us.

But we must appropriate that fullness through faith and through prayer as we daily live for him. Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians is also for you. You can ask the Holy Spirit to fill every aspect of your life to the fullest.

God give the promise to all of Abram’s descendants.

Colossians 3:16

God gave the promise to Abraham and his child. And notice that it doesn't say the promise was to his children, as if it meant many descendants. But the promise was to his child—and that, of course, means Christ.

Although the early Christians had access to the Old Testament and freely used it, they did not yet have the New Testament or any other Christian books to study.

Their stories and teachings about Christ were memorized and passed on from person to person. Sometimes the teachings were set to music, and so music became an important part of Christian worship and education

Carry out and guard Godly instructions.

Proverbs 4:13

Carry out my instructions; don't forsake them. Guard them, for they will lead you to a fulfilled life.

Even friends can make you fall. It is difficult for people to accept the fact that friends and acquaintances might be luring them to do wrong. Young people want to be accepted, so they would never want to confront or criticize a friend for wrong plans or actions.

Many other people can't even see how their friends' actions could lead to trouble. While we should be accepting of others, we need a healthy skepticism about human behavior. When you feel yourself being heavily influenced, proceed with caution. Don't let your friends cause you to fall into sin.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: Life Application Study Bible. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print