

Foreword

Growing up, I had an impression that if a person was truly going to "go all the way" serving God (or completely dedicating their life to Him) - it would entail a life of fasting, prayer, poverty, sackcloth, ashes, hunger & thirst, meager existence, seeking God, self-denial, celibacy, preaching and teaching the Bible, witnessing, continually giving all our money away, spiritual & physical oppressions, demonic encounters. . . and then finally and probably - experiencing a tough martyrdom. Just like Jesus did.

I glimpsed in some readings of some of the early American Catholic priests who would travel and pioneer early wild America to bring the Gospel to the native Indians - how a number of them would be brutally tortured and die for God.

I mean, who would voluntarily sign-up for this kind of thing?

By the grace and work of God, by the age of 24, living in the 20th century United States of America, I dedicated my complete life to God. I intrinsically knew to go "all-out" meant to "max-out" in all the basic Christian disciplines that God liked and brought His pleasure: Fasting, Prayer, Bible study, Seeking God, Witnessing, Trying to get others to receive Christ, Attending & Helping at Church meetings, Giving money, Doing Good Works, and such.

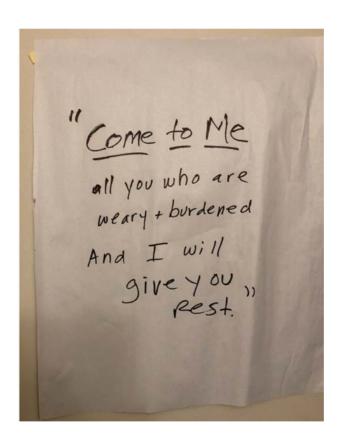
My first month into this new life, I believe I fasted about every day. My boss was very concerned about me, and thought something might be seriously wrong with me. I was pale, haggard, and gaunt . . . My eyes had black circles around them, and I had some bad dandruff going-on. I was probably pretty intense and scary looking.

After several years of daily attempting to "max-out" in these basic Christian disciplines - the life of God seemed to be waning from me. I was experiencing severe bouts of feeling dry, dead, and empty. The joy of God seemed to be fleeting. The answer must be to do more of the basic Christian disciplines. . . somehow going to a deeper spiritual level through more of them. They had previously brought the continued joy of the Lord.

I was in my car one evening while on a break at work. It was a cold, darkening grey Michigan winter day. I was trying to read my Bible and warm-up with a hot cup of coffee, while the cold kept creeping through my thin metal car doors and try to keep biting into me. I was reading a verse, "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened..." (Matt 11:28). Slowly but suddenly, the Lord

Jesus (invisibly) was sitting right next to me in my truck. It wasn't some wild vision or visitation - but *He was there, right next to me,* in my vehicle. I talked to him right there in person - *about anything.* He was closer and more real than I had experienced Him in a long time. *It was a great, life-giving experience! It was exhilarating!* I felt full of great joy and peace! It followed me home!

At home I posted a giant 2ft x 3ft sticky-note on some old art newsprint, on my mobile home wall, to help remind me to keep doing this "top thing" every day. "Finding Him" and talking with Him . . . Like what happened in my car earlier that day, was going to be my new priority in life. Doing all the Christian things that God liked, was now going to be second priority. I believe these both are God's priorities for us.



After several days, my gracious wife Barb asked me how long I planned on leaving that paper taped up on the wall. So, I began decorating my home "stickynotes" as appropriate. (She was merely trying to be a good home-maker.) So

that is how all future large "sticky notes" began to be posted on artistic backgrounds . . .



I know how easily and quickly we can "lose" truths - even profound milestones in our Christian experience. (Jesus was astonished at the ten lepers whom He had healed and cleansed - with only one coming back to thank Him. *Talk about short-term memory loss!*)

If we don't keep our priorities "in our own face" in profound ways - we will probably forget them quickly and thus stop doing them. Jesus wants our "fruit to remain." This is why I push the spiritual training books . . . really just reminder lists. If we keep flushing ourselves with our priorities - they will better become part of us . . . until they become us. ("Train yourselves in righteousness." 1Tim. 4:7)

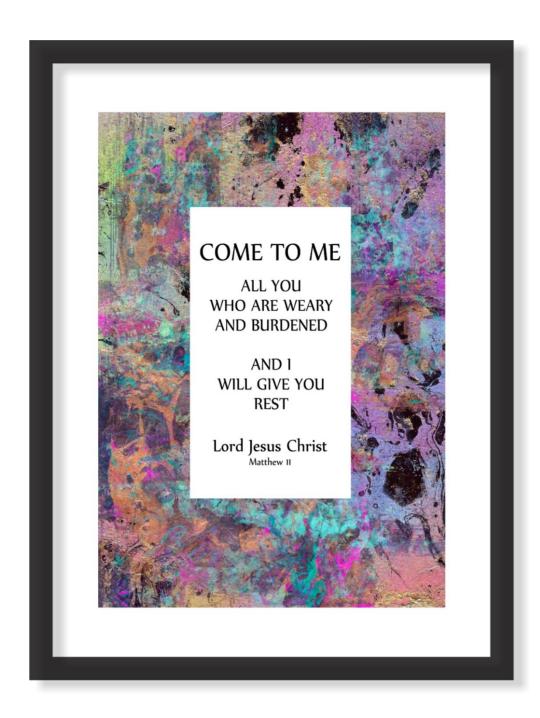
I firmly believe we need to strive to adhere to doing our best in all the Christian disciplines - while keeping the priority of our times of personally finding and interacting with the Lord Jesus Christ, God our Father, and the Holy Spirit.

I have many times seen Christians trying to maintain intimacy with God and neglecting - or even foregoing - the basic Christian disciplines. This does not work long term. God wants us all to grow up in Him and be like Him and act like Him. Jesus was our example here on earth. On the other hand, we have all probably experienced the distasteful and sometimes repugnant Christians who are glorying in their "Christian life" - full of Christian disciplines - apart from personal intimacy with God. Proud, boisterous, arrogant, unteachable, condemning - We all can become dangerous Pharisees - and destructive "Religious People" if we are not careful . . . We don't want the world to hate us for the wrong reason!

We need them both - frequent times of personal intimacy with God, and fulfilling all the basic Christian disciplines. We need to attend to them both. Life will not work correctly without them both - unless we chose to remain as immature, ignorant children.

This of course, just like anything, we cannot do on our own ("Apart from Me, you can do nothing." - Jesus Christ). We need God's help and direction and input and power. This is why we should prioritize and schedule and prepare and train in all these disciplines - with God. Train with God. Live with God.

In this verse, Jesus invites us into a real, personal experience of coming to Him and interacting with Him. We all need to hold on to this truth - *forever!*



We all need to keep experiencing God. This verse keeps inviting us all back to this. There is even a promise contained in it! As we keep coming to Him, He is going to give us something. He promises He is going to give us something. Peace and Joy and Rest! The very thing all humans desire and are seeking!

Directions for Use of this Tool

Go through each verse, one at a time. Speak the verse to your soul. Speak the verse to God. Turn it into prayer. Do I believe this verse? Am I actually *doing it daily?* (It is easy to think that just because we know the verse - that we are also doing it! How dark we can be!) Honest reading of the Bible usually should send us to prayer and relationship with God. We then need to ask God if we are obeying or believing a particular verse! What does He see? He will show us and convict us.

Most verses in this tool are *commands, promises, or knowledge* about God and His Kingdom.

We can only believe and obey any of God's commands through His power, strength, and righteousness He gives us. Jesus said, "Apart from Me, you can do nothing." If we then need to repent, we repent. We get forgiveness. We ask to make us each verse. One of God's promises is that He will change us into His image and righteousness - through yielding and complying with Him.

We go on to the next verse.

Again, I believe with any honest reading of the Bible - we will usually end-up finding ourselves in prayer. Even doing something as noble and religious and seemingly righteous as reading the Bible, can be a dark thing if we are doing it for selfish and wrong reasons. God accused many Jewish Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees of doing this. Through their own carnal reading and study of the Scriptures - they ended up in heresy, hating and opposing God, and even hating the Messiah they were waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ. **We can all easily do the same thing as those religious folks.** Some bad motives when reading the Bible can include - to look good to others, to feel good about ourselves, to try to be more important, etc.

The verses in this tool are probably some of the most important, most quoted and used verses in the Bible in Protestant/ Full Gospel circles today.

It is this author's desire that each reader would ultimately compile their own Tool 6 and train with it. When we flush our soul's and minds with God's Commands, Promises, and Knowledge of Him (preferably daily), we will find ourselves not only continually being *cleansed* by His Word - but actually *becoming it.*

Many times, Christians frequently study the Bible to learn new and exciting things about God. This is good. It is commonly known, believed, and confessed by Christians that most know way more than they are actually doing.

Why learn more things when we are not doing what we already know? A tool like this can help keep this from happening. Let's make sure we are practicing and doing what we know – or at least trying to!!

