

dence between verses in the Bible and situations in life. So when you confront a particular circumstance or problem, just plug in the appropriate verse!

Unfortunately, things aren't quite that simple. In the first place, both the Old and New Testaments were written in the context of cultures that differ vastly from ours. So to make the Bible practical to us today, we not only have to translate Hebrew and Greek words into English, but also *translate cultures* as well.

We do that primarily by looking for biblical principles. By principles I mean basic truths that the text either clearly or strongly implies. In the material that follows, I'll present some principles for godly living, along with passages that I believe teach those principles.

Take time to read carefully each scriptural passage and consider what it says about God's objectives for *your* life. For each of the five categories of the Pentathlon, there are scores if not hundreds of principles throughout the Bible. I've merely selected a few here to illustrate the process of analyzing the Scriptures. You can continue this kind of analysis on a regular basis on your own.

## PERSONAL LIFE

1. You are to cultivate an abiding loyalty and deep commitment to love God with every part of your being.

Matthew 22:36-38: "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the great and foremost commandment."

2. You are to cultivate an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:8-10: I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

3. You are to maintain a growing dependence on God. Hebrews 11:6: And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.
4. You are to serve God with deep gratitude and loyalty in every area of life. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.
5. You are to seek daily spiritual renewal. Romans 12:2: And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
6. You are to exercise self-control and discipline. 1 Corinthians 9:25-27: Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

7. You are to cultivate and enjoy friends. Proverbs 17:17: *A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*
8. You should get adequate rest and leisure. Psalm 127:2: *It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.*
9. You are to cultivate Christlikeness in your character. Philippians 2:5-7: *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*
10. You are to practice the loyalty and lifestyle of a disciple. Luke 14:26-27: *"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."* Luke 14:33: *"So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."* John 13:34-35: *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* John 15:8: *"By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."*

#### FAMILY LIFE

1. You are to see yourself as a servant to each member of your family, whether or not they are believers.

- Mark 10:45: *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*
2. Husbands are to provide the proper environment for their wives to grow spiritually. Ephesians 5:25-26: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.*
3. Husbands are to treat their wives with respect and care. 1 Peter 3:7: *You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow-her of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*
4. Wives are to respect and honor their husbands and to lead by example. 1 Peter 3:1-6: *In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. And let not your adornment be external only—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, and putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands. Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.*
5. Husbands and wives are to manifest an intimate



union with each other.

Mark 10:7-8: *For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh.*

6. Husbands and wives are to engage in sex with each other.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5: *Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

7. Parents are to provide biblical instruction and wisdom for their children.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7: *"And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."*

8. Parents are to provide a loving environment for their children.

Proverbs 22:6: *Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Ephesians 6:4: *And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

9. Children are to honor their parents.

Ephesians 6:2-3: *Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.*

10. Parents (fathers especially) are to provide for the

material needs of the family.

1 Timothy 5:8: *But if any one does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.*

## WORK LIFE

1. You are to see yourself as a servant to coworkers and customers.

Mark 10:45: *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

2. You are to work with a motive of serving Christ, not just people. Your work is an act of worship.

Ephesians 6:5-7: *Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men.*

3. You are to have a healthy balance of work and leisure, not being lazy and not being a workaholic.

Ecclesiastes 4:5-6: *The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh. One hand full of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind.*

4. You are to mark your work with excellence of effort.

Colossians 3:23: *Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.*

5. You are to maintain a high level of ethical distinction in your attitudes and actions on the job. Your character, your values, and your attitude should be so unique, so Christlike, that coworkers would want to know why.

Philippians 2:15-16: *That you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.*

6. You are to share the gospel with coworkers.

Mark 16:15: *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*

7. You are to pursue peaceful relationships with coworkers as much as possible, without violating your integrity.

Romans 12:18: *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*

Hebrews 12:14: *Pursue after peace with all men, and after the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.*

8. You are to cultivate a sense of gratitude and fulfillment in your work as a gift from God to bring glory to Him.

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13: *I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime, moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God.*

9. You are to find contentment in the material blessings you have and not be craving more and more.  
1 Timothy 6:8-10: *And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves*

*with many a pang.*

10. You are to submit to your boss and to the rules of your company, with a good attitude.

Titus 2:9-10: *Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.*

1 Peter 2:18: *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.*

## CHURCH LIFE

1. You are to be a servant to other Christians.

Philippians 2:3-4: *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

2. You are to maintain regular fellowship and worship with other believers.

Hebrews 10:25: *Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*

3. You are to use your spiritual gift(s).

Romans 12:6-8: *And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*



4. You are to help those in need.

1 John 3:17: *But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

5. You are to honor and remain loyal to other Christians.

Romans 12:10: *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.*

6. You are to encourage and build up other Christians.

1 Thessalonians 5:11: *Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.*

Hebrews 10:24: *And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.*

7. You are to support financially those whose primary occupation is the proclamation and application of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:14: *So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.*

8. You are to maintain regular fellowship and Bible study.

Acts 2:42: *And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

9. You are to accept other Christians for who they are.

Romans 15:7: *Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.*

10. Older women are to teach and set an example for younger women.

Titus 2:3-4: *Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children.*

## COMMUNITY LIFE

1. You are to see yourself as a servant to non-Christians in your community and in the world.

Galatians 6:10 (NIV): *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people.*

2. You are to proclaim Christ by your life and words.

Mark 16:15: *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*

Philippians 2:14-15: *Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.*

3. You are to pursue the moral health of your culture.

Matthew 5:16: *"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*

1 Timothy 2:1-4 (NIV): *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

4. You are to help the poor.

Galatians 2:10: *They only asked us to remember the poor — the very thing I also was eager to do.*

5. You are to seek to preserve and protect God's creation.

Genesis 2:15: *Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.*

6. You are to be an example of good works and maintain a good reputation with unbelievers.

- 1 Timothy 3:7: *And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*
- 1 Peter 2:12 (NIV): *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*
7. You should know how to explain the gospel of Jesus Christ to someone else, and tell why you are a follower of Christ.
- 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV): *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*
8. You are to obey the law and those in authority.
- 1 Peter 2:13-14: *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution: whether to a king as the one in authority; or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.*
9. You are to pay your taxes.
- Romans 13:7: *Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.*
10. To the extent you can, you are to avoid being a financial burden on society.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12: *Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.*

## CONCLUSION

You may be feeling a bit overwhelmed after reading through these various expectations. Especially when

you realize that I've only scratched the surface of the many principles for godly living contained in Scripture.

In fact, you may be more than overwhelmed—you may feel defeated. Especially if you know that you're failing in many or perhaps even most of these areas. If so, let me encourage you with an important truth from Psalm 103:8, 10, 13-14:

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,  
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. . . .

He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. . . .  
Just as a father has compassion on his children,  
So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

For He Himself knows our frame;  
He is mindful that we are but dust.

There are so many more principles, taught not only explicitly in passages like those mentioned, but also implicitly in the many stories, poems, and biographical sketches in Scripture. I encourage you to read and study your Bible daily, looking for principles that you can apply in your life.

That's really the point of Bible study — that you'll live differently as a result. After all, God didn't write the Bible to have it studied; He wrote it to change lives. In God's eyes, the priority is not knowledge, but *obedience*.

To what extent do you obey God? The personal inventory in the next chapter will help you answer that question by letting you evaluate yourself in some specific ways.



# Personal Inventory

120 PUTTING WORK IN ITS PROPER PERSPECTIVE!

## PERSONAL LIFE

- 1. Do you have a daily time of reading the Bible? Yes No
- 2. Have you read completely through the Bible? Yes No
- 3. Do you have a regular Bible study or discipleship group with whom you meet? Yes No
- 4. Do you have a daily time of prayer? Yes No  
When and for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Do you have a prayer plan to pray for people? Yes No
- 6. Do you regularly meet with a friend socially? Yes No
- 7. Do you plan regular periods of rest and recreation on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis? Yes No
- 8. Do you consider yourself overweight? Yes No
- 9. Do you feel you should get more exercise? Yes No
- 10. Do you regularly discuss your needs and problems, thoughts and feelings with your spouse and/or a close friend? Yes No

## FAMILY

- 1. Do you and your spouse "date" regularly? Yes No
- 2. Do you regularly have family devotions? Yes No
- 3. Do you regularly take time to talk with your spouse about anything that matters to either of you? Yes No

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- 4. Do you regularly spend individual time with each of your children, giving them focused attention? Yes No  
When and how long? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Would your family rate you as physically affectionate? Yes No
- 6. Does your family plan family fun and togetherness each week? Yes No
- 7. Wives, would your husband say you follow his leadership? Yes No
- 8. Husbands, would your wife say you are a good leader? Yes No
- 9. If your parents are still living, do you call or visit them regularly to see what their needs are? Yes No
- 10. Do you have a budget to control your family finances? Yes No  
Where is it? \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Do you and your spouse have a weekly time of planning? Yes No

## WORK

- 1. Do you regularly plan out your day and set priorities? Yes No
- 2. Do you routinely pray for coworkers? Yes No  
When? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Could you give a clear presentation of the gospel to a non-Christian coworker? Yes No
- 4. Can you point to one area of your job in which you've improved in the past year? Yes No  
What is it? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Do you stay current with changes and

- developments in your profession?  
 Yes No  
 6. Is there any area of ethical compromise in your work?  
 Yes No  
 What is it? \_\_\_\_\_  
 7. Are you clear on how your job helps others?  
 Yes No  
 8. Do you tend to work too many hours?  
 Yes No  
 9. Do you worry excessively about your work?  
 Yes No  
 10. Do you find that problems at your work cause significant frustration and anger when you come home?  
 Yes No

### CHURCH

1. Do you know what your spiritual gift is?  
 Yes No  
 2. Do you talk with and affirm your pastor?  
 Yes No  
 3. Do you have a regular program of giving to those who proclaim the gospel?  
 Yes No  
 4. Do you have regular fellowship with others who will challenge you spiritually?  
 Yes No  
 5. Do you regularly call or write other Christians to thank them for something they've done or to encourage them in their faith?  
 Yes No  
 6. Do you routinely pray for other Christians?  
 Yes No  
 When and for how long? \_\_\_\_\_  
 7. Do you ever practice hospitality to Christians in need?  
 Yes No  
 8. Do you have anyone who holds you

- accountable to reach personal goals?  
 Yes No  
 9. Do you have any direct contact with missionaries?  
 Yes No  
 Who? \_\_\_\_\_  
 10. Are you involved in any form of financial assistance to those in need?  
 Yes No

### COMMUNITY

1. Do you regularly meet socially with nonChristians?  
 Yes No  
 2. Do you have any close nonChristian friends?  
 Yes No  
 3. Do nonChristians feel comfortable around you?  
 Yes No  
 4. Do you know your neighbors?  
 Yes No  
 5. Can you give a clear, concise presentation of the gospel?  
 Yes No  
 6. Do you regularly pray for government leaders and other officials?  
 Yes No  
 7. Are you involved in any community service projects?  
 Yes No  
 Which ones? \_\_\_\_\_  
 8. Are you giving money to feed the poor?  
 Yes No  
 9. Are you aware of the political issues in your area?  
 Yes No  
 10. Have you shared the gospel with someone in the last six months?  
 Yes No  
 To whom? \_\_\_\_\_

### MAKING THE MOST OF THIS INVENTORY

Having completed this personal inventory, you're almost ready to start planning some specific action steps for



when I asked how he had found time, he replied simply, with a smile: 'I work.'<sup>8</sup>

But these were exceptional men! But were they busy because they were exceptional, or were they exceptional because they were busy? And were they not busy because they were Christians and because there is much to be done for the glory of God? For them time is a precious thing to be used to the utmost for God and for His kingdom.

The young American Roman Catholic Doctor Dooley, working in a hospital up-country in Laos, with the threat of an early death from cancer hanging over him, quoted Robert Frost:

'The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep  
And miles to go before I sleep'

and then added, 'I believe the important thing is not how long we live, but what we do in the days allotted to us.'<sup>9</sup>  
What are we doing?

#### Suggestions for prayer and meditation

What is my attitude to my use of time: is it my aim to use it for my Lord? Should I not make a habit of reviewing my use of time in prayer at the beginning and end of the day?

Am I using my opportunities for Christ, or do I not really give the matter a thought?

Am I in danger of being a 'sluggard' and haphazard over time?

<sup>8</sup> Some people 'do' too much, sometimes even engaging in Christian work to the neglect of their families, the detriment of their work and their own souls, and the despair of their friends. Some need a word on not neglecting their wives and children, or their own personal relationship with Christ. See my *Consistent Christianity* (IVF, 1960), p. 41.

Are the years just going by without achieving anything?  
What are my goals in my use of my time as a Christian?

Am I neglecting my own family or my own children?

Have I been neglecting to have a Quiet Time?

Do I potter and dither about?

Am I always in a mad rush?

Dear Lord, grant to me both diligence and serenity in my use of time, and help me to know what is important, that in the days which You give to me I may glorify You.

'Are there not twelve hours in the day? . . . Night comes, when no one can work' (Jn. 11: 9; 9: 4).

'Only twelve short hours—O never  
Let the sense of urgency  
Die in us, Good Shepherd, ever  
Let us search the hills with Thee.'

AMY CARMICHAEL

Prize: Take My Life

Michael Griffiths

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