

## I don't want spiritual advice - I want practical advice

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### Content

This article covers:

- **Basics:** Is the bible just about a bunch of talking spirits and similar fairy tales or is it a lot more than that, relevant for today?
- **Next generation:** The bible can give practical tips for our generation to solve the world's problems or all other problems from A-Z for example on **Addiction**, **Knowing how to argue**, **Maintaining a stable marriage** and **Ziping your tongue**.
- **Your turn:** What tools can assist you in living out the bible principles practically?



### Basics

Many people, no doubt who haven't drunk from the well of the Spirit think the bible is about a bunch of talking spirits and fairy tales (maybe like those in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*) but that it is far disconnected from the REAL WORLD. What possible practical advice could it give they ask? Would you dismiss George Orwell's *Animal Farm* just because it's about a bunch of talking animals? Or would you see it as a commentary of the deeper truths about politics, communism, and human nature?

And yet the bible is far superior to *Macbeth* or *Animal Farm* and it correctly captures the root of the problems in our world and in our lives and how we can solve them, with practical solutions.

### Examples from the bible for world problems

**#World problem 1: Too much conflict. Men are at each other's necks.** We need peace. We are Unforgiving. Too many of us carry grudges in our hearts and resentment. We are always angry.

*Solution:* This one is easy, Jesus called himself the "prince of peace" and in his sermon on the mount he called peacemakers the "sons of God". So as a believer taking this message to heart, you learn daily to find avenues to "de-escalate conflicts".

**#World problem 2: We are killing our environment, we are killing the wildlife.**

The bible says in Proverbs 13: 22 (NLT): *Good people leave an inheritance to their grandchildren, but the sinner's wealth passes to the godly.*

It also says in Proverbs 12: 10 (NLT): *The godly care for their animals, but the wicked are always cruel.*

You can using the above verses apply the principles to leave an inheritance for your children and children's children, this includes a good world. You therefore will find practical means to for example:

- Reduce your carbon footprint
- Support charities and other causes committed to leaving the world better than we found it.
- Seek to educate yourself about animal cruelty and how you can reduce it.

**#World problem 3. I am not saving enough... yet others are rolling in the dough.** We live in tough times today. Debt has us in crisis and we don't earn enough to save "dough" or "money" and to make it worse, due to longer life spans, people will "outlive their savings". What does God say about this? The bible says:

*"A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences."<sup>iii</sup> Many of us face calamity (with lack of money at the root) and then get angry at God for "doing nothing" and yet saving is important as a biblical principle – and of course a practical lesson tool.*

A further problem is we are "Keeping up with the Joneses" - "we want the same expensive things as our friends or neighbours." The bible considers "keeping up with Joneses" as a sign of both pride and covetousness and is causing wars and conflict. A verse in the bible explains it as follows:

*What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. James 4: 1 – 3 (NLT).*

So you can start by saving \$1 every day, in time, a principle called "compounding" takes place. As you see your savings accumulate, you start saving \$2 a day and further more your savings generate interest and the saving lifestyle then becomes a destiny – you can have enough for old age and leave an inheritance for your children's children.

## Our generation: Tips for practical (spiritual) living.

The bible examples to world problems show that it's not that about "I don't want spiritual but practical advice". The issue is that you have got to be open to the word of God to settle in your heart and then to meditate on it and then apply it and you will find practical solutions to both world problems and your personal problems using the principles you learn there. But will our generation have the time to sit and meditate on the word? Learn from Jesus humbly?

Can our generation really learn from He who is the word of God – the Alpha and the Omega or the A to Z?

## Practical advice (from the bible) for all sorts of situations ... from A to Z

**A for Addiction?** Lust, sex, pornography, gluttony, anger, shopping, alcohol, drugs and other addictions have a common solution – you need to learn self-control. To start, focus on having Jesus change your thought patterns from this world's customs. Jesus teaches you first to renew your mind daily. What else does he then teach you? To for example run (like Joseph), to overcome with your word (testimony) and to fast (self control over food teaches you control over other emotions and flesh lusts).

Without self-control, the bible says you are like a city with broken down walls. In other words, mastering self-control is as important as a city's walls. <sup>iii</sup>

**B for Busy (procrastination trap).** Our generation is always "busy" but until I started researching on this, I had never heard of a new form of "laziness" or "procrastination – being busy!"<sup>iv</sup> It is explained as this:

You procrastinate by being "busy" but you are not busy doing the most important things, you are doing less important things or what is called priority dilution. Here is a case study to help you.

*Case Study1: If a president can do it, how about you?*

Did you hear the story of President Obama and their family's dinner routine while in the White House? A *Harvard Business Review* article said this: *The president has a strict 6:30 time for dinner with his family, and it's pretty much inviolate. He's willing to miss dinner twice a week, but that's it.*<sup>v</sup>

In this case, the priority was spending time with his family and the world literally had to stop for him to attend to this. If an American president can prioritise their most important thing, how about you, why can't you find time to prioritise Christ?

### **D for Debt trap**

When I first came to Christ, I didn't realise how serious my wasteful spirit was. I for example didn't know clearly how much a loaf of bread cost. The bible however shows that Jesus doesn't waste things even when he provides in abundance - for example in feeding 4,000 and 5,000, he collected leftover bread and fish! After I encountered Christ, he taught me to start watching the pennies and building up more savings (he used a tough lesson of emptying me out financially first) and so I started slowly coming out of the debt slavery trap for the bible says a borrower is a slave of a lender<sup>vi</sup>.

### **G for Generosity (give until it hurts)<sup>vii</sup>**

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Luke 6:39 [NIV].

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9 [NIV].

### **H for How to love**

What is love? Here is an oft quoted verse read at weddings and all sorts.

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 1 Corinthians 13. 4.*

Did you notice that these are all actions or a verb (a doing word), not just a feeling. Notice, yes notice what love is: It (takes action and becomes) patient, it (acts and becomes) kind, it (acts and becomes being humble) (not proud), it (acts to) honours others etc.

See these are all actions - not feelings. So follow the actions, not the feelings. That is how to love.

### **J for Just be humble (secret of leadership)**

Great leaders and humility don't seem to be connected words in our world but a [great article from Forbes](#) says something different: *In his seminal book Good to Great, Jim Collins found two common traits of CEOs in companies that transitioned from average to superior market performance: humility and an indomitable will to advance the cause of the organization.*

To become a great leader - learn humility. The bible even says: *God blesses those are humble for they will inherit the whole earth. Matthew 5: 5 (NLT).*

### **K for Know how to Argue**

*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1 NIV*

So the practical lesson is this, if you must argue – be gentle in your answers, don't use harsh words.

### **M for Marriage (building a stable one)**

“Let each one of you individually so love his wife as he does himself; on the other hand, the wife should have deep respect for her husband.” —Ephesians 5:33.

“Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely.” — Colossians 3:12, 13.

### **S for Sad? Depressed?**

The bills are due, you live in a shack.. Like the rest of the world do you continually seek happiness? Keep up appearances?

Solution: The world tells you to pursue happiness but instead the Lord teaches you to pursue joy.

*Rejoice and again I say rejoice. Philippians 4: 4*

So in sadness, in depression get out your hymn book and start humming along to “Peace Perfect Peace”. You go onto *YouTube* and sing along “What a beautiful name it is, the name of Jesus”.

### **X for Xenophobia (or racism, tribalism, sexism and other isms)**

*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3: 28 (NIV).*

### **Z for Zip your mouth. Control the tongue!**

The bible says:

*The mouths of fools are their ruin; they trap themselves with their lips. Proverbs 18:7 NLT.*

*Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish. Proverbs 18:13 NLT.*

*With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? James 3: 9-11 (NIV).*

**You can see the full A – Z list we have prepared in [Appendix 1](#).**

## How I do it (a summary)

What does it take to move from the mind (spiritual) to the body (practical)?

1. You must do what the word (the bible) says and not just read it.
2. You must persevere. You keep your eye on the prize - the most important thing you are aiming for. The prize to keep your eye on is Christ.

Here are some of the things I do and think in living a purposeful life – using the bible as a practical help.

### **1. The principle of starting small – 1 step at a time, otherwise it gets daunting.**

From the little seed of reading the bible 10 minutes every day, I learnt other skills for example:

- *Read 1 book chapter a day* – You can read 100 books a year, like Joseph a friend of mine who gets up at 4.00 am to pray but also to read books!
- *Memorise 1 verse a week* - You can memorise 52 verses a year, 520 verses in 10 years – and in this way improve your overall memorising ability.

Save \$1 at a time, Improve one step at a time, Conquer the world 1 step at a time. See the connection?

### **2. Use tools to help you.**

- **Notes facility on my phone** – to maintain my prayer journal, my to do list.
- [Echo prayer app](#). To help me remember to pray for different things regularly.
- [Bible reading plans](#). Read the bible in one year? Grow in faith? In Prayer? There's an App for that.
- **Enlist others** for those who are busy and need help, sites like fiverr.com enable you to find someone to handle tasks for which in you are not skilled, starting at \$5! Alternatively find a personal assistant. I have one. He is remote and we work through email and WhatsApp.
- **Subscribe to different wisdom sources**. To become wise, spend time around wise people. I for example subscribe to various websites for wisdom/information. God uses these tools to build your character to help you grow in wisdom and in favour with both men and with God<sup>viii</sup>.

### **3. Attitude**

I have the following attitudes:

- *Refusing to give up attitude*. I press on to win the prize of the high calling of Christ. <sup>ix</sup> I refuse to give up reading the bible. It is the rock upon which all other tips and my life rests.
- *Number your days attitude* <sup>x</sup>- When you die, what will you leave to your children? To your grandchildren? What treasure will you have waiting for you in heaven?
- *Purpose attitude* - what have you been called to do? How did you fulfil it today?

## Your turn

**Prioritise.** Which practical tips can you set for yourself from the bible? How shall you put them into the respective categories to drive your priorities? What is for example:

- *High* (Very Urgent, you need to learn it now);
- *Medium* (You need the mid-term to develop); and
- *Low* (You already do it so simply check on it every once in a while that you are still standing).

**Use tools to assist you.** Take advantage of the technology. Need to reinforce the bible reading habit? There is an App for that. Need to keep track for you prayers? There is an App for that too. If Apps are not your thing, get a good old fashioned note book. I do maintain one by my bedside and it's great!

*Write notes here*

## Appendix 1: Full A – Z list (summarised)

**Addiction.** See main article.

**Busy (procrastination trap).** See main article.

### **Cheerfulness**

*A cheerful disposition is good for your health; gloom and doom leave you bone-tired. Proverbs 17:22 [MSG]*

**Debt trap.** See main article.

### **Enjoying good relationships with others<sup>xi</sup>**

“All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them.” —Matthew 7:12.

“He that conducts himself as a lesser one among all of you is the one that is great.” —Luke 9:48.

“Follow the course of hospitality.” —Romans 12:13.

### **Finance (money) principles<sup>xii</sup>**

- *Contentment.* *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Hebrews 13:5*
- *Keep records, budget.* Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches (24:3,4).
- *Work Hard.* "In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury [poverty]" (Prov. 14:23). "He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough" (28:19).
- *Seek Godly Counsel.* Psalm 1:1 declares, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly."

**Generosity (until it hurts).** See main article.

**How to love.** See main article.

### **Integrity (infinity and beyond).**

*Better to be poor and honest than to be dishonest and rich. (Proverbs 28:6, NLT)*

*Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold. Proverbs 22: 1*

*Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands. Ecclesiastes 5: 15 (NIV).*

**Just be humble (secret of leadership).** See main article.

**Know how to Argue.** See main article.

### **Laziness.**

*"A lazy person is as bad as someone who destroys things." Proverbs 18:9 NLT*

**Marriage (building a stable one).** See main article.

### **Need excellence? Master yourself.**

*"In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly."<sup>xiii</sup>*

*Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people. Ephesians 6: 7 (NIV)*

### **Open doors with gifts...**

*"Giving a gift can open doors; it gives access to important people!" Proverbs 18:16 NLT*

### **Positive attitude (cultivating one)**

*"Whatever things are true. . . lovable, . . . well-spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things." —Philippians 4:8.*

### **Quitting bad habits. Also see addiction.**

*He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." —Proverbs 13:20.*

*"Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine." —Proverbs 23:20.*

*"Do not have companionship with anyone given to anger." —Proverbs 22:24.*

### **Run – from (not towards) temptation.**

*Resist the devil and he will flee (James 4: 7).*

### **Sad? Depressed?** See main article.

### **Treat mum and dad right (even when they fail you - or annoy you)**

*Honor your father and mother" — which is the first commandment with a promise — "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Ephesians 6:2-3 NIV*

### **Understand what time of the day it is - don't be haphazard.**

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:*

*A time to be born and a time to die,  
A time to plant and a time to uproot,  
A time to kill and a time to heal,*



*A time to tear down and a time to build,<sup>xiv</sup>*

**Value wisdom (the principle thing - above seeking wealth<sup>xv</sup>)**

*Wisdom calls out in the street, she lifts her voice in the square, in the main concourse she cries aloud, at the city gates she makes her speech: "How long, O simple ones, will you love your simple ways? How long will scoffers delight in their scorn and fools hate knowledge? If you had repented at my rebuke, then surely I would have poured out my spirit on you; I would have made my words known to you.*

*Because you refused my call, and no one took my outstretched hand, because you neglected all my counsel, and wanted none of my correction, in turn I will mock your calamity; I will sneer when terror strikes you, when your dread comes like a storm, and your destruction like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish overwhelm you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will earnestly seek me, but will not find me. For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the LORD. Prov 1: 20-29 (NIV).*

**Work on your heart**

Above all else guard your heart for everything you do flows from it. Proverbs 4: 23.

**Xenophobia (or racism, tribalism, sexism and other isms).** See main article.

**Yearn for the Lord – to change the world**

*Blessed is the man*

*Who walks not in the counsel of the [a]ungodly,*

*Nor stands in the path of sinners,*

*Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;*

*2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,*

*And in His law he [b]meditates day and night.*

*3 He shall be like a tree*

*Planted by the [c]rivers of water,*

*That brings forth its fruit in its season,*

*Whose leaf also shall not wither;*

*And whatever he does shall prosper.*

*Psalms 1: 1 – 3 (NKJV).*

**Zip your mouth. Control the tongue!** See main article.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> In Matthew 5: 9 (NIV) the bible says: “Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

<sup>ii</sup> Proverbs 27:12 NLT

<sup>iii</sup> From Proverbs 25: 28

<sup>iv</sup> <https://lifehacker.com/if-you-re-always-busy-you-may-just-be-procrastinating-5992840>

<sup>v</sup> <https://hbr.org/2014/03/if-president-obama-can-get-home-for-dinner-why-cant-you>

<sup>vi</sup> Proverbs 22: 7

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.beliefnet.com/inspiration/galleries/practical-advice-from-the-bible.aspx?p=10#GH71zWxRdsIR9I3v.99>

<sup>viii</sup> From Luke 2: 52

<sup>ix</sup> Philippians 3: 14

<sup>x</sup> Extracted from Psalms 90: 12 “teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom”

<sup>xi</sup> <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/2009401#h=24>

<sup>xii</sup> <https://www.backtothebible.org/all-posts/10-financial-principles-that-are-biblical>

<sup>xiii</sup> Romans 12:6-8 NLT

<sup>xiv</sup> Ecclesiastes 3: 1 – 3 (NIV)

<sup>xv</sup> <https://medium.com/pursuing-progress/31-lessons-from-the-book-of-proverbs-523ea07db190>