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Rev. Vijayesh Lal

## **The Gift of Security in the Eternal Father's Embrace**

As Father's Day approaches, we reflect on the ideal of perfect fatherly love - tender provision, steadfast protection, and wise guidance wrapped in unconditional acceptance. Yet even the most devoted human fathers inevitably fall short of this standard, their love tainted by the brokenness of our fallen world. This sobering truth points us to the ultimate reality of God as our heavenly Father, the only true model of perfect, unchanging fatherly affection and authority.

In this age of insecurity and existential fears, the promise of eternal safety in our father's loving embrace takes on special urgency. The uncertainty amplifies our universal longing for an unshakable foundation, a love that will never abandon us to face life's troubles alone. And this is precisely the unfailing,

everlasting love God offers those who trust in Him through Jesus Christ.

To grasp the radicalness of this divine fatherly love, consider the dysfunctional fatherhood prevalent in the Roman Empire when the New Testament was written. Lofty family ideals masked a tragic fatherless void. Many fathers were emotionally distant, unfaithful, neglecting parental duties as they indulged in prostitutes and mistresses. Routine infanticide saw impoverished families dispose of unwanted infants, girls frequently the victims viewed as inferior.

As for paternal authority, it was authority distorted - unrestricted power over children with no rights, no voice to escape an authoritarian father's whims. One historian notes, "A 45-year-old



senator...if his father was still alive couldn't own a denarius' worth of property."

Into this devastating fatherlessness stepped Jesus, portraying God as the perfect heavenly Father. Unlike callous Roman fathers, our Father makes us co-heirs with Christ, full members of His household (Romans 8:17, Galatians 3:28). Where they were unfaithful, God remains faithful (1 Thessalonians 5:24). And when they deserted children to death, God sent His only Son to die so none would perish (John 3:16).

God's willingness to sacrifice His beloved Son reveals the unfathomable price He paid to adopt us. To then abandon His redeemed children would negate His righteous, loving character. As Hebrews declares, such betrayal is unthinkable for the unchanging One (13:8). The souls washed in Christ's blood are eternally secure.

This assurance flows from our Father's immutable love. "Nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ," Paul proclaims (Romans 8:38-39). No matter how scarred our earthly father experience, in God we find the tender Father we've longed for. Through the Spirit we can cry

"Abba, Father!" - an intimate Aramaic term reflecting a child's trust (Romans 8:15).

On our own, we could never be worthy of such lavish affection. We were once God's enemies (Colossians 1:21). Yet in magnificent grace, the Father reconciled us through Christ's sacrifice, adopting us as beloved children. His devotion transcends human paternal ideals - serene yet strong, gentle yet just, an incomprehensible love that shelters us in His eternal embrace.

Yes, we are prone to waver, doubting such unmerited favour. But our faithful Father does not falter. His constancy allows us to stake our beings on His unfailing affection, putting all fears to rest. This Father's Day, may we exult in the reality that we are forever secure and treasured in the eternal Father's embrace. There is no greater gift than being so perfectly loved by the One who created and redeemed us. There is no safer refuge than being cradled as His cherished children. And there is no higher calling than reflecting His radiant fatherly love to a world still groaning for the tenderness we found in Him.

**Rev. Vijayesh Lal**



# DO WE HAVE 'ETERNAL SECURITY' BECAUSE THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT WE ARE SPIRIT-SEALED UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION?

Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj

There are those who point to Bible passages where it says the Holy Spirit has 'sealed' us 'eternally' for redemption to argue for eternal security of one's salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14; Rom. 8:9; John 14:16). In response, I would like to quote David E. Pratte: 'Some people mistakenly use such passages to claim that, since we have the Holy Spirit as a "guarantee," we cannot lose salvation - "once saved always saved." However, the "earnest" shows good intention on God's part; but that in no way guarantees the faithfulness of the humans in keeping our part of the agreement. It is not uncommon,

in human transactions, for a party to back out of a purchase or violate a contract after earnest money has been paid. The point here is that God will not back out, if we keep our part of the agreement. But if we humans do not keep our part of the covenant, God is surely not required to provide us eternal life. He can and will then withdraw His earnest, and we lose our reward.' That was correctly put. Even David acknowledged that the Holy Spirit could take the liberty of leaving him when he was living in open rebellion against God. That's why he prayed this prayer post his repentance from the Bathsheba affair: "Do not take your Holy

Spirit from me!" (Psa. 51:11).

The references for the Holy Spirit sealing upon a believer come in two places in 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5). If Paul meant via these references that there was absolutely no chance of a backslidden believer ever landing in hell, he would NOT have penned lines like these which imply exactly the opposite in the very same book: 'Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified' (2 Cor. 13:5, NKJV). Those who do not live the 'Christ-in-me' life of holiness will be disqualified from entering heaven – that is the meaning here (I believe). In 1 Corinthians too, Paul issued a similar warning, taking himself as the example. He wrote, 'I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself' (1 Cor. 9:27, MSG).

Paul talked about being sealed in the Spirit in the book of Ephesians as well (Eph. 1:13-14).

Does this mean that believers cannot be ever lost? Does this imply that believers have no chance of going to hell? No! In the same book where Paul says that the Holy Spirit has sealed believers, Paul also penned that the Holy Spirit is grieved whenever believers commit sin (Eph. 4:30). That verse reads like this: 'And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption'. Some have argued, 'Though our sin can grieve the Holy Spirit, he will stay with us till the day of redemption – the Holy Spirit will take us to heaven without fail'. That would be true, if Paul never ever warned about believers going to hell in his letters. But he did. And he did so even in his letter to the Ephesians. Just read Ephesians 5:1-5 and you will get this. If believers stubbornly lived unholy lives like the unbelievers around them, the ultimate fate of the unbelievers will be "surely" (see Eph. 5:5) the fate of the stubbornly backslidden believer as well! So, the implication is this: the Holy Spirit will keep convicting the flagrantly sinning believer, the Holy Spirit will keep



warning the wayward believer, but if the believer is still stubborn in sin, after a God-set, certain point, the grieving Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19 would call the same thing quenching the Spirit), will finally leave the believer. Only God knows when this would happen. Once the ministry of the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from a believer, he or she cannot repent. Why do I say that? Because only the Holy Spirit can bring about a conviction of sin, in anyone's life (John 16:8; 1 Cor. 14:24). That's why, it is important to respond with immediate repentance when the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin telling us gently things like these: 'that is lust... that is pride... that is selfishness...repent now'. If we keep disobeying the voice of the Holy Spirit, we will then store up the wrath of God against us – a wrath that will fully be fleshed out in eternal hell (Rom. 2:4-5; 2 Thess. 1:8-9).

Paul words in Romans 8:9 ('if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ') and the words of Jesus in John 16:14 ('And I will ask the Father, and he will give you

another advocate to help you and be with you forever—') have been also used to teach 'once saved, always saved'. These two verses have been used to teach: 'the Holy Spirit never leaves a believer'. However, I disagree with this interpretation.

Let us take up Romans 8:9, first. The phrase 'belong to Christ' is used there. Paul used this phrase first in Romans 1:6. He writes there: 'And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ' (NIV). What is the meaning? The Gospel was announced to the Gentiles; a remnant from among them chose to repent from sin and believe on Jesus. And consequently, they started to 'belong to Jesus Christ'. But if these Gentile believers, backslide, keep sinning stubbornly without repenting, then this Pauline statement is true about them: they are storing up God's Wrath against them – a wrath that will fully be fleshed out in eternal hell (Rom. 2:4-5; 2 Thess. 1:8-9). Therefore, those who once belonged to Christ can indeed go to hell. If that is true, then those who once had the

Spirit of Christ also can go to hell. This Spirit would wrestle with them, prodding them to repent. But if the Spirit's gentle voice is not heeded to, again and again, the Spirit has no choice but to leave, before the stubbornly backslidden believer is consigned to hell at the end.

What about John 16:14 – does it teach 'once saved, always saved'? No! Let me explain: What Jesus is saying here is this: the Spirit of God will be with the disciples of Jesus forever. This verse, obviously, is not talking about backslidden disciples of Jesus. Who is a true disciple of Jesus? Jesus answers this question in John 14:23. We read there this: 'Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."' The Father and Son reside in the hearts of Jesus-disciples who show forth an ongoing obedience to the teachings of Jesus! Similarly, it can be said that the Spirit of God indwells in the hearts of the disciples who show forth ongoing obedience to the words of Jesus/the Word of God!

But if the disciples of Jesus choose to disobey the words of Jesus by demonstrating an ongoing sinful stubbornness, the indwelling Spirit may finally choose to leave after giving that disciple adequate chances to repent. I say this because I have read the rest of the Gospel of John. The names of the disciples were written in heaven (Luke 10:20). But one of the disciples, Judas, whose name was also written in heaven, chose to keep sinning stubbornly, so records John's Gospel (John 12:6 - 'He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it'). Jesus gave him many chances. But finally, Jesus decided to put an end to all his chances of salvation. How do I know that? These words which I read in John's Gospel: 'As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So, Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly"' (John 13:27). Judas was given many chances by Jesus. But he blew them all up. Judas had crossed the point of no-return. That's why Jesus spoke

that way to him. Similarly, we can have the case of Satan entering a believer (if he could enter Judas, he can enter a believer like him – stubbornly into sin without repenting) and the Holy Spirit leaving that believer ultimately. After this happens, this believer cannot be saved. But only God knows if this has happened with any believer or not. I say this because it was Jesus, and no one else, who told Judas, 'What you are about to do, do quickly!'



**Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj**

*This is a pre-published excerpt from Duke Jeyaraj's upcoming*

*book, Hyper-Biblical, aprovocative antidote against modern false teaching; Duke, is the founder of Grabbing the Google Generation from Gehenna Mission (G4 Mission). He started preaching at the age of 16. He became an itinerant preacher from the age of 17. By the age of 49, he preached atleast once in 20 different Indian States and in 7 Nations. Duke founded his own ministry (after being a pastor, Bible College teacher, missionary), quitting his MNC Bank job at the age of 34. He released his first book, Straight Talk, at the age of 36. This book brings frank Bible Teaching on sex, love, marriage, porn, phone addiction and more. You may reach Duke via this email, [emailduke@gmail.com](mailto:emailduke@gmail.com) or this WhatsApp, 918886040605*

But you, man of God,  
flee from all this,  
and pursue righteousness,  
godliness, faith, love, endurance  
and gentleness.  
1 Timothy 6:11





# COUNT THE WHAT IFS

Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy

When John Wesley was five years old, on the night of the Ninth of February 1709, the roof of the parsonage where his family lived caught fire. Roused from their sleep, the parents managed to shepherd all their children out of the house – all, except John, who was left stranded on an upper floor. With the stairs engulfed in flames and the roof about to collapse, John Wesley was lifted out of a window by a parishioner standing on another man's shoulders.

Looking back on his life, quoting Zechariah 3:2, Wesley said that he was "a brand plucked out of the fire". What if Wesley had died in that fire? Do you think of the "what ifs" of your life?

## Counting Blessings

We love singing  
Count your blessings, name them one by one;  
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;  
Count your blessings, name them one by one;  
Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.

Then someone in youth ministry thought it would be fun to sing about counting them two by two, three by three, all the way to seven by seven.

Count your blessings, name them two by two,  
Count your blessings, see what God can do!

Count your blessings, name them three by three,

Count your blessings, see what  
God has done for me!

Count your blessings, name  
them four by four,  
Count your blessings, count  
them more and more!

Count your blessings, name  
them five by five,  
Count your blessings, see that  
God is alive!

Count your blessings, name  
them six by six,  
Count your blessings, see what  
God can fix!

Count your blessings, name  
them seven by seven,  
Count your blessings, count  
them all the way to heaven!

It's good rhyming fun at a lusty  
sing-along session, but it doesn't  
make any sense, nor can it be  
done. When we don't even count  
our blessings one by one, how  
are we going to be able to classify  
or categorise them in groups of  
two to seven?

We tend to gloss over the  
blessings that crowd our lives. We  
tend to just say stuff like, "God  
has blessed me abundantly",  
without specifying the ways in

which we have been blessed. Or  
we might ritually acknowledge in  
prayer that God has provided us  
with food, clothing, and shelter.  
When something special  
happens, we might  
immediately/momentarily  
express our gratitude profoundly,  
as when we pass an exam, get a  
job, or are healed of an illness.  
But when the moment has  
passed into our history, we don't  
exercise ourselves recalling them  
one by one.

To count your blessings one by  
one, you must pause your life and  
look back at the days and years  
gone by, one by one. That is when  
we will be able to count our  
blessings one by one.

It's a good thing to look back on  
our lives. But the special  
moments are faded memories. I  
have found that memories of  
when my life was at a point where  
it could have ended in disaster,  
are sharper.

More than once, I have been  
saved from disastrous outcomes.  
My life could have gone another  
way. It didn't, because God  
intervened to pluck me from  
those situations. What if I had not  
been rescued so wonderfully?

Where would I be today? I shudder when I think of the what ifs in my life. At turning points, when I could have been lost, God was there to rescue me and redirect the course of my life.

### **Brand Plucked from the Fire**

Let's turn to the Bible to understand the phrase "a brand plucked out of the fire":

"Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?'" (Zech. 3:1-2). In vision, Zechariah saw the high priest being accused by the Devil. But the Lord God challenges that accusation and says that the high priest was a brand plucked from the fire.

The high priest represented the covenant people of God. Thus, Zechariah's vision was about God coming to rescue His people from their exile in Babylon. The vestments of the high priest were special but in exile they were soiled. Satan's accusation was

that Joshua was unfit to be the high priest because he had not kept himself pure. The angel of the Lord remedied this by taking away the dirty clothes and dressing him in clean clothes (vv.3-4). The brand plucked from the fire was not only rescued but recommissioned to serve God.

Zechariah's next vision had to do with the political leader Zerubbabel. The message to Zerubbabel was: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty (4:6). Tasked with rebuilding Jerusalem, Zerubbabel needed to learn to rely on the Lord, not on any political power or military strength.

Both the spiritual and political leaders represented the one people of God. Both the messages were for God's people. They were as a brand plucked from burning and they would fulfil their mission only by the power of the Spirit. These two visions show us the ways in which God intervenes in our lives. He rescues us and He empowers us. Whatever we have achieved in life could not have been achieved without the interventions of God.



Considering the what ifs of our lives is very important because it is the way we observe the hand of God upon us. What if “that” had happened? What if life had gone the other way? Where would I be? Where would you be?

Two hundred years before Wesley identified himself as a brand plucked from the fire, there was John Bradford (1510–1555), an English reformer, an itinerant preacher, and a martyr. Once seeing a group of criminals being led out to their execution he declared, “But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford.” That echoed the Apostle Paul’s saying, “Last of all, as to one born abnormally, he appeared to me. For I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am...” (1 Cor. 15:8–10).

### **By God's Grace**

Paul’s was a life interrupted. He was on his way up, rising to power among Pharisees by being a zealous in the persecution of the followers of Jesus. He was present at the stoning of Stephen. It appears that he was overseeing the stoning, because those who stoned Stephen laid their outer

robes at his feet so that their robes would not get soiled while picking up stones to throw at Stephen (Acts 7:58). But Stephen’s vibrant faith and forgiving spirit in the face of a cruel death only provoked Saul (as Paul was called at the time) to mount a vicious attack on Christians. He couldn’t abide the fact that the new faith was superior to his hateful religion of oppressing people giving the martyr the courage of his convictions. In Saul’s determination to stamp out the new faith, he went from house to house hounding Christians and jailing them (8:3). Not satisfied with doing it in Jerusalem, he decided to pursue matters in other places. He started his persecution tourism by making his way to Damascus (9:1-2). He came up short on this project as he encountered the Living Christ on the road to Damascus, and Jesus said to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads” (26:14). Draft animals that are slow are prodded to action. Saul had been receiving pricks to his conscience from the time he had witnessed Stephen’s remarkable death, but he kept on resisting those prods to his

spirit, until the Lord confronted him and stopped him from proceeding further with his plan to exterminate the disciples of Jesus. By grace the persecutor was transformed into a preacher of the gospel. And thus, Paul was plucked out of his bitterness and rage. He had been burning with hatred. He was indeed a brand plucked from the fire of hatred that consumed him. What if our Lord had not plucked this brand from burning up? For one thing, thirteen books of the New Testament would be missing and about half of the book of Acts.

Paul seems to have kept on reminding himself and his listeners that the Lord had plucked him from his career in persecution of those who followed Jesus (22:3-21; 26:9-18). This is something we too must do. We must look back to the what if moments in our lives. What if I had fallen through the cracks? What if God wasn't there to pick me up from where I was, when I was in a dangerous place? What if...what if...what if...

We pray desperately when in trouble, but when the trouble is past, often we are just casually grateful. We may be long in

praying for solutions and answers, but we rush through our expressions of gratitude. Recently, I came across this meme on Facebook: Traced it to a devotional entitled "Thanking God for What Didn't Happen" written by Debbie McDaniel:

Sometimes we need to thank God for all the things that didn't happen, for what He's stopped that we never even knew about.

We may not always see it, or feel it, we might forget it's there at times, or even wonder if God's left us to fend for ourselves in the heat of hard situations in life. But His protection is real. He sees what we can't see. He knows what we may not know. And if we belong to Him, we can trust, He's with us, every step, going before us, and covering our back too.

Yet in a world of dark, He often gets blamed for a lot of stuff that swirls around us. "Why would God let that happen? Why didn't He do something different? Why did God cause that to happen?"

But the truth is we often have no idea how much He has protected us from, how He's continually working on our behalf, even behind the scenes where we can't see. Following after us. Chasing us. To

bring great blessing, and to show us the way.

What Debbie has written is noteworthy. But I'm looking at it another way. I don't know how things could have gone if God didn't intervene in my life. However, I do know how it has been because He did intervene. I'm here now, and it is "by the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10). I didn't get here without help. I wouldn't be here without the Lord having rescued me, without Him snatching me from many a bad situation, without Him giving me the power to overcome my weaknesses.

Ten men suffering from the dread disease of leprosy sought healing from the Lord Jesus. With a word the Lord healed them. He told them to just go ahead and show themselves to the priest so that they could re-enter society. Knowing that when Jesus said something, blessing would come when they acted in faith, they started on their journey to the priest. On the way, before they reached the priest, they found that they had experienced healing. One turned back immediately to return to Jesus to thank Him. The others didn't

bother (Lk. 17:11-17).

All that the nine, who didn't turn back to thank Jesus, could think of was that they were going to end the social ostracism they had been suffering. They couldn't wait to get back to their families and their neighbourhood communities. They didn't give any thought to the man who had healed them by the power of His word. Or shall we say, they didn't think much of Him? Of course, they didn't lose their healing because of their failure to be thankful. Knowing Jesus, we can be sure that He didn't take back the healing He had granted graciously. Jesus wasn't spiteful or vindictive. His prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" is characteristic. That's His nature.

### **Possible Outcomes**

What if Abraham had refused to obey the call to be a nomad, leaving the security of his homeland in the hope of receiving a land of his own? What if Joseph had decided to give up on righteous living because he had been wronged again and again? What if Moses hadn't left the comfort and safety of life in the Pharaoh's palace to discover



his people and side with them? What if he hadn't got curious about the burning bush? What if David had been afraid to face Goliath armed only with his confidence in God? Reflecting on the alternative possibilities of these episodes in the history of faith are indeed a way to study the Bible.

And then we have the biggest what if of all. What if Jesus had refused to bear the sin and the guilt of the world?

Reflect then, on the alternate possibilities of how your life could have turned out without God's interventions. What if...what if...what if... Thinking about the ways in which your life could have

taken a wrong turn is a sure way to learn to be grateful.

So then, hold these two biblical ideas together:

"There but for the grace of God go I" (1 Cor. 15:10).

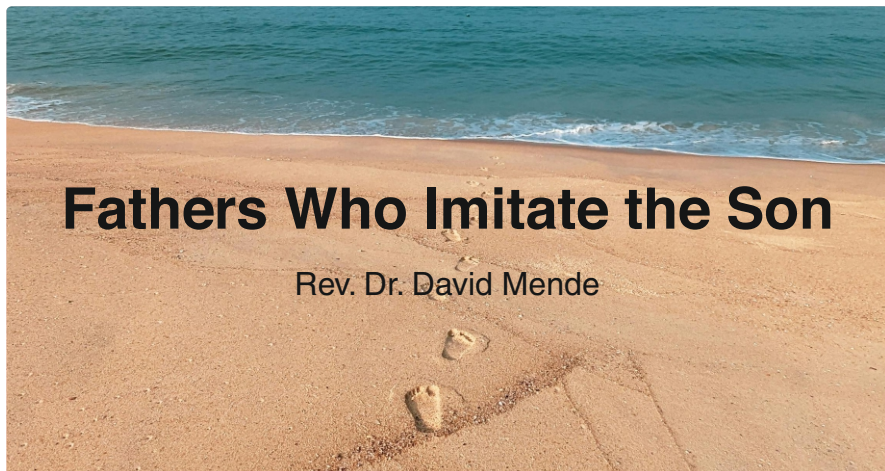
"Didn't God give you everything you have?" (1 Cor. 4:7, GNB).



**Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy**

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Whoever fears  
the LORD has a secure fortress,  
and for their children it  
will be a refuge.  
Proverbs 14:26



# Fathers Who Imitate the Son

Rev. Dr. David Mende

A young boy was asked, "What's special about Mother's Day?" The boy retorted "It's a day when mothers are treated like queens. They get a break from cooking as dads take the family to a restaurant. And the mothers even get some gifts on that day." Then, he was asked, "What's so special about Father's Day?" to which he replied, "It's a day the father drives down his family to his favorite restaurant to celebrate his special day and ends up paying the bill."

Dads are special! As a child, I thought that He-man, Spider-man, or Batman were heroes. But later, I realized that none of these so-called heroes were of any help to me. It was my dad who worked

hard and provided for all my needs. Along with my mother, he brought me up in the fear of the Lord. Even as the world celebrates Father's Day this month, it's an awesome occasion to honor our fathers. Some of you might have not experienced your earthly father's love. Or you probably lost your father at an early age. Still, we can experience the perfect love of our heavenly Father! Some married men may not be fathers as yet but praise God, you can be a spiritual father to many.

Now I cannot overemphasize the influential role of a father. According to a survey, if the child is the first person to receive Christ in a family, there is a 3.5%

probability that the rest of the family members will be saved. But if the mother is the first person to receive Christ in a family, the probability of the household getting saved goes up to 17%. However, if the father is saved first, the probability of the entire family receiving Christ is 93%! That shows the significance of a father's influence.

We know that the ultimate goal of our salvation is to be like Christ (Rom. 8:28-29). All believers, including all fathers, must strive to become like Christ. So, the basic premise I present in this article is **that fathers must imitate Jesus in their lives**. Fathers must imitate Christ in order to be a positive influence on their family and society. Though Jesus was never married and didn't have any physical children, He is a perfect role model for every believer and every father. I believe that this world desperately needs fathers who imitate Jesus. So, in what ways must fathers be like the Son, Jesus? Let me give you seven godly qualities.

### **1. Fathers Must Be Loving Like Jesus.**

The first characteristic that

fathers must imitate is to love like Jesus. Jesus demonstrated His love for God and others by dying on the cross (Jn 15:13). Earthly fathers must also love God and others (Mt. 22:36-40; 1 Jn 4:7-8). In many families, an ugly cycle recurs. Since the fathers don't love their family enough, the wife and children disrespect their fathers. This further hinders the father from demonstrating love to his family. This must stop. The fathers must be loving, no matter what. The wife and children must respect the father, no matter what.

### **2. Fathers Must Be Humble Like Jesus.**

One of the major sins that we men struggle with is pride. But God hates pride. The Bible repeatedly warns us about pride (Ps. 31:23; 1 Pet. 5:5). God alone is worthy of all the glory, honor, and praise and we must give Him the rightful place in our lives. We must follow the example of Christ who came as a servant to this earth (Mk 10:45). Jesus is the greatest example of humility. He demonstrates this beautifully at the Last Supper (Jn 13:3-5).

Though Jesus is the eternal God,

He humbled Himself to the position of a slave. Although He knew his disciples would betray Him, desert Him, and deny Him, He still washed their dirty feet. That's why the Father highly exalted Him (Phil. 2:5-8). As fathers, we must not be arrogant. We must shun pride and develop humility with the help of the Spirit.

### **3. Fathers Must Be Compassionate Like Jesus.**

Compassion is often seen as a feminine emotion. Men don't like to give the impression that they have a soft heart. But Jesus felt compassion towards the lost (Mt. 9:36). He even wept on a couple of occasions (Lk. 19:41; Jn 11:35). Compassion is a biblical quality that the fathers must possess: "As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him" (Ps. 103:13). Even when you discipline your children, show them compassion and love. Spend time with your children. Share in their disappointments and joys.

### **4. Fathers Must Be Self-Controlled Like Jesus.**

Every father must develop self-control. The Bible says "A man without self-control is like a city

broken into and left without walls" (Prov. 25:28). A city whose walls are broken is vulnerable to attacks. If we don't have self-control, we will be without defense before Satan and our flesh. Cain didn't have self-control and he committed the first murder in human history. David didn't have self-control and he committed two terrible crimes—adultery and murder.

But Jesus had self-control. Though he was tempted for forty days and forty nights, he didn't yield to Satan's temptations (Luke 4). From Luke 4, we learn that we can defeat the temptations of the enemy through fasting and prayer, the Spirit, and the Word of God. Fathers, let's practice the spiritual discipline of fasting. It will break the power of sin and flesh in our lives. We must develop self-control which comes from the Spirit (Gal. 5:23).

### **5. Fathers Must Be Gentle Like Jesus.**

The world projects angry macho men as real men. Many men think that meekness is a sign of weakness. But gentleness is Christ-like (Mt. 11:29). Since

Christ is gentle, He can offer rest for our souls. Quoting Zechariah 9:9, Matthew (in 21:5) writes: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey.'" We must develop the quality of gentleness in our lives (Gal. 5:23). As leaders, we must not drive our families harshly. Rather, we must lead our families gently.

## **6. Fathers Must Discipline Like Jesus.**

Jesus is not all about love, compassion, and gentleness. He was also firm in disciplining. Similarly, fathers must be gentle. Yet, they must discipline their children as well. We must learn to strike the balance. When the disciples failed to cast out the demons from a young boy, Jesus rebuked them and said, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?" (Mk 9:19). Also, when Jesus predicts his impending death and suffering, Peter rebuked Jesus and said, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you" (Mt. 16:22). And Jesus rebuked Peter in very strong words: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to

me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man" (Mt. 16:23).

Fathers, let's listen to the words in Proverbs 3:11-12 (which are quoted in Hebrews 12:5-6): "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights." You will discipline your children if you love them and delight in them.

## **7. Fathers Must Be Prayerful Like Jesus.**

Jesus was a man of prayer. In his book, *Spiritual Leadership*, J. Oswald Sanders writes about the prayer life of Jesus. He says, "Surely if anyone could have sustained life without prayer, it would be the very Son of God Himself. If prayer is silly or unnecessary, Jesus would not have wasted His time at it. But wait! Prayer was the dominant feature of His life and a recurring part of his teaching." Luke 5:16 (NIV) says that "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."

Fathers, your children will not be blessed if you merely provide for



their needs. Pray for your children. Pray with your children. Lead your family in prayer and Bible reading. Be the priest and the leader that God has called you to be. Fathers must be prayerful like Jesus.

## Conclusion

**Fathers must imitate Jesus in their lives.** I have obviously not shared an exhaustive list of a father's qualities. A father has to provide for the family, teach God's Word to his children, and fulfill several other obligations. But we focused on the need for fathers to reflect Jesus through their lives. Fathers, we are not perfect. We are fallen human beings in a fallen world. But the more we look to Christ, the more we will become like Him. He is our ultimate role model. Even when you fail, run to Jesus and ask Him to forgive you. He will grant His grace and make you the kind of leader and priest He wants you to be. Let's imitate Jesus!

P.S. This article is adapted from Dr. David Mende's book, *Powerful Sermons for Special Occasions*. You may contact him for copies of this book.



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# Our Saviour-God

Mr. Chacko Thomas

## Here are a few quotations:

“Once saved, always saved.”

Rev. RT Kendall

“Once saved always saved?”

Rev. David Pawson

“What would be your first feeling when you reach heaven?”, Billy Graham was asked. “Relief”, he replied.

“I am a Calvinist with a strong Arminian leaning.” George Verwer, answering a minister who was considering to invite him to speak to his congregation.

“Caution: Be careful in persuading people that they are saved. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, He is the One that knows and searches the heart.” Alan Douglas in *One Hundred Bible Lessons*.

## Godly Christians on both sides of the argument:

The first two quotations above are titles of two different books by two godly, scholarly, outstanding Bible Teachers/Pastors. While Rev. Kendall affirms the view of “Eternal Security”, Rev. Pawson questions it. These are two men I respect and often consult in my ministry.

Obviously, godly people differ on details of salvation (and other doctrines). The Moravian motto is very helpful in this case: “Unity in essentials, Liberty in non-essentials, and Charity (Love) in all things.” It has been the life-saver for many international and interdenominational Christian ministries. [Universal church is just that, International and

interdenominational. It is a mistake to want a church that is “Indian”].

I have been on both sides of the divide, myself. I must confess that those who are on the side of eternal security have a better ride to heaven, judging from my experience. My confidence is in God my Saviour.

One of my brothers-in-law suggested to me: “Instead of seeing it as opposite views, see it as two parallel walls. We walk in between them. People who are fearful of losing their salvation need assurance and the Bible is not short of assurance of salvation. Others who are careless about their salvation need warnings to be vigilant, and there are plenty of that in the Word of God. People of all temperaments find their place in between these two exhortations in God's Word about their Salvation.” [Prof. Deva Nair]

My wife and I enjoyed three days recently with a missionary couple in Bedford, UK. Bedford is made famous by a tinker, John Bunyan, and his book *The Pilgrim's Progress*. We were given a copy of the adapted version of John Bunyan's book: *The Family Pilgrim's Progress*. I was glad to

find these words in it: “Before long the path ran between two thick walls. Along these in huge letters were written a word: SALVATION.” (I hope that I have not misunderstood Bunyan.)

### **Salvation in 25 words:**

What is Salvation? “The wrong things we do separate us from God. Messiah Jesus died, taking our punishment, and rose again, proving He is God. Trust in Him.” That is exactly 25 words. (Michael Rydelnik, expounding on 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 in *50 Most Important Bible Questions*, Moody Publishers)

### **It is not because I am so good:**

Paul Bramsen writes, “Years ago I spoke with a very religious lady about God's gift of eternal life. Though she called herself a Christian, she had never placed her trust in God's provision of salvation in Christ. “When I told her, “I know I will go to heaven when I die,” she replied with some indignation, “Oh, you think you are *so good* that you will go straight to heaven, do you?”

“No”, I replied, “it is not because I'm 'so good.' It's because God is good. He is the one who has told us that we can '*know that we have eternal life*' if we believe in Him and what He has done for us.” The

Bible says: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23, 5:1-11, quoted from *One God One Message* by Paul Bramsen).

### **Salvation is of God**

The Biblical concept of Salvation was one of the things that convinced me that the Bible is God's Word and that the God of the Bible is the true and living God. It is a unique way of salvation. I realised that any man could have invented the way of salvation found in any of the other religions in the world, but no man could have conceived God's way of salvation offered to us in the Holy Bible through the substitutionary death of the God-Man, Christ Jesus.

It is unsurpassed yet simple. It is for all mankind, just as he causes His sun to rise on all and gives His rain to all. God saved us who could not save ourselves. Salvation is offered to us for free, a gift from God. It is ours to take by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is unique (See Romans 5:1-11)

And the Salvation itself, oh, what a great provision it is! It cannot be compared with the salvation concepts of other faiths. We have an inheritance, kept for us in heaven and we are kept for it by

God (1 Peter 1:3-5). We look forward to being with God, in the New Heaven and New Earth. The Bible is a book of Salvation. It has much to say about it.

### **May I be assured of my Salvation?**

Speaking to a congregation of about 3500 people in Moody Church, Chicago, the then Pastor Dr H. A. Ironside said: "As a youngster, I had been troubled for a long time about my soul. Somebody had given me a card that read like this: "IF I DIE TONIGHT. I WILL SPEND ETERNITY IN H.... BECAUSE I HAVE / HAVE NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS MY PERSONAL SAVIOUR".

"A preacher had asked me to fill out the card honestly. I filled it, signed it and hung it over the head of my bed. It read 'If I die tonight I will spend Eternity in *Hell* because I *have not* believed in the name of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour."

Then one night, "as just a lad, I knelt before God in my little room in Los Angeles, confessed myself a sinner, turned to God's holy Word, read Romans 3 and John 3 and I told the Lord that I would

believe His testimony. I read that “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”.

“And I remember saying to the Lord, 'now Lord, you have said it; and I believe it; you have said that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life. I take you at your word and thank you for giving me everlasting life.' (John 3:16)

“I stopped quietly before God, I ceased praying and expected to have a sudden rush of feeling, a most intense emotional experience, but it did not come. So I said, 'I think I have been mistaken; I will have to go all over again' then I read John 3:18 'Whoever believes in Him is not condemned; but whoever does not believe does stand condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.'

“I saw that that there were two classes of people, he that believes and he that believes not; I saw that there are two results, “he that believes in Him is not condemned; he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the name

of the only begotten Son of God.  
...

“To which class do I belong? And I looked up into the face of God and said, 'You know that I belong to the first class; I do believe on the Son of God.' Very well, “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” So, I said, 'Blessed Lord, I take You at Your Word, I am not condemned. You have said it, and I believe it.'

“And again I looked for some emotional experience and it did not come. But I said, 'never mind, I have God's Word for it and I believe it'. I thanked Him, rose from my knees and took down that little sign I had over my bed and put it in the waste basket.

“And I said, 'Thank God that is over, for God says, “He that believes on Him is not condemned. That was forty-two years ago. Let me tell you something more; in forty-two years, I have never felt saved; but for forty-two years I have felt happy to know that I am saved. I am not saved by my feeling, but I feel so good to know that I am saved, and I know it because God has said I am.”

### **That you may know:**

The Apostle John wrote the



Gospel of John and stated why he wrote his Gospel. He says: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah [Christ], the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name (John 20:31). His Gospel was for the unbelievers to believe and have life in Jesus.

The Apostle John writing his Epistle gave a different reason for writing his first Epistle: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13)

### **God is a faithful Saviour:**

The Apostle Paul wrote: "May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful and He will do it. (1 Thess. 5:23-24).

The Apostle says that our God is a Faithful Saviour-God. He initiated our Salvation, He provided the way of Salvation, He saved us who believed in Christ and His finished-work, He will keep us in Salvation, He will bring it to pass. "Being confident of this, that He Who began a good work in you will carry it on to

completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1:6).

That is my only hope. I need no other hope. "I know whom I have believed, He is able ..."

My faith is built on nothing less, than Jesus blood and righteousness.

*"Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand*

*Never foe can follow, never traitor stand;*

*Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,*

*Not a blast of hurry, touch the spirit there.*

*Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest,*

*Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest."*



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# Foundation for Christian Ministry-Part I:

Ps. Grish Lal Tamta

## Introduction

Holy Bible says, “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only begotten son, that whoever believes in him, shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)”. Scripture is the record of loving God who created mankind in his own image and likeness. He commanded him to rule over the earth and so that he could have relationship with him. But the mankind sinned by disobeying and lost fellowship with God. God wanted to restore the relationship with mankind through his son Jesus. He came and launched restoration and reconciliation ministry for which even he gave his life on the cross. After resurrection, he commanded his

followers to carry on his ministry in the world. This is the ministry we must carry with great-commandments, commission, and compassion so that his kingdom on earth be established as in the heaven. So, the church and its followers are given mandate to carry his ministry.

## What is Christian Ministry

Christian Ministry is sharing the Gospel with others so that they come to know about Jesus Christ and receive salvation by accepting him as their personal saviour and Lord. Also find him as the essence of their life (John 1:12, Phil 3:8-10) and serve him and help his people physically, emotionally, mentally,

vocationally, financially, and spiritually (Mk 1:38-39).

## **OT and NT understanding of ministry**

The OT understanding of ministry is in two terms. One is like a slave (ebbed) or servant and other is minister (meshareth) or priest. The first kind is referred to tilling, cultivating, civil, and military service and the second is referred to domestic household, temple servant. The NT understanding is to serve (διακονία) as slave (δούλος). It is a service to God and others in his name. Jesus gave an example of as to how serve and not to be served (John 10:41-45) and also serve like Paul in Roman (Rom 1:1).

## **The basis of Christian Ministry**

The Christian ministry is based on the great commandments, great commission, and great compassion. The first great commandments are based on, to love your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength (Math 22:37-40) and love your neighbour as you love yourselves. All the laws and

prophets are depending upon these commandments. The second is the Great commission which is based on, to go and make disciples in the nations and baptise them in the name of the father, son and the holy spirit and teach them to obey everything what he commanded us to do (Math 28:18-20). The third is the great compassion, which is based on, to help the poor, needy, sick, oppressed, and exploited. So, Jesus has passed the authority on to us, to go into the world and minister him.

## **Ministry in our own words**

The Christian Ministry is to go into the world and preach the gospel in the name of Jesus and in the great power of the holy spirit to preach gospel to open their eyes, deliver them from the darkness, release them from the power of Satan and bring them into the light and the power of the God, to receive the forgiveness of their sin and have eternal life (Acts 26:18) and prepare for his second coming. In other words, it is to proclaim his salvation, promises, and healing by his grace through faith in him and holy spirit, to bring glory to God

and fulfil the commandments and commission till he returns.

### **Ministers are like “a midwife” according to A C Kaross**

A C Kaross says Ministers of Christ are like midwives. In other words, they are enablers. They serve as enabler of good conversation helping the group members to express their thoughts and feelings and experience as an active learner to contribute something like midwife enables the mother to bring the baby out. Similarly, the ministers need to be midwives to the people who are like mother and the baby is the new life in Christ.

### **Ministers are like “a people developers” according to McNeal**

McNeal says ministers are like people developers. These developers empower and encourage them to explore the gifts, passion, and talents to develop their own ministry. They equip people with whatever skills are required for effective ministry work. They are available as resources to the people to grow, lead, know, and show. The biblical

model of leadership is based on spiritual gifts not intellectual achievements and theological qualification. They make way for them to lead. The true leadership is the one which reproduce the leaders and empower them for ministry.

### **The ministry of patriarchs, priests, and prophets in the Old Testament**

- The ministry of patriarch was to minister their family and offer sacrifices on behalf of the family, taught their children and house, hold to love the lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength (Deut 6:4-9) and keep his ways. They led the family in worship and instructed them to intercede for others (Gen 20:17).
- The ministry of priest was to minister in the holy places (Exd 28:43) in two aspects. First, the minster was “to bring people to God” by offering sacrifices and meet in the tent meeting and intercede on their behalf. The second aspect was “to bring God to people” by teaching his word and message.
- The ministry of prophets was

to carry the message of God to His people. They were called the messengers of God and their message consisted in two parts. One was *forthtelling* and the other was *foretelling*. Most of the messages were to encourage people to live a covenant-oriented life of righteousness and justice.

### **New Testament ministry as the work of all God's people**

In New Testament, John the Baptist's ministry was to prepare the way for the Lord and call for repentance and baptism. When Jesus arrived, he began preaching about repentance and about the kingdom of God. While serving, he sacrificed his life on the cross for mankind. His ministry was to fulfil the father's will (Phil 2:5-11). In the same way after his resurrection, he called his disciples to carry on his ministry. They were sent forth to teach, preach, heal, and cast the devils out of the oppressed with the authority of Jesus Christ. Now it is the responsibility of Christians as people of God to carry his ministry in this world. Jesus even today does not call without equipping, commission

without provisions, authorise without empowering and send without enabling.

### **Use of this concept of ministry in your Church**

The way John the Baptist, Jesus and his disciples including Paul preached the gospel, in the same way, we the people of God, should take his word to the world. The ministry of early church, especially after the Pentecost day, laid the way for us to emulate, to spread the gospel in the world. Stephen and Philip carried his ministry and did not care for their life and performed signs and wonders with the power of the holy spirit and saved Simon, a sorcerer and Ethiopian eunuch. When the persecution started, ordinary people got scattered, and preached gospel beyond Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and rest of the world.

These ordinary people were the first missionary to help the infant church to grow outside Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas are the example to begin as missionary church. In the same way, when God chose ordinary people to be missionary then nothing stops anyone from being



missionary of God. Bible says he chose foolish of the world to shame the wise and weak of the world to shame the strong, to serve him (1 Cori 1:25-27). Believing his word and promises, we must apply this concept of ministry and spread the gospel in the world.

### **Ministry as per epistles**

The epistles of Paul and Peter give several kinds of ministries. In the 1st letter to Corinth, Paul lists the order of ministries like apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, healer helpers, and administrators. In 2nd letter to Corinth, he says Christ's love compels him and made him a competent minister of new covenant (2 Cori 3:6). He exhorts believers to live their life for Christ as we all are a new creation in him, and he made us his ambassador in this world (2 Cori 5:17-20). In Ephesian, he lists the ministry of apostle, prophets, evangelist, pastors, and teachers (Eph 4:11-12). In Philippians, Paul says his mission is to know Christ and make his name known to others. Pastoral epistles give us the essentials of characteristics of

the office of the Pastors. In 1st epistle of Peter, he says he has chosen and called us Holy nations, royal priesthood, people belonging to God and called out of darkness to the marvelous light (1 Pet 2:9). He calls upon the people of God, to be faithful to minister him, and fulfil his redemptive plan till he returns (Rev 22:12).

### **The aim of Christian ministry**

The aim of the Christian ministry is to help its followers to attain the unity in faith and knowledge of his son Jesus Christ and attain maturity in the son of God. The maturity does not mean the length of time of following him, but it is about to obey him and reflect his nature. This maturity comes by his grace because he is the source of all things (2 Pet 1:3-9).

### **How different it is from another faith**

The Christianity is different from other faith on many grounds. However, the most important is that it is not about what we do as human being in order to please God, but it is about what God has done for us so that we could have relationship with him. Whereas in

other faith, it is about the human attempts to do good works, sacrifices, and rituals to please God but in Christianity it is God who graciously saves human through his son Jesus. In other words, humans try to become God by doing good works but in Christianity, God became human to have relationship with them, is the main difference from other faith.

### **What does a minister mean?**

The word minister in Greek is διακονία (diakonia) which means ministry and διάκονος (diakonos) which means the person who serves and διάκονο (Diacono) which means to serve. Apostle Paul used this word for himself as servant of the Lord (1 Cori 3:5), servant of God (2 Cori 6:4) servant of gospel (Eph 3:7) and servant of the church. Jesus said that we all his followers should be the servant (Math 20:26). Paul again used δούλος (Doulos) for himself as slave or servant of Jesus Christ. He commanded all believers to be servant because Christ himself took the nature of servant (Phil 2:7) by washing the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-15). So, the meaning of minister

is to serve God and one another. But unfortunately, most of the Christians want to be served.

### **Four ways in which Christian ministry is unique**

- In Christian ministry, the character and credibility are more important than the activities and achievement. Paul says, follow my example as I follow Christ (1 Cori 11:1). The minister should walk the talk and have godly character to serve God.
- Christian ministry is representing God, working with God and being used by God. We are partners with God (2 Cori 6:1) and one should be clean with hands and pure in hearts then only one can serve the Lord (2 Tim 2:21).
- Christian ministry is done on the basis of person-to-person contact. The 5G spectrum is not eligible replacement for personal evangelism. The gospel is to be preached by going to the people and identifying them and communicating in a simple way so that they can understand it. Personal touch,

involvement and person to person evangelism is most important method in spreading gospel to the nations.

- Christian ministry is the work against the forces of darkness that have blinded the eyes and understanding of the people. Paul says that our fight is not against the flesh and blood but the power of darkness and spiritual forces of evils in the heavenly realm (Eph 6:12). The minister should stand firm and work in the power of the holy spirit because when he comes, he will convict the world of their sin (John 16:8). So only the holy spirit can open their eyes and mind to understand the gospel.

### **Christian ministry is not a bed of roses**

When Lord Jesus Christ preached the gospel to the people, they tried to stone, imprison, kill, and always faced opposition from the teachers of the Law. Paul says the servant of Lord should be prepared for insult, hardship, offenses, sufferings, pain, opposition, and persecution.

Paul suffered imprisonment, flogged, exposed to death, five times got lashed, three times beaten with rod, three times had shipwrecked, without sleep, food, water, and dangers from people and lived in cold and naked. He wrote to Timothy to endure hardship like a soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim 2:3).

When I accepted Christ as my personal saviour and Lord, my family excommunicated me and still do not invite me in any of the family get togethers. It is painful but the peace of the Lord, helps me to overcome it because he has promised to get us out of the valley of shadow of death. This pain is not comparable with the glory he gives us (Rom 8:18).

### **Christian ministry quick results may not be lasting results**

We are living in a world of quick fix like quick noodles, coffee, photo, and results in a 5G information technology. The science and technology have been misusing the talent given by God to interfere in the affairs of God. If we look at a farmer who toils day and night, sows seed

and waters and waits patiently for the crop come up and enjoy the fruits. Similarly, the lasting results require long time of hard and diligent works. If a baby is delivered premature may face complications even may die. In the same way, let the seed of the word of God and sound teaching, take time to germinate, break, sprout, have buds, ear and develop like a plant and grow as tree to bear fruit which may last.

### **Teaching is important and necessary in Christian ministry**

The teaching in Christian ministry is important for growth and maturity. Paul says that all scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2Tim3:16-17). Jesus taught and trained his disciples for 3 long years and plus then send them to preach and make disciples. But the contemporary churches are concentrating more on Baptism rather than teaching and making disciples. They must be taught to obey the commandment of the Lord as an ongoing process. The

lack of teachings may lead to backslide and become nominal Christians.

### **Where should we expect our reward**

In secular world, the reward will be immediately after the completion of the task but contrary to Christian ministry, the rewards will be given after earthly life. Jesus said “Behold I am coming quickly, and my reward is with me and I will give to everyone according to the work done on earth (Rev 22:12). So, we have to continue to be faithful to his work and endure hardship like a soldier of Christ to do our work honestly, righteously, justly, and lovingly, so that we may hear his commendable words in heaven saying “well done my faithful servant and come and here is your reward.”

### **Conclusion**

God created universe and mankind in his image and authorised to rule over it. But mankind, violated the authority and lost the relationship with God. Bible says, “God so loved the world that he gave his one

and only begotten son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)". So, God planned to restore the relationship with mankind through his son Jesus who came and reconciled us unto him. He authorises us to carry his restoration and reconciliation ministry. The purpose of his ministry is to establish his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. The church and his followers as his agents, must carry his ministry with great commandments, commission, and compassion to spread

gospel in the nations and hasten his second coming.  
Amen.



**Ps. Grish Lal Tamta**

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Children, obey your parents in  
the Lord, for this is right.  
“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.”  
¶ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead,  
bring them up in the training and  
instruction of the Lord.  
Ephesians 6:1-¶



# PRAYING FATHER

Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy

My Father was not well off. After his father died of meningitis and his mother died of sadness, within weeks he failed his college exams. He had to discontinue college. His father's older brother advised him to pick up a job and support himself. Those days connections mattered. His well-to-do and very well-placed relatives (and there were plenty) could have ensured that he got a job with a good salary on their recommendation. That didn't happen.

After three children were born, Father left Bangalore and went to Hyderabad for better pay. As he had a very good command of English, he was made the section head in the factory, but he was not paid what he had been promised

when he was called from Bangalore to join the company. He could have easily made money dishonestly on purchases and sales and justified it on the grounds that he had been cheated by his employers. He didn't. Such scrupulous honesty even when he was cheated by his employers was a valuable lesson he taught us children by example.

When the pastor of St George's Church, Rev Walter Stand Skillicorn, preached on tithing and encouraged people to buy the book *Christian Giving* by Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, the first Indian bishop of the Anglican Church, Father bought the book and having studied it, changed the way he gave to God. Though poorly paid, he began to



diligently tithe his salary.

I learnt then, that obedience to God in this matter does not depend on how well off one is. Rich or poor can tithe—the only way to give proportionately and equally. After his death, Mother continued the practice of tithing very carefully. She didn't plead that she was a widow with three children to educate. Her old hometown friends were wealthy women. When they got together for Bible studies, some of them belittled the concept of tithing saying that as believers they were not under Old Testament law but had freedom in Christ. Seems to me that while they despised Jews for being bound to the Law, they themselves were in bondage to mammon (Matt. 6:24).

Father read a lot. Every morning before Father left for work, he was up early to read the Bible and other devotional books. That's how I know he was my praying Father.

After my sister, brother and I got involved in Youth For Christ, Father escorted us to a YFC rally as it was held after sundown. But the altar call at the end upset him.

He said that it seemed to suggest that anyone who didn't go forward was rejecting Jesus Christ, and that's not what he felt. My Father very definitely believed that Jesus was the only Saviour and following His teachings was very important to Father.

### **A Prodigal Son**

But I thought that anyone who didn't share my vocabulary of claiming to be “born again” or having “accepted Jesus” was not a believer. This spiritual arrogance led to my fall. In the end, I tried to run away from home. I went to the home of friends imagining that their parents were better than my own and would take me in and then I would be able to be a better Christian. I was missing from home for many hours. The other family brought me back home late at night after they had persuaded me to return. Father never scolded me. He just took me in. Years later, my sister told me that he had been like the father in the story of the prodigal son. He kept standing at the gate of the house waiting for my return.

Did the father of the prodigal son pray for his lost son? Our Lord said of the father, “But while he

was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him” (Lk. 15:20). The father had not forgotten his wandering son. He had to be on the lookout for his son to have seen him while he was still at a distance. Can any parent keep on looking out with longing for a lost boy or girl without praying for the poor wanderer?

### **Divine Intercessors**

The father in our Lord’s story represents God, whom Jesus called Abba. Does God pray over His children? The Lord God dictated the prayer of blessing to be used by His priests:

May the Lord bless you  
and protect you.  
May the Lord smile on you  
and be gracious to you (Num.  
6:23-25, NLT).

That was God’s own prayer for His people. He was speaking out His heart. If prayer is the expression of heartfelt desires, then we can believe that God’s blessing is a prayer for people. In any case, in complete agreement and oneness with the Father, both Jesus (Heb. 7:24-25) and

the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26-27) are our intercessors.

Fathers are tasked with teaching children about God and the tenets of faith (Deut. 6:7, 20-25). From this, Jews developed the tradition of the youngest of a family asking the meaning of the Passover and the patriarch of the family launching into a teaching session on the meaning for the benefit of all present at the meal. In line with this, Paul assigned the task of teaching to fathers (Eph. 6:4). However, it is mothers who are held up as legendary when it comes to praying for their children’s salvation and spiritual growth.

### **Legendary Job**

In this respect, Job stands out. He was legendary in being a praying father:

Job’s sons would take turns preparing feasts in their homes, and they would also invite their three sisters to celebrate with them. When these celebrations ended—sometimes after several days—Job would purify his children. He would get up early in the morning and offer a burnt offering for each of them. For Job said to himself, ‘Perhaps my children have sinned and have

cursed God in their hearts.” This was Job’s regular practice (Job 1:4-5).

His children partied and they partied with gusto. Their parties were not quiet and sober affairs. They were celebrations. The wine flowed. There was much merriment. Job feared for their spiritual state after they partied hard. So, he prayed – sometimes that is the only thing that a parent can do when children want to just have a good time without giving any thought to anything else.

As a prayerful father, Job also had a wonderful sense of justice. He treated his daughters just like he treated his sons. “He had seven sons and three daughters...their father gave them inheritance among their brothers” (42:13-15). Job was neither a descendant nor a relative of Abraham. He may well have been a contemporary of Abraham or one of the other patriarchs. He predates the giving of the Mosaic Law. Unlike Job’s daughters, the daughters of Zelophehad had to contend for their right to their father’s inheritance. Moses didn’t give them an answer straight away. He said he would have to ask God what to do about their request to

break with the conventions of patriarchy (Num. 27:1-7). How different Job was, and it was because as a man of prayer, he knew what was the right thing to do.

When Jacob blessed his sons, it was in part a prayer for them (Gen. 49). As a human being, he did not have any power to bless them in such a way as to affect their future. The only way his blessing would work was for it to be a prayer for them.

As David handed over charge of the kingdom to Solomon, he didn’t neglect to pray for him. Succession is always a moment of triumph. In the midst of that triumphal moment to remember to pray for the successor shows both faith and humility. Instead of simply exulting in pride that he had succeeded in choosing his heir and passing on the kingdom to him (in spite of those who schemed and plotted against the succession), David prayed for his son to be guarded by the Lord God and to keep him wholehearted in devotion to God (1 Chron. 29:19).

While the word “mothering” is associated with nurturing, caring,

and protecting children by the mother or even by a loving unrelated woman, the word “fathering” refers only to making a woman pregnant and having a child by her. That is a sad commentary on the role of fathers in the lives of their children. These examples of praying fathers are a course correction for all fathers.

### **Adoptive Fathers**

No reflections on fatherhood could be complete without considering the adoptive fathers of the Bible. Jesus was the adopted son of Joseph. He adopted Jesus as his very own son, and he loved him so much that no one ever suspected that Jesus was not Joseph’s son (Lk.3:23; 4:22). Jesus would have been an unwanted child but for Joseph’s love. Joseph sets an example in foster love and care.

The Bible does not tell us a lot about Joseph. It does tell us that he was not a cruel man, because he saved Mary from being stoned as an adulteress when he found out that she was pregnant before marriage (Matt.1:19). He was also a man who was in touch with God, because he received God’s revelations concerning the situations he faced (v.20; 2:13,

19-20), and he was always obediently responsive to those communications of God (1:24; 2:14, 21). Clearly, Joseph was prayerful. It can therefore be concluded that, faced with the task of raising God’s own Son, Joseph would have sought God’s guidance about how he a human was to bring up the Divine Son.

Despite knowing that Jesus was the Son of God, and had a special mission on earth, Joseph still took the trouble to teach carpentry to Jesus! Why did Joseph waste his time and effort doing that when he knew that Jesus wouldn’t stick with carpentry? Joseph did that under guidance from God that the boy Jesus would need to be fathered and taught how to be a man. So, Joseph taught carpentry until Jesus discovered what God wanted Him to do. He couldn’t have ventured on without trembling and being in prayer constantly to know what he had to do moment by moment. Yes, Joseph prayed about Jesus. He prayed for Jesus.

Then there was the bachelor, Paul. He didn’t have any biological children but maintained a fatherly attitude toward those

whom he personally had brought to Christ (1 Cor. 4:14; Philem.v.10). Timothy and Titus (Tit.1:4) were two whom he referred to as his “true sons” (1 Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4). However, Paul didn’t keep them subordinated to himself. He helped them to grow in their ministry. He treated them as his equals. In the course of time, both Timothy and Titus were called “brothers” (1 Thes. 3:2; 2 Cor. 2:13) and identified as fellow workers (Rom. 16:21; 1 Thes. 3:2; 2 Cor. 8:23). Paul also included Timothy as his co-author for four of his letters (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil.1:1; Col. 1:1; Philem.v.1).

As John wrote in another context, an elder can have no greater joy than to know that his children are walking in the truth (3 Jn. v.4). Those in mentoring positions should learn that the church is not theirs to lord over (1 Pet. 5:3), because Jesus is the only Lord and Master – the Chief Shepherd (v.4), and all are brothers (Matt. 23:8). A mentor must pass on what he has received. He must bring his subordinate students to equality in status, function, and authority.

### **Build My Son, My Daughter**

Many years ago, I came across a

filler in the Reader’s Digest. It was a prayer for his only son by Douglas MacArthur, general of the Allied Forces. I promptly cut it out and pasted it in my prayer notebook. I adapted it by putting all references to “son” and the related pronouns in MacArthur’s prayer into square brackets to pray this prayer, not only for my son, but also for my daughter. I still use it regularly:

"O Lord, build my [son/daughter] N\_\_\_\_\_, to be strong enough to know when [he/she] is weak, and brave enough to face [himself/herself] when [he/she] is afraid; make N\_\_\_\_\_ one who will be proud and unbending in honest defeat, and humble and gentle in victory.

"Build N\_\_\_\_\_ so that [his/her] wishbone will not be where [his/her] backbone should be; a [son/daughter] who will know Thee.

"Lead [him/her], I pray, not in the path of ease and comfort, but under the stress and spur of difficulties and challenge. Here let [him/her] learn to stand up in the storm; here let [him/her] learn compassion for those who fail.

"Build N\_\_\_\_\_ to be one whose heart will be clear, whose goal will be high, a [son/daughter] who will master [himself/herself] before [he/she] seeks to master other

men, one who will reach into the future, yet never forget the past.

"And after all these things are [his/hers], add, I pray, enough of a sense of humour, so that [he/she] may always be serious, yet never take [himself/herself] too seriously. Give [him/her] humility, so that [he/she] may always remember the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, and the meekness of true strength.

"Then I, [his/her] father, will dare to whisper, 'I have not lived in vain'."

Whether mother or father, the best thing a parent can do is to envelop their daughters and sons with powerful praying. Bequeath them with an

inheritance of godliness. That is what they need most of all – the only inheritance that will not devalue with time nor will be stolen from them.



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My son,  
do not despise the Lord's discipline  
or be weary of his reproof,  
for the Lord reproves him whom he loves,  
as a father the son in whom he delights.  
Proverbs 3:11-12



# Remembering Dads on Fathers' Day

Dr. Shantanu Dutta

My memories of my father are mixed. As a child, I largely remember him as a tyrant. He was as patriarchal as they come—strict, authoritarian, and all that. Like many parents, he wanted to live his dreams through me, but he failed. He wanted his son to be an all-rounder, but I was not. I had no aptitude or interest in sports, but I had to enroll and always came last. Similarly, I had to participate in many on-the-spot painting competitions and never won anything.

On the other hand, he had no interest in what I was passionate about—books, reading, writing, history, and culture were all discouraged. My interest in pursuing journalism was similarly nipped in the bud. Although not

said in so many words, my interests were not considered suitable for boys.

After finishing school, I went away to study and stay in a hostel, seeing much less of him. We only met during the short summer and winter breaks. Along the way, he retired from government service and moved, first to Bangalore and eventually to Kolkata. I don't know what was happening inside him because I wasn't around, but I found him gentler and mellow every vacation. He was no longer the tyrant of my schooldays. He became the ideal dad, a friend, a confidant, and a companion, a man I remember fondly. My last memory is of his death in a remote Air Force base where he

had come to visit me. He had a sudden heart attack and died. We did not have the facilities to treat him in that remote place.

I remember him throughout the year, though I am using Father's Day as an occasion to write about him now. The Lord asks us to honor our parents, and for those of us whose parents are no longer with us, remembering them and what they have taught us is a good way to honor them.

The Christian teaching on honoring fathers comes from the fifth commandment in the Bible, found in Exodus 20:12: "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." I was not born a Christian, and Father's Day was not something I remember being observed, but the importance of honoring parents was ingrained in my generation. My father wasn't someone I wanted to be around as a child, yet honoring him was important—not because he was always a great person but simply because he was my father. It is a command with promise.

Give honor to your parents, and you will be someone whose life

will be a quality existence. It is fitting that we celebrate Mother's Day and Father's Day because it causes us to set aside other things and consider what it means to honor our parents. God includes this in his commands because it runs against our human nature. We tend to fight authority, whether it be the authority of God or the authority of our parents. We want to be free. We want to do our thing.

As someone who recognizes that he hasn't been a perfect father and has been told that to his face, it is hard to write some of this. So, I chose this topic. From experience, I know that a child is not likely to find a father in God unless he sees something of God in his own father. But then, the respected Pastor Eugene Peterson writes:

*A search of Scripture reveals one rather surprising truth: there are no exemplary families [that show us a father, mother, and children], portrayed in a way that evokes admiration. There are many family stories, considerable references to family life, and sound counsel to guide the family. Still, not one model family is given for anyone to look up to in either*

*awe or envy. The biblical material consistently portrays the family, not as a Norman Rockwell painting around a Thanksgiving turkey, but as a series of broken relationships needing redemption* (Eugene H. Peterson, *Like Dew Your Youth*. Eerdmans, 1994")

Although we need mothers just as much as we need fathers, God, in His wisdom, has chosen to be compared to a father. Jesus taught us in the model prayer to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven...." (Luke 11:2). Jesus, in a parable, again compared earthly fathers to our heavenly Father: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks a fish, will he, for a fish, give him a serpent? Or will he offer him a scorpion if he asks for an egg? If you (fathers), being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11:11-13).

Fathers were the breadwinners in the Bible, so the Bible has a lot to say about the Fatherless. Fathers are important. It is so important that God makes

special provisions for fatherless homes. On behalf of the oppressed poor, the Psalmist prayed to God, "You are the helper of the fatherless" (Psalm 10:14). To the fatherless poor, the Psalmist promised, "The Lord relieves the fatherless and widow" (Psalm 146:9). In the New Testament, James said "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows" (James 1:27).

Paul interprets the command to honour our parents in two ways. Paul gave this instruction in Ephesians 6:1-3. This command has two parts. The first part addresses children still at home: "Obey your parents in the Lord for this right." The second part is for grown children who are no longer at home. Even though grown children are adults alone, they still should "Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise."

But what does it mean to "honor your father?" It doesn't mean that we have to give them public praise or throw a party and celebration for them on Father's Day. To honour may simply mean to speak politely and respectfully

to your father privately. To honor our father means you find something for which to be thankful.

Ultimately, no one but God alone fathers perfectly. Our father hunger can only be truly met by Heavenly Father. That is why we look to him to meet any needs our fathers lacked and why we look to Jesus for forgiveness for any shortcomings in our lives.

This is good news for all of us. Regardless of how poorly our earthly father loved us, our heavenly Father can make up for anything he lacked. We can have the full and complete love of a Father—to have your father hunger entirely satisfied—even if you never knew your biological dad. We can have the full and complete provision and protection of a Father even if our

earthly dad was lazy and abusive.

And the good news for all the fathers like me who have not been the kind of fathers God made us be is that Jesus died to take away our sins, change our hearts, reveal the will of God, and strengthen us to walk in righteousness beginning right now.



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**As a father shows compassion  
to his children,  
so the Lord shows compassion  
to those who fear him.  
Psalm 103:13**



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# Intercessory Prayer Points



June 2024

**1 SATURDAY** Thank God for His mercy that is new every morning. Pray that the Lord would use you greatly for the extension of His kingdom.

**2 SUNDAY** Pray for God's servants who tirelessly labour in His vineyard. Pray that they could be encourage and that God would bless the works of their hands.

**3 MONDAY** Pray for people who suffer from storms, floods, and droughts intensified by climate change. Pray that the Lord would provide them and change their situation. Pray also for leaders delegated to make important decisions that they may be guided by God.

**4 TUESDAY** Continue to pray for the persecuted believers all over the country. Pray that their love for God would even grow stronger and as a result they may continually serve Him with gratitude and sacrificially.

**5 WEDNESDAY** Pray for Zeliangrong Baptist Church, Manipur. Pray that the church would reach many dying souls and show them the way to eternal life through Christ.

**6 THURSDAY** Pray for the Voice of Christians Evangelical Church, Punjab. Pray that as they witness Christ in marketplaces and teach, preach God's Word and serve the people.

**7 FRIDAY** Pray for Tribals Transformation India, Karnataka. TTI is committed to share the Good News and to bring wholeness to the community. Pray that the ministry would effectively evangelize, plant churches, train leaders and work for community development.

**8 SATURDAY** Pray for your neighbors today. Pray that you would be good neighbours to one another in accordance with Jesus' command.

**9 SUNDAY** Pray for all the pastors who are teaching and preaching the Word of God today. Pray for Holy Spirit equipping so that they would effectively serve the church.

**10 MONDAY** Pray for the Union Church Coonoor, Tamil Nadu. Pray that the church may grow and be a channel of transformation for those who attend.

**11 TUESDAY** Pray for Peace Trust, Tamil Nadu. Pray that God would use them as His instrument as they work towards protection of environment, eradication of child labour, women empowerment etc.

**12 WEDNESDAY** Pray for the upcoming Stations of Generosity seminar scheduled on July 9-10, 2024 at New Delhi. Pray for many to sign up for this seminar.

**13 THURSDAY** Pray for the Board of Christian Community Church, Chhattisgarh. Pray that they may stand strong amidst trials and hardships and be a strong model to the believers in the state.

**14 FRIDAY** Pray for Utilize People's Potential Action for Humanities and Research (UPPAHAR) in Andhra Pradesh. Pray that God would use this ministry as his instrument to touch many lives.

**15 SATURDAY** Pray for yourself that you would love the Lord with all your heart, with all your strength. Pray also to have teachable hearts to learn and follow Christ's footsteps.

**16 SUNDAY** Pray for all the fathers to love their family and to carry out their priestly role in the family faithfully and diligently. Pray that they would lead their family with good examples.

**17 MONDAY** Pray for the Pocket Testament League, Uttar Pradesh. Pray that through them, God would reach out to many unreached people in North India and Nepal. Pray for their new believers' discipleship training to be simple, meaningful, and effective. Pray for strength and renewed commitment to serve God.

**18 TUESDAY** Pray for the Church of the Four Square, Karnataka. Pray that God would use them to plant many more churches and equip people with their short term trainings.

**19 WEDNESDAY** Pray for UDHAR Multipurpose Society, Maharashtra. Pray that God would bless the works of their hands and glorified His name through them.

**20 THURSDAY** Pray for EFI-

National Centre for Urban Transformation (NCUT). Pray that God's word would effectively spread and transform lives in cities and towns despite busy lifestyles.

**21 FRIDAY** Pray for Southern Asia Bible College, Karnataka. Pray for God's leading and empowerment for all the staff and faculty. Pray that students would be shaped and equipped to serve in God's kingdom.

**22 SATURDAY** Let's pray for ourselves that we may fully give ourselves in the service of King Jesus and influence many lives with His beauty.

**23 SUNDAY** Pray for your pastors. Pray that God may draw many people to His Son through their teachings and serving.

**24 MONDAY** Pray for the Wesleyan Church, Gujarat. Pray that God may enable and equip them to share God's extravagant love with people. Pray that people who come in contact with them would experience life in Jesus Christ with them and join their celebration.

**25 TUESDAY** Pray for Vongzawl Presbytery (PCI) in Assam. Pray that the church would continue to grow and be a transforming agent

with the help of the Holy Spirit.

**26 WEDNESDAY** Pray for the Disciples of Christ Church, Chhattisgarh. Pray for love, mercy, and goodness to overflow the members of this church. Pray that in everything, their conduct may be praise-worthy.

**27 THURSDAY** Vatsalya Ministry, Training & Development Centre for Mentally Challenged at Gujarat. Pray for the staff in this ministry to prayerfully train others who would reach out the mentally challenged people with love, concern, and care.

**28 FRIDAY** Pray for the Bible Society of India, Karnataka. Pray that love for God's word and a desire to obey it would increasingly grow in our hearts and minds. Pray that BSI would continue to serve and be an instrument in spreading the Gospel.

**29 SATURDAY** Let us pray for ourselves that our lives may be transparent and highly commendable as Christ's return is near.

**30 SUNDAY** Thank God for His goodness that endures forever. Thank Him for being with you throughout the month.



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ACCOMMODATION (AC)	Capacity / No. of people	CHARGES PER DAY
Double Room	4 rooms / 8 beds	1500/- per room
Dormitory - 3rd Flr (Left)	50 beds	500/- per bed
Dormitory - Ground Flr	10 beds	500/- per bed

CONFERENCE HALLS	Capacity / No. of people	8 Hours / 9am - 5pm	4 Hours	2 hours
1st Floor (AC)	100	10,000	6,000	3,000
3rd Floor (AC)	40	6,000	4,000	2,000
Ground Floor (Non AC)	40	7,000	5,000	2,000

## For bookings, contact

Caleb Joel

74281 91694

reachcepl@gmail.com

RZ-122, Street No.3, Vaishali,  
Palam Dabri, New Delhi,



Extra facilities will be charged additionally



Meals can be customised and will be charged additionally.

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BIBLE COLLEGE**

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### BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY

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### DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY

2 YEARS

### CERTIFICATE IN THEOLOGY

1 YEAR

ALL COURSES ARE OFFERED IN ENGLISH

### ABOUT US

APBC is wholly owned by the Andhra Pradesh District of the South India Assemblies of God committed to training women and men to serve the Lord in evangelism, church planting, preaching and teaching ministry of the Church.

### FACILITIES

The college is located in a 9-acre lush green campus away from the hustle and bustle of life, ideal for reflection, and learning, along with:

- A fully equipped library with 5000 plus volumes
- Spacious, technologically enabled classrooms
- Chapel for daily devotions and special occasions
- Cafeteria with attached kitchen
- Administrative office and guest facilities
- Separate dorms and rooms for men and women students

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