

The Christian Handbook and Troubleshooting Guide

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2Timothy 3:16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Some experiences I have gone through lately have made me really aware of how important handbooks and manuals can be when we are trying to understand a tool, a machine, a process or when we are trying to fix something. I have always made a habit of getting an auto repair manual for almost every vehicle I have owned and when it comes time to fix something, we can cut our time and effort down by just consulting the repair manual.

As I prayed and thought this week on a message, the Lord used that awareness about the value of handbooks and troubleshooting manuals to remind me that Christians have a such a book. It is here in my hands. It is God's gift to His people as a guidance document to be used for instructions and troubleshooting. It gives information that can be used to understand every part of His created system. I could spend years preaching on the various subjects covered by this handbook, but I am going to try today to just highlight a few things about this priceless guide. May the Lord just give us understanding and appreciation for it as we look at some of these things.

I. I want to first point to the fact that there is a **companion activity** to be used with The Christian Handbook and Troubleshooting Guide - **1Tim. 4:4-5** For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the **word of God and prayer**.

- Prayer needs to always go along with opening and referencing the handbook
 - The apostles were confronted with how to provide for the daily needs of their widows and orphans and needy members. They instructed the church to elect some deacons to handle it. In this event, we learn something very important about the association of prayer with the use of the Christian handbook and troubleshooting guide: **Acts 6:4** But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.
 - An important association may often be missed here because we almost always read this with a pre-conditioned mindset to think about what the apostles must mean by “ministry of the word.” The pre-conditioned thinking says, “this is about them preaching and teaching.” And it is. But I want us to step backward just a little and think about what preceded their preaching and teaching. Prayer for sure. But what else? When we think about it this way, we suddenly realize that they

STUDIED THE WORD OF GOD...the handbook (incomplete then, but still the handbook of the people of God). And what if I told you that this Greek word for “ministry of” had connotations that refer to “tending to,” or “attendance upon.” So, now the statement by them in English might be understood as, “we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to “tending to” the word.” NOW, we can make the connection between prayer and consulting the handbook.

- Prayer acts like a good customer service hotline to link us to the Holy Spirit so that He will open our understanding about what we read.
- The guidance (in **1Tim. 4:4-5**) about prayer as a companion activity to go along with your handbook also provides explanations about how to use and think about the things this handbook is about - namely the things of this created universe (“every creature (created thing) of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:”)

II. There is a way to use this handbook

- **2Cor. 4:2** But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, **nor handling the word of God deceitfully**; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
 - We must not be guilty of ignoring or leaving out part of the guidance and troubleshooting steps or of leading other people to believe there are shortcuts to success in using the handbook (nor handling the word of God deceitfully)
 - **Luke 4:4** And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every** word of God.
- Use it for daily guidance and understanding - **Acts 17:11** These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily**, whether those things were so.
 - David was busy looking into the word before even the night watchmen quit their guard duty: **Psalms 119:148** Mine eyes prevent the *night* watches, that I might meditate in thy word.
- Carry instructions from this handbook with you all the time - **Psalms 119:11** Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.
- Use the handbook as a behavior guide - **Psalms 119:9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.
 - **Psalms 119:105** Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path
 - **Ephesians 5:15-16** - See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

III. There are many things in this handbook and troubleshooting guide to help us **understand** the so-called mysteries of the universe and complexities of life - we'll look

at a few:

- When we want to study the origin of the universe, this handbook gives us the fundamental starting point and how to avoid falling for false views held by the scientific community
 - ▶ **Heb. 11:3** Through faith we understand that the **worlds were framed by the word of God**, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.
 - Then, (of course) this handbook starts us at the beginning in **Gen. 1** with “In the beginning **God created....**” and “**God said....**” (NOTE: God produced some of our handbook as He was in the act of verbally creating)
- We have guidance about how to understand and troubleshoot human relationships
 - ▶ Toward unregenerate people of the world
 - We are taught that people in real need, regardless of their spiritual condition, are in fact our neighbors (**Luke 10:29-37**)
 - ▶ Guidance for behavior toward enemies of Christ: **Mat. 7:6** Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.
 - ▶ Then again, we are given guidance about showing mercy, even to these enemies, concerning sharing basic necessities - **Rom. 12:20** Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.
 - ▶ Guidance for behavior toward people who are antagonistic to the instructions of the bible, but do not necessarily show an enmity for the things of God: **2Tim. 2:25-26** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.
 - ▶ Guidance for attitude and behavior toward fellow citizens of the Kingdom of God
 - How we should see our relationship with them - **Luke 8:21** And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.
 - Balance and fairness in our attitude and treatment of them - **James 2:1** My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.
 - What not to think toward them - **James 5:9** Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.
 - Guidance for treatment of those who have slipped - **Gal. 6:1** Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
 - Instructions for how to love them - **1Peter 1:22** Seeing ye have purified your

souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto **unfeigned love** of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently:

- Instructions for how to sacrifice for them - **1John 3:16** Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

IV. This handbook gives guidance for how to receive blessings from the Lord

- The same guidance about feeding and giving water to our enemies (that I mentioned previously from **Rom. 12:20**) is given in **Prov. 25:21-22** where the wording shows that this instruction is also guidance on how to be rewarded by the Lord: **Prov. 25:21-22** If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: 22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and **the LORD shall reward thee.**
 - ▶ **Psalms 41:1-2** Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. 2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be **blessed upon the earth**: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.
 - ▶ **Prov. 22:9** He that hath a **bountiful eye shall be blessed**; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.
 - Jesus makes the same observation about being blessed in **Luke 14:13-14** But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 **And thou shalt be blessed**; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.
 - ▶ David names a variety of ways that a person shows that he fears the Lord in **Psalms 128**, and ends it with this from **Psalms 128:4** Behold, that thus shall the man be **blessed that feareth the LORD.**
 - **Psalms 115:13** He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.
 - Psalms 128:1** Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.
 - ▶ **James 1:25** But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a **doer of the work**, this man shall be **blessed in his deed.**
 - ▶ **Psalms 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
 - ▶ **Psalms 24:4-5** He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall **receive the blessing from the LORD**, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
 - ▶ **Psalms 40:4** Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

- ▶ **Psalms 67:5-6** Let the people **praise thee**, O God; let all the people praise thee. 6 *Then* shall the earth yield her increase; *and* God, *even* our own **God, shall bless us.**
- ▶ **Prov. 8:1** Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? Pro. 8:34 Blessed *is* the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.
- ▶ **Mat. 5:3** Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Those that feel themselves to be spiritual beggars are actually heirs of the kingdom of heaven. (NOTE: In Christ's listing of the ways that people are blessed, there are two that the blessing is stated in the present tense...this one and the last one we will look at. Further, this present tense in both instances is about having possession of the kingdom of heaven.)
- ▶ **Mat. 5:4** Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Those who find reason to be saddened to the point of mourning on this earth are actually well off because they are promised comfort by the Lord
- ▶ **Mat. 5:5** Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. True humility guarantees a blessing in the form of possession of the earth.
- ▶ **Mat. 5:6** Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
- ▶ **Mat. 5:7** Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
- ▶ **Mat. 5:8** Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
- ▶ **Mat. 5:9** Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
- ▶ **Mat. 5:10** Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ▶ **Mat. 5:11-12** Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.