

Our Perfect Savior

Scripture: Hebrews 2:9–18

Code: 1606

INTRODUCTION

A newspaper article once hailed the arrival of the "Son of God": Guru Maharaj Ji, the young leader of the Divine Light Mission. But he is nothing new because he takes his place in a long line of would-be saviors of the world. They go back to men like Theudas, who tried to split the waters of the Jordan river and couldn't (Josephus, Antiquities 20.5.1). There are even modern-day "saviors" like Hitler. Someday, another individual will claim to be the world's savior, and he is known in Scripture as the Antichrist. But unfortunately for all would be saviors--and fortunately for us--there is only one perfect Savior: Jesus Christ. The apostle Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). But how can we know that Jesus Christ is, in fact, the perfect Savior? What qualifies Him? The complete answer to the validity of His claim is in Hebrews 2:9-18.

The Holy Spirit wrote Hebrews through an unknown author primarily to the Jewish people, but that does not mean it isn't for anyone else. To prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God--the mediator of a new and better covenant, the Holy Spirit must prove to the Jew that Christ is better than all the issues that accompany the Old Covenant. We've learned that the Old Covenant was mediated to men by angels. Therefore, the Holy Spirit must prove to the Jewish mind that Christ is superior to angels, which He did in the first two chapters of Hebrews.

A. The Problems

There were questions still lingering after the Holy Spirit's presentation in Hebrews 1:1--2:9.

1. How could Jesus be superior to angels?

The Holy Spirit had been attempting to prove that Jesus is better than angels. But the problem that stayed with the Jew is: How could Jesus be better than angels since He was a man who died? Angels never die, and they are certainly higher than men. The theological problem that the Jews faced was relating the humanity of Christ and His death to His superiority over angels who do not die (Luke 20:36).

Hebrews 2:9 says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower." We determined from the Greek text that the phrase "a little lower" was a connotation for time. Verse 9 is saying that Jesus became less for a brief period of time. By nature Christ is greater than angels. It was only for a little time in His incarnation that He became less to accomplish a specific purpose.

2. How could Jesus be a victim of death?

How could Jesus die if He was the Messiah--the Anointed of God? Whenever the Word of God was preached to the Jews, as in Acts 17:2-3, it was necessary for them to know why Christ had to suffer. Paul told the Corinthians that the cross was a stumbling block to the Jews (1 Cor. 1:23).

B. The Purpose

In Hebrews 2:9-18 the Holy Spirit defends the incarnation. He tells us why Jesus become lower than angels for a little time: He came to die. Those soft baby hands fashioned by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb were made to have two great nails put through them. Those pink and white chubby feet were to walk a hill and be nailed to a cross. That sacred head was made to wear a crown. His tender body wrapped in swaddling clothes would be ripped open by a spear to reveal a broken heart. The death of Christ was no accident--He was born to die.

Jesus did not lose His identity by becoming lower than angels. When God created man in his innocence, He gave him dominion over the earth. But man sinned and he immediately lost his dominion. Jesus Christ came to die to remove the curse so man could regain his dominion. So there was a definite purpose in Jesus coming to die--He came to restore the crown. But to do that He had to come as a man. Even though He was lower than angels, He accomplished something no angel could--the restoration of man.

There are five perfections that Christ's humanness and death brought about. Jesus became our substitute, our captain of salvation, our sanctifier, our conqueror over Satan, and our sympathizer. He is our perfect Savior. The death of Christ is not hard to explain at all--it was the purpose for His incarnation.

LESSON

I. OUR SUBSTITUTE (v. 9)

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."

Christ died in our place. The first and foremost reason for the incarnation is that He might taste death on behalf of every man. He came to die in my place--to be my substitute.

A. God's Choice

The prophet Ezekiel said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). The Bible lays down that same principle in the New Testament: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Sin brings death. God had an option with man: Either let man die and pay for his own sin, or allow a substitute to take man's punishment and die in his place. The latter was His design. He sent the second person of the Trinity (God humbled Himself) to earth to die a substitutionary death for me. That doctrine is important to affirm because modern liberal theology does not adhere to it. It claims that Jesus died as an example, like a martyr dying for some cause. But He died as a substitute for your death and mine.

B. Christ's Choice

1. The concept of His humiliation

For Jesus Christ to die for man, He had to become what man is. That's the purpose of the incarnation. God became man to be a substitute for man's death. Thus He freed man to live a life with God. That's how simple the gospel is. It is a stunning concept to realize that the creator of angels, the Lord of hosts, should become lower than angels for our sakes. Now that's humility! Verse 9 says that after becoming our substitute, He was lifted up to glory and honor.

2. The extent of His humiliation

Hebrews 2:9 says that Jesus became "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." Jesus came to do precisely what no angel could ever do, and that is to die. The phrase "for the suffering of death" indicates that His exit from the land of the living was not calm and peaceful; it was accompanied by outward torture and inward agony.

3. The purpose of His humiliation

a) The accomplishment

Here is the purpose of Christ's death: That He "should taste death for every man" (v. 9). He drank its bitter cup to the bottom. The death He tasted was the curse of sin. Jesus suffered the total agony of every soul in hell for all eternity in a few hours on the cross. That was the depth of His suffering. He was guilty of nothing, but He suffered for everything because He chose to be our substitute.

(1) Galatians 4:4-5--"When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." God sent His Son to redeem men.

(2) 2 Corinthians 5:15--"He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." Jesus Christ purposed to die as a substitute for every man. It is only as a result of the Son tasting death that we are free from death.

b) The analogy

Historically, kings have always had someone taste their food and drink their wine before they ever consumed it. The cup of poison that belonged to us was drained to the dregs by Jesus Christ before it could ever touch our lips. He substituted His death for ours, releasing us from sin us to live with God.

4. The motive of His humiliation

a) The provision of grace

Hebrews 2:9 tells us that God's grace moved Jesus Christ to suffer for us? Do you know what grace is? It is free, lovingkindness. What we did not deserve (salvation) we received, and what we deserved (death) we did not receive.

b) The prompting of grace

God's great, unbounded love prompted a gracious deed on our behalf. Solely on the basis of His own good pleasure and His sovereign will did Jesus die (Eph. 1:5). He did not die by the hands of men or by the deed of Satan alone, but by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23).

(1) John 10:18--Jesus said, "No man taketh [life] from me, but I lay it down of myself."

(2) 1 John 4:10--"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be

the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins."

5. The result of His humiliation

Jesus was "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). After Jesus accomplished His substitutionary death, He was exalted to the right hand of the Father and now sits on a throne to reign forever.

- a) Hebrews 5:4-5--"No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee." Christ didn't glorify Himself; God glorified Him.
- b) Philippians 2:9-10--"God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."
- c) Ephesians 1:21--Jesus Christ has been set over "all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named."

The result of Christ's humiliation was His exaltation.

The writer of Hebrews is explaining to his Jewish readers that believers don't apologize for the cross because it magnifies the Lord. That He was a man who died is no problem because He condescended to do so. Christ's humiliation and death is far from being something we are ashamed of, it is something we glory in. Jesus became a perfect substitute by becoming a man. If He had not died for us, we would die in our sins (John 8:24).

II. OUR CAPTAIN OF SALVATION (v. 10)

"For it became him [it agreed with His nature], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

God not only made all things, but He made it all for Himself because He deserves the glory. And God brought many sons to glory because His design is to bring men to Himself. Jesus had to become a man and He had to suffer and die to be the perfect provider of salvation.

A. Agreeing with God's Character

The phrase "it became him" means that what God did through Christ was consistent with His character.

1. Wisdom

God is wisdom. And the cross was a masterpiece of wisdom. God solved a problem that no finite brain or angels could hope to solve: reconciling sinful man to a holy God.

2. Holiness

God showed His hatred for sin on the cross.

3. Power

The cross was the greatest display of power that God ever gave. Christ endured in a few hours what it would take an eternity to expend on sinners.

4. Love

5. Grace

Christ's death on the cross agreed with God's grace because it was substitutionary.

6. Nature

God's work of salvation was totally consistent with His nature.

God's desire was to bring many sons to His glory. To do that, He had to tell us how to get there. But more than that, He had to have someone to take us. It wouldn't have done us a bit of good if Jesus had arrived here and left a map to heaven.

B. Blazing the Trail to God

The Greek word for "captain" in Hebrews 2:10 is archegos, which means "pioneer" or "leader." In Acts 3:15 and Acts 5:31 it's translated "prince." It is translated "captain" in many verses. It often refers to someone who does something that someone else enters into or benefits from. For example, it's used of a man who founds a family and others are born into it. It's used of a man who founds a city in which others come to live. It was commonly used of a pioneer who blazed a trail for others to follow. The archegos never stood at the rear giving orders; He was always out front blazing the trail. Christ has gone before us. He is our trail blazer.

1. The perfect pattern

a) Obedience

Hebrews 5:8-9 says, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." By His obedience Jesus blazed the trail of obedience for us to follow.

b) Suffering for others

The apostle Peter said, "Hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us" (1 Pet. 2:21).

c) Death and resurrection

Jesus said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). He also said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26).

Jesus is the Archegos of salvation. He blazed the trail to God. He didn't stay in the rear and tell us how to get there; He went out in front. All we have to do is take His hand and let Him lead us into the presence of God.

2. The perfect leader

God made Christ lower than angels for a brief time so He could come down to us, take our hand, and be the perfect leader. Only the perfect pioneer could take us into the presence of the Father. It is only when you put your hand in the nail-scarred hand of Jesus Christ that you'll ever enter into the presence of God. You'll never find your way on your own. Men have tried too long and failed.

Through death Jesus became the perfect leader. The trail got rough at the point of death. That's where we couldn't make it. But Jesus says, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). G. B. Hardy in his book Countdown: A Time to Choose [Chicago: Moody, 1971], p. 32) says that the following are the ultimate questions in the world: Has anyone ever cheated death? And if he did, did he leave the way open for me? Yes, someone did cheat death; His name is Jesus Christ. And He did leave the way open for us. All you have to do is put your hand in His and He'll lead you out of death. You'll say with the apostle Paul, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). There isn't any. Christ has given us the victory. He had to be a man to come into our world and lead us out. He had to conquer the barrier between us and God, which was sin. And He conquered it by bearing the punishment of death, thus leaving the way open to eternal life with God.

III. OUR SANCTIFIER (vv. 11-13)

A. The Position of Brotherhood (v. 11)

"For both he that sanctifieth [Christ] and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

1. Made holy in Christ

Verse 11 means that Christians are holy. You may think you're not holy, but you are. I'm not talking about your practice; I'm talking about your position: Before God you are holy. You may not always act holy, but you are in His sight. Just as a child may not always act like the son of his father, he is nonetheless still his son. The righteousness of Christ has been placed before God in your behalf, and that makes you holy. There are two truths in the New Testament: positional @truth and practical truth--what you are and what you act like. Positionally, you are holy and perfect. Colossians 2:10 says, "Ye are complete in him." Yet practically we've all got a long way to go.

2. Made one in Christ

Hebrews 2:11 says, "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Did you know that we're all one with Christ? The apostle Paul calls us joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). We are one with Christ because His righteousness is our righteousness.

3. Made brothers in Christ

As a result of being one with Christ, He's not ashamed to call us brothers. What an overwhelming truth! The Son of God calls me brother and is not ashamed to do so.

a) The price

By conquering sin through His death, Christ placed His righteousness on us in an eternal, positional sense. Thus, we became holy. He could never have done that had He not paid the penalty for sin. He had to die to be our sanctifier. The Greek word for "sanctified" is *hagiazō*, which means "to make holy." Only Jesus Christ can make a person holy.

Hebrews 10:10 says, "By which will we are sanctified [made holy] through the offering of the body of

Jesus Christ once for all." We were made holy through His sacrifice. Verse 14 says, "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Positionally, you are as pure as God is pure, righteous as Christ is righteous, and therefore entitled to be called a brother of Jesus Christ. That is a good indication of what God's grace is like. Out of love He stooped to pick us up and give us righteous equality with Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "[God] hath made [Christ], who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

b) The promotion

Hebrews 11:16 says, "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God." Can you imagine God being happy to be called your God? Do you know why? It is not because of who you are, but because of who you are in Christ. Your righteousness is His.

In Romans 1:16 the apostle Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." But isn't it sad that although God is never ashamed to call us His own, we are often ashamed to call Him ours? Who has the right to be ashamed of whom? When I realize that Jesus is not ashamed to call me His brother, and that God is not ashamed to say He is my God, that thrills my heart. It makes me well aware that I stand in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and not my own, which is at best filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). Let me add that all men are not Christ's brothers. Only those who by faith in Jesus Christ have His righteousness are related to Him.

B. The Proof of Brotherhood (vv. 12-13)

The Holy Spirit proves the brotherhood aspect by using Old Testament quotations, as He does throughout Hebrews. He quotes the words of Christ spoken to the Father in the Old Testament.

1. Christ's declaration (v. 12)

"I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church [congregation] will I sing praise unto thee."

This quote from Psalm 22:22 is a picture of Jesus Christ calling believers His brothers in the Old Testament. Psalm 22 deals with the crucifixion and the resurrection. Jesus is pictured in post-resurrection joy with His brothers. And that tells the Jewish reader that the idea of the Messiah as a brother is right out of the Old Testament. That is a convincing argument for the Jewish individual. So often in Scripture, especially in the book of Hebrews, does the writer turn to the Old Testament to corroborate truth.

2. Christ's dependence (v. 13)

"And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children whom God hath given me."

Hebrews 2:13 is a quote from Isaiah 8:17-18. Christ admits that He lives by faith, just like His brothers. Jesus Christ is our brother not in nature or power, for we are human and He is divine, but in righteousness and faith. When Jesus was in this world, He learned the obedience of faith and thus became a perfect Savior. It's a tremendous thing to realize that when we are called to walk by faith, submit ourselves, and live in dependence on God, we can follow the path Jesus walked. He said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for whatever things he doeth, these also doeth the Son in the same manner" (John 5:19).

Brotherhood with Jesus means we have His righteousness and walk as He did: by faith.

IV. OUR CONQUEROR OVER SATAN (vv. 14-15)

Someone had to break Satan's power over us. If we were to be free to live with God and experience what He has, someone had to shatter the power that held us. And what is Satan's power over men? Death. Sin is a part of it, but death is the ultimate weapon. If Satan can hang on to a man until he dies, he has him forever. So someone had to conquer death to conquer Satan.

A. Christ Removed Satan's Weapon of Death (v. 14)

"Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"

1. The dominion of death

Satan's hold on men is physical, spiritual, and eternal death. Satan knows God requires death for sin. Satan knows that all died in Adam--that death entered as a principle of life. He wants to hold onto men until they die because once they're dead, men cannot escape.

2. The destruction of death

God needed to wrest the power of death from Satan's hand. Jesus came to accomplish that purpose. But how was He to do that? Simple: conquer death. If you've got a greater weapon than Satan, then his weapon is useless. You can't fight a machine gun with a bow and arrow. If all Satan has is death, and God has something greater, then Satan's weapon is useless. Jesus provided something better than death: life. Jesus destroyed death. Notice that verse 14 says, "Through death he might destroy him." It was through death that Christ destroyed Satan's power of death. How could that happen? Because Jesus rose again proving He could conquer it. That's why He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). Jesus left the pathway open. The resurrection of Jesus Christ provides the believer with eternal life. It's the only thing that could have done it. Satan had dominion over all men in the form of death, but Jesus shattered his dominion.

The Significance of the Incarnation

Hebrews 2:14 says, "The children are partakers of flesh and blood" (emphasis added). The Greek word translated "partakers" is koinoneo, from which we get the words fellowship and communion. It refers to a partnership. We are made of flesh and blood. That's our nature. Verse 14 says, "[Christ] also himself likewise took part of the same." The Greek word translated "part" is not koinoneo but metecho, which means He took hold of something that was not His own nature. Christ is not flesh and blood by nature, but He willingly took hold of it that He might die in our place.

By rising from the dead, Jesus smashed Satan's power. Revelation 1:18 says that Jesus Christ has

"the keys of hades and of death." Jesus became the death of death. S. W. Gandy said,

He hell in hell laid low,
Made sin, He sin overthrew,
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death by dying slew.

Jesus Christ conquered death in His resurrection and left the way open for us. But He had to be a man to do it.

B. Christ Released the Saints from Fear of Death (v. 15)

"And deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

The thing that creates panics more than anything else is death. All through their lives men are subject to the bondage of the fear of death. It's a horrible fear--the king of terrors. But when you receive Jesus Christ, death holds no fear. We're released from the bondage of our fear. You can actually look forward to death in that sense. The apostle Paul said, "To live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). It's a promotion. He didn't mind staying, but he knew that to be with Christ is far better (vv. 22-23). We say with Paul, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). Death holds no fear for believers. It simply releases us into the presence of Jesus Christ. We are no longer in fear of death because Jesus has conquered it. We've placed our hand in the hand of the captain of our salvation, and He'll lead us out of the grave. But He never could have done it if he hadn't become lower than angels for a little while.

V. OUR SYMPATHIZER (vv. 16-18)

A. His Nationality (v. 16)

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham."

What's the significance of that? He didn't come to redeem angels. If He was to redeem man, He had to become a man. So He took on Himself the form of Abraham's seed and became a Jew. There are songs that say Jesus is black, or Jesus is white, or that He's all colors. But Jesus was a Jew. Someone once wrote, "How odd of God to choose the Jews." (He concluded, "Not so, you know, His Son was one.") But if He'd chosen another race, people would ask, "Why did He choose them?" The Bible says that God chose them because He loved them (Deut. 7:7-8).

B. His Mission (vv. 17-18)

"Wherefore, in all things it behooved him to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

For in that he himself had suffered being tempted, he is able to help them that are tempted."

1. Reconciliation

Jesus became a man because He came to reconcile men. The high priest's job was to represent men before God. Jesus came to take men into the presence of God.

2. Sympathy

Jesus also came to help those who are tempted. He wanted to feel everything we've ever felt that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest. He came not only to save us, but also to sympathize with us.

a) Our dependence on Christ

Timothy had many problems. Paul told him, "Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee" (2 Tim. 1:6). Timothy needed to fan the flame a little. He was also bothered by heretics and by those who were upset at him because he was young. Paul said, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example [to] the believers" (1 Tim. 4:12). Timothy was feeling defeated, and he may have had an ulcer because Paul said, "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake" (1 Tim. 5:23). Timothy did have many problems, but Paul's final advice was, "Remember ... Jesus Christ, of the seed of David" (2 Tim. 2:8). One of the things Timothy needed to remember was Christ's humanity and know that whatever he was experiencing, Jesus had experienced before him.

When the going gets tough, you can get down on your knees and say, "Lord, You remember what You went through when You were here. I'm going through it now." Know that He knows what you're going through. And be encouraged by this: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make the way to escape" (1 Cor. 10:13). Isn't it wonderful to be able to lean on someone who has been through a problem like yours, knowing that he has experienced victory? I'm sure you know how it feels to tell someone about your problem when they can't relate to it--you feel like you wasted your time telling them about it. But when you find someone who can understand, you feel like you've found a rock to lean on.

b) His degree of temptation

Jesus didn't just arrive in the world and die; He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He wanted to be a merciful, faithful, and sympathetic high priest. Jesus was hungry, thirsty, and overcome with fatigue. He slept. He was taught. He grew. He loved. He was astonished. He marvelled. He was glad, angry, indignant, and sarcastic. He was grieved and troubled. He was overcome by future events. He exercised faith. He read Scripture. He prayed all night. He sighed in His heart when He saw another man in illness. Tears fell from His eyes when His heart ached. He felt everything you'll ever feel, but He felt it to a degree that one who never gives in to temptation feels. He felt temptation to its extreme on every occasion. Most of us never know what degree temptation can go to because we succumb about three-quarters of the way down the line at best. Jesus never sinned. He took the full shot of every temptation that ever came His way, and He felt every pain that you and I will ever feel and more. Why did He do that? That we might have a merciful and faithful high priest who can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15).

I don't want a cosmic God who is indifferent to me. I want someone who knows where I hurt and where I feel pain. So Jesus had to become lower than angels to be the kind of Savior you can go to for sympathy in addition to salvation." Jesus is our perfect Savior.

Focusing on the Facts

1. What were two questions that might still have been on the mind of the Jew even after the discussion in Hebrews 1:1--2:9?
2. What are five perfections that Christ's humanness and death brought about?
3. What were God's two options for dealing with man's sin? Which option did He choose?
4. What kind of death did Christ endure?
5. What was the purpose of Christ's death?
6. What was the motive behind Christ's death on the cross?
7. According to Hebrews 2:10, it agreed with God's character to make Christ the captain of our salvation through suffering. What aspects of God's character did it agree with?
8. Explain how Christ is the captain of our salvation.
9. Who makes the Christian holy? Explain (Heb. 2:11).
10. How are Christians made holy (Heb. 10:10)?
11. Why is God not ashamed to be called our God, or Christ to call us brothers?
12. Explain how the Holy Spirit proves the Christian's brotherhood with Christ in Hebrews 2:12-13?
13. What is the ultimate weapon that Satan holds over man?
14. How did Christ destroy Satan's weapon (Heb. 2:14)?
15. What creates panic more than anything else? What is the only way a person can effectively deal with it (Heb. 2:15)?
16. Explain how Jesus can sympathize with our problems (Heb. 2:17-18).

Pondering the Principles

1. As the captain of our salvation, Christ not only blazed a trail to God, but also set a pattern that we can follow. Look up the following verses: John 15:9-13; 1 Peter 1:21; 1 John 2:29. Determine what pattern of behavior Jesus established in each of those verses. How well are you following the pattern

Jesus set? Memorize one verse each day for the next three days. As you memorize, be thinking of ways you can follow that pattern, and then do it.

2. Read Romans 8:15-17 and Hebrews 2:11. All believers are children of God, brothers of Christ, and joint heirs with Christ. Those special relationships bring about mighty blessings in the life of a believer. To find out what those blessings are, read Ephesians 1 and record every blessing that comes with being in the family of God.

3. One of the things that can be most destructive to Christians is times of discouragement. That's when we really need someone to lean on, but sometimes a loving brother or sister in Christ are not available. But even if they are, Christ wants you to lean on Him first because He is the best one to deal with your pain. To help you through such times, memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it" (NASB).

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