

Sample of the “Principles to Live By” by Dr. Gene Getz, author of *Life Essentials Interactive Study Bible*

Woven throughout the Life Essentials Interactive Study Bible is 1500 Principles to Live By author by Dr. Gene Getz. These principles, presented with written commentary and questions for “Reflection and Response,” also contain an interactive QR code which allows the reader to access Dr. Getz’s teaching on that particular principle (each video is approximately ten minutes). Each of the 1500 principles to live by are arranged under 241 major topics at the beginning of the Bible.

1 KINGS PRINCIPLE – MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT FOR FELLOW CHRISTIANS

To continue to grow spiritually and to do God’s work fervently, we should seek encouragement from fellow Christians.

It’s understandable why Elijah felt he was the only one still fighting evil. To a great extent, he was alone during the three-and-a-half-year drought. God understood this problem in Elijah’s life. In his overall plan, the Lord knows that no individual is strong enough physically, psychologically, or spiritually to handle his work alone, especially for a lengthy period of time and under intense pressure. So to help Elijah continue to heal from his depression, the Lord reminded him that there were “seven thousand in Israel” who remained faithful to God (v. 18).

This is why Jesus chose twelve men to launch the church. This is why he proceeded to unveil that wonderful mystery: the body of Christ (Eph 3:3-12). We are “members of one another” (Rm 12:5). Together, we are called to be “salt” and “light” in this world (Mt 5:13-14). To accomplish this goal, we are to meet regularly to encourage one another, especially as we see the coming of Christ drawing near (Heb 10:24- 25).

Reflection and Response

How does being a part of a functioning and caring body of believers help us overcome discouragement and bouts with depression? (See 1Co 12:24-26.)

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ROMANS PRINCIPLE – TWO-DIMENSIONAL LOVE

To live in God’s will, not only are we to accept one another but we are to also instruct one another.

When Paul wrote that the Roman Christians were to “accept one another” (v. 7) just as Christ had accepted them, he was summarizing what he had just written about relationships among immature and mature believers. However, he quickly balanced this mutual acceptance with mutual instruction, or more literally, mutual admonishment. In other words, Paul was teaching them—and us—that we are both to accept fellow Christians unconditionally and also to lovingly confront sinful attitudes and actions. That is to say, true biblical love does not give believers permission to use their position in Christ to manipulate others or to rationalize sinful patterns in their lives. (See 1 Samuel Principle 40 - Personal Confrontation, p. 362.)

This raises a very important question. What qualifies any Christian to admonish another Christian?

First, we are to accept others unconditionally, just as Christ accepted us when we became believers. If we do, we will earn the right to be heard. Second, we must be living in God’s will ourselves, which Paul described as being “full of goodness” (v. 14). This, of course, does not mean perfection, since it would disqualify any one of us from admonishing others. It does mean, however, that we have reached a level of maturity in our lives that Paul called being “spiritual” (Gl 6:1-2). (See Galatians Principle 11 -

The Process of Restoration, p. 1516.) Third, we must understand clearly what God's will really is—that is, we are to be “filled with all knowledge” (Rm 15:14). When we are, we'll be able to differentiate between the absolutes in Scripture and those things that are areas of freedom.

Reflection and Response

How do these twin concepts of accepting and admonishing apply to parenting?

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MATTHEW PRINCIPLE – REJECTION

We should not be surprised when those closest to us reject the gospel and us as well.

Luke summarized what happened when Jesus returned to his hometown. When the Lord claimed to be the Messiah and the one Isaiah prophesied would come, those who were listening became intensely angry and literally attempted to take his life by throwing him over a cliff on the outskirts of Nazareth (Lk 4:16-30).

It was in this context that Jesus made a statement that has become a very popular proverb: “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his household” (Mt 13:57). We are not told the extent that his immediate family was involved in this treacherous attempt to take his life, but they evidently didn't defend Jesus's actions. In fact, John reminded us that as Jesus continued his ministry—when hostility and attempts on his life were increasing—“not even his brothers believed in him” (Jn 7:5). (See John Principle 15 - Family Tensions, p. 1358.)

Reflection and Response

In what ways have you seen or experienced rejection, particularly from unbelieving family members? Why does this happen?

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1 CHRONICLES PRINCIPLE – BUILDING GOD'S ETERNAL KINGDOM

As we live our lives, we should have a primary goal to build God's eternal kingdom, not our own.

David was called to build an earthly kingdom. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Mt 6:33). We are not promised long life or years of service, but if we are faithful, we are promised eternal rewards.

When Paul faced death at the hands of an evil Roman emperor, he wrote to Timothy,

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time for my departure is close. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing. (2Tm 4:6-8)

What forceful statements—and what a powerful epitaph!

Reflection and Response

Though most of us will not be martyrs because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, how should the witness of New Testament believers impact the way we live our lives?

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ROMANS PRINCIPLE – SIN'S DEVASTATING RESULTS

In view of the power of sin, we should not be surprised how human beings progressively violate God's moral laws and suffer the consequences.

In this section of his letter, Paul not only explained what was happening in the Roman Empire, but also what has happened to all societies since sin entered the world in the garden of Eden. Furthermore,

from our vantage point, we can see how Paul's description of human nature was also prophetic regarding all future societies and cultures, including our own.

Paul was teaching that when people know the truth regarding God's will but choose to live unrighteous lives, they more and more suppress that truth. For example, parents who choose to violate God's will negatively affect their children. Apart from some kind of miraculous intervention, these children will choose values that are even more sinful. This principle of deterioration will then become pervasive throughout the entire culture as each generation declines even more. (See Judges Principle 5 - Modeling and Teaching, p. 288.)

At some point during this downward spiral, God in his perfect righteousness and anger against sin allows his most significant and highest creations to become victims of their own evil choices. Note the decline:

- God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts to sexual impurity. (Rm 1:24)
- God delivered them over to disgraceful passions.(v.26)
- God delivered them over to a corrupt mind [which leads to] all unrighteousness. (vv. 28-29)

Reflection and Response

How have we seen this process at work in our own culture?

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JOHN PRINCIPLE – SEEKING THE TRUTH

Even though we may be in the process of discovering who Jesus really is, we should invite others to join us in this exciting adventure.

We see this principle illustrated several times in these opening scenes. John the Baptist eventually discovered Jesus's true identity and introduced him to others as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (vv. 29-31).

John proceeded to introduce two of his own disciples to Jesus. These men spent a day with the Savior and became convinced that he was "the Messiah." Andrew, initially one of John's disciples, in turn introduced his brother, Peter, to Jesus (vv. 40-41).

We next meet Philip, who may have been the unnamed disciple who also spent the day with Jesus. He in turn introduced his friend, Nathanael, to the Lord (vv. 44-45). Though Nathanael initially doubted Philip's declaration, through a divine encounter he became convinced that Jesus was "the Son of God" (v. 49). (See Genesis Principle 43 - A Born-Again Experience, p. 40.)

Even though these men confessed belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, they did not have a full understanding of who this God-man really was—and is! Yet, they asked others to join them in their search for truth. God certainly honored their quest and their desire to help others discover who Jesus really is. Together, those men eventually became true believers.

Reflection and Response

How would you explain where you are in your own spiritual journey? Who might you invite to join you in your search for truth?

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JAMES PRINCIPLE – HEAVENLY AND EARTHLY WISDOM

To gain God's wisdom, we must walk by the Spirit and not in the flesh.

James introduced this letter by reassuring these Jewish believers that if they lacked wisdom, they could receive it if they—by faith and without wavering—asked God to provide it. With this wisdom, they

would be able to endure trials and, at the same time, grow and mature spiritually. (Review James Principle 2 - Wisdom from Above, p. 1619.)

At the midpoint in his letter, James elaborated, showing that God's wisdom and Christlike living are inseparable. Conversely, earthly wisdom always accompanies worldly attitudes and actions.

We know that divine wisdom is activated in our lives by the Holy Spirit when we present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice (Rm 12:1-2). By contrast, carnal Christians manifest the wisdom of this world activated by self and Satan, resulting in ambivalent and double lives. Believers who are living according to the flesh are "double-minded" and "unstable in all [their] ways," causing their prayers to be ineffective (Jms 1:7-8).

Reflection and Response

How does this section in James's letter compare with Paul's description of the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit in his letter to the Galatians?

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PSALMS PRINCIPLE – PROPER FOCUS

When we lead others in worship, we are to help them focus on God rather than on ourselves.

The last five psalms in the Psalter (Pss 146–150) begin and end with the word "Hallelujah," often translated "Praise the Lord."

This principle applies to all those who lead in worship. Thus, the psalmist wrote, "Do not trust in nobles, in a son of man, who cannot save" (146:3). Clearly, we need leaders, but they are to point us to God and our Savior. Thus, Paul had one goal, which he stated plainly to the Corinthian Christians who were focusing on their leaders rather than on Jesus Christ:

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, announcing the mystery of God to you, I did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom. I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. (1Co 2:1-2)

Reflection and Response

How can worship leaders point people to Jesus Christ rather than to themselves?

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2 CHRONICLES PRINCIPLE – THE PERIL OF FAME

When leaders become successful and well known, they should constantly be on guard against engaging in actions motivated by arrogance.

Uzziah made a great start as king. However, when "his fame spread even to distant places" (v. 15), he lost sight of the one who had made him successful. He violated worship restrictions by offering incense in the temple—a task specifically given by the Lord to the priests. We see the depth of Uzziah's pride when he was confronted with his sinful actions. Rather than repenting he became intensely angry, and he was severely punished by God.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that events are recorded in the Old Testament to warn us against the root of most sin: prideful thoughts and actions. Paul warned, "whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to fall" (1Co 10:12). (See 1 Corinthians Principle 22 - Lessons from Scripture, p. 1479.)

However, Paul went on to share the good news:

No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide a way out so that you may be able to bear it. (1Co 10:13)

Reflection and Response

Fame and fortune are not wrong in themselves, but what steps must all Christians take to avoid Uzziah's prideful heart?

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