How many of you ladies who cook frequently use recipes? Why do you use a recipe? Have you ever forgotten a critical ingredient when making something?

Some of you men are in the building trade. What is this? If you are going to build a house, you need blueprints, the plans, instructions. Why do you use blueprints -- so you can do it right. What happens when you do it wrong?

How to Always Do the Right Thing -- that's what the Bible is about from beginning to end. The Bible begins with the story of the first married couple in a garden paradise of Eden. They make a bad choice, disobey God and do the wrong thing.

In the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible Jesus says, Revelation 22:7 “Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book.”

The first principle for always doing the right thing is to

1st CAREFULLY FOLLOW GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS.

God’s Word the Bible is the instruction manual, the “how to” book, our guide and recipe or blueprint for life. The ideas of right and wrong, obedience, and disobedience appear on almost every page. If we want to do the right thing, we’ve got to study the book.

If you have a copy with you this morning, printed copy or digital, let’s begin with Joshua 1:8. God has just installed a new leader for the nation of Israel. Moses, the one God used to bring his people out of bondage in Egypt has died.

Now God has chosen a new leader named Joshua. Joshua was stepping into giant shoes and he knew it. But task ahead of him was different. This was the military portion – leading a slave nation on a military conquest of the Promised Land.
God used Moses to write the first five books of the Bible, the part the Jews all the Pentateuch; Penta meaning five. God tells Joshua, this new leader:

“Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.”

The entire territory is theirs; from the Negev Desert to the Lebanon Mountains, from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea. God had promised it to their ancestors.

And God promised his unfailing presence. In v.5 he said, “No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.”

All that is required of Joshua is full uncompromising obedience. To insure guaranteed success he would need continual study and meditation on the instructions God had given through Moses.

This is the same thing God requires of us—our uncompromising obedience. The guarantee of success is ours as well. God has promised his faithful and powerful presence with us too. We need only to keep our continual focus on Him and his Word so that we will not stray from His path.

Now why is this important? Because doing the right thing, obeying God ultimately leads to blessing, while disobedience, doing the wrong thing always has negative consequences.

Thus it behooves us, it is to our advantage to learn how to do the right thing all the time. Here is a second principle for always doing the right thing.

2nd ALLOW GOD TO REVEAL HIS WISDOM.

In 1 Corinthians 2:7 the NT Apostle Paul says, “The wisdom we speak of is the secret wisdom of God which was hidden in former times, though he made it for our benefit before the world began.”

These Corinthian Christians were still hung up on men’s wisdom, the Greek philosophers. Though in Paul’s time Corinth was under the rule of the Romans, Hellenistic influences were still strong.
Paul is arguing that man’s wisdom and man’s philosophy is nothing compared to God’s.

And God’s wisdom is hidden, unknowable by human means. It is only known through the Spirit. These are the “deep secrets” “mysteries” of God Paul mentions in v.10. Only we who have God’s Holy Spirit can know them.

Jesus said in John 16:13, “When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.” James, the half brother of Jesus said, “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you.” James 1:5

3rd BE PROACTIVE ABOUT YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE.

Ephesians 4:22-24 “Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.”

Paul is giving us extremely practical “how to’s” for living the Christian life. The old nature has never been anything but sinful and wicked, self-centered and full of greed and impurity.

It’s not the well you want to go to when you are thirsty, empty and tired. That’s the former way of seeking renewal and refilling. It is like drinking salt water – greed and lust never satisfy.

They trick and deceive you. They only make you more thirsty and even sick. The Holy Spirit stands ready to truly renew, refill and re-energize you.

We must go back to the closet and choose to put on your new nature. You were created to be like God, truly righteous and holy. Turning to the Spirit instead of the old sin nature means, breaking old habits and intentionally starting new ones.

It means refusing to be deceived and misled and paving a highway that leads to righteousness and godliness. Construct concrete barriers blocking the old paths.

Intentionally choose a new way of life. Install flashing colored sign pointing to the right road.
Thank God for being willing to meet you at your point of need and for offering that which is truly satisfying, nourishing and strength building, making you more like Jesus.

How many of you SOAP or have a personal quiet time on a simi regular basis, raise your hand? Keep them up, please. How many are in a quad or a triad, or other small group, Sunday school class or Wednesday night discipleship class.

Now I’m not trying to disparage or denigrate any of you that didn’t raise your hand because you might be helping in AWANA or attending CBS or something else, my point is, I want to applaud you for getting proactive about your spiritual development.

I’m glad that you all are here this morning – that says something about your intentions. But we can’t just leave this up to chance.

We have a number of young men from this congregation who have recently gone to boot camp. Why?

Because they joined the military service and they need to be ready to defend this country if called upon. They need to be ready to go to battle. Last week Dan Schar and his daughter, Sherry talked to us about Spiritual Warfare.

We all need to be ready to do spiritual battle. It’s not “if” we get attacked because we will be every day. Get proactive.

4th LOOK AT THE WORLD FROM GOD’S POINT OF VIEW.

Jesus in Mark 8 tells his disciples, “You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s...If you want to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross, and follow me. If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will find true life.” Mark 8:33-35

I read the story this week of Marion Mill. Marion was literally a princess, born in a fairy tale castle in Hungary. Her first spoon was solid gold. She grew up and was sent to school in Vienna to study acting.

There she met and fell in love with a young aspiring actor named Otto. Otto and Marion married and in 1935 Otto was hired by Twentieth Century-Fox and the couple moved to Hollywood, CA.
There, as they “set up house,” and Otto was began to rise in the film industry as a movie director. We now know as the late internationally famous Otto Preminger.

Marion’s beauty, wit, and irresistible charm brought her everything a woman desires. But Otto’s princess could not handle the fast life of Hollywood.

She got into alcohol, drugs and then numerous affairs. Her life and lifestyle became so sordid, even for Hollywood, that Otto Preminger divorced Marion.

She tried to take her own life three times, unsuccessfully, and finally moved back to Vienna. There at a party she met a doctor, named Albert Schweitzer, the well-known medical doctor, musician, philosopher, theologian and missionary to Africa.

Schweitzer was home on leave from his hospital in Lambarene, Africa. Marion was so fascinated by Schweitzer that she asked him if she could meet with him. For almost six months, she had a standing appointment with Dr. Albert Schweitzer weekly.

At the end of that time Schweitzer was scheduled to go back to Africa, and Marion begged him to let her join him in the mission. Schweitzer agreed.

Marion, the young princess, who was born in a palace went to a little village in Africa, and spent the rest of her life emptying bed pans and making bandages to wrap the putrid sores on the poverty-stricken Africans.

She wrote an autobiography of her life titled All I Want is Everything. In her book she quoted Albert Schweitzer saying, “There are two kinds of people. There are the helpers, and the non-helpers. I thank God He allowed me to become a helper, and in helping, I found everything.”

Peter in Mark 8 attempts to dissuade Jesus for the radical path he was on that he knows will lead to his death. Christ’s response was the most drastic demand yet for his disciples – a complete abandonment of self and personal ambition and a willingness if necessary to lay down their lives for him and the Gospel.
The **disciples** had already **demonstrated** extreme **willingness** to follow him—leaving **vocations** and **families** but evidently there was still a **residual** of **self** in their ambition.

Ultimately **eleven** of the twelve **proved willing** to lay down their lives for the Gospel. The **call** to Christ’s disciples **today** is the **same standard** of commitment. How far are **you** willing to go?

How much are you willing to **sacrifice**? Can you **turn away** from **everything** for the sake of his Kingdom? If we want the **true life** his is offering, if you want **everything**, you must **abandon** every pursuit **except** the life **only He** can give.

Now I’ve talked about **obedience** and doing the **right thing** as **individuals**, but God has a **similar requirement** for **nations**.

**Nations** need to

**5th LISTEN TO HIS PROPHETS.**

Just a little **history** about the **ancient** nation of **Israel** – under King **David** Israel became a **dominant military** power in its part of the world. David was a **brilliant military leader**.

When **David died**, his son **Solomon** became king and **God** gave the nation a time of great **peace and prosperity**.

**But** following Solomon, the **nation divided**. Solomon’s son **Rehoboam** imposed **oppressive** policies on the nation causing the **northern tribes** rebel and **secede**. They chose a man name **Jeroboam** to be their king and took the name **Israel**.

The **Southern** Kingdom remained **loyal** to **Rehoboam** took the name **Judah** and the **two** kingdoms **co-existed** for the next **200** years. The **northern** kingdom was call **Israel** and the **southern**, **Judah**.

In the **OT** books of **Kings** and **Chronicles** you can **read** the stories of the **kings** of both the northern and southern **kingdoms**. Both kingdoms **strayed** further and further away from their **historic commitment** to God—**the God** who brought them out of **slavery** and **established** them as a **nation**.
God had promised that as long as they remained faithful to the covenant he had established with them, he would be their God and they would be his people, and they would continue to enjoy his blessing and provision.

But, they were clearly warned, if they disobeyed his covenant, began worshipping false gods, God’s hand of blessing would be removed and they would suffer the consequences.

Many of the kings that followed were selfish and ungodly men leading their respective nations into rebellion and idolatry. God sent numerous prophets to warn the kings and the nations to repent and return to God.

Periodically they would, and God would mercifully forgive them and bring blessing again to their land, but these spiritual awakenings were generally short-lived.

Eventually, the northern kingdom fell in 722 BC and Sargon of Assyria reportedly carried off 27,290 Israelites into captivity. The Southern kingdom lasted another 135 years before falling to Babylon and king Nebuchadnezzar.

Though the nations had been conquered and many of their leaders killed or taken away in captivity, the nations remained serf-states paying taxes to their conquering nations.

In the last chapter of 2 Chronicles, chapter 36 we hear the last whimpering cries of a once great and illustrious nation. Zedekiah is the final king. Let me read just two verses, 12&21.

“He (Zedekiah) did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and he refused to humble himself when the prophet Jeremiah spoke to him directly from the LORD….So the message of the Lord spoken through Jeremiah was fulfilled. The land finally enjoyed its Sabbath rest, lying desolate until the seventy years were fulfilled, just as the prophet had said.”

The tragic and final end of Judah’s earthly kingdom had come. And the destruction came at the hands of army of Babylon, the ancient city of the Chaldeans.

Abraham, the man known in the OT as God’s friend, was called out of that country, from Ur of the Chaldees. God took him into a covenant relationship with himself.
Now his degenerate seed are being carried back to that country again, signifying that they had forfeited all the kindness they had enjoyed for the forefather’s sake.

The benefits and blessings of that covenant into which he was called--all was now undone.

The city was completely destroyed. Everything of value was demolished or carted off. The temple, the king’s palace, all other buildings and even the walls, demolished.

All this happened just as the prophets had warned. Ezekiel in Ez.12 precisely described the king’s end. He said that Zedekiah would leave Jerusalem through a hole in the wall but that he would be captured and taken to the land of Babylon, but that he would never see it.

That’s sounds a bit strange – he would be taken to Babylon but that he would never see it. But prophecies are sometimes like that. They don’t make sense or sound illogical. However, when Nebuchadnezzar set siege to the city, and there was finally no hope of victory, Zedekiah abandoned the city through a hole in his garden wall. But he was chased and captured, bound in chains and his eyes gouged out before he was taken to Babylon.

It all happened just as God had warned. God’s credit rating, if you’ve ever wondered, is a perfect 850 – he has never failed to deliver on a promise or fulfill a prophecy. Everything he says will happen – happens. We dare not take his words lightly or flippantly disregard his warnings.

6th PRAY FOR GODLY LEADERS.

Proverbs 28:2 “When there is moral rot within a nation, its government topples easily. But with wise and knowledgeable leaders, there is stability.”

Solomon was in a unique position to observe nations and their leaders. God had given King David military victories over almost all surrounding nations.

Now Solomon, David’s son inherits a kingdom that sees 40 years of peace and abundant blessing. And also God granted Solomon exceptional wisdom. Solomon records distilled wisdom in the book of Proverbs.
His warning in 28:2 is of particular importance to the United States in this time. We have been burdened with leaders who adopt and support immoral positions that seem based on nothing more than the amount of campaign contributions they will generate.

Our country is headed toward unprecedented depravity and decadence. We have abandoned the sacredness of marriage and family. We are sacrificing the innocent unborn on the altar of convenience.

We have jettisoned honesty and integrity for campaign expedience—whatever it takes to win. As David said in Ps 60:11, “all human help is useless.” God is our only hope.

Finally, if we are to do what is right we must

7TH PUT FAITH IN ACTION.

Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter.”

Jesus is just concluding a three-chapter sermon that he might have titled “Kingdom Citizenship.” In it he teaches about be-attitudes, salt and light, the law, anger, lust, divorce, revenge, loving enemies, giving, prayer, fasting, money, worry, judging others, the way to heaven and furtfulness.

He concludes with a powerful illustration about the wisdom of obedience, doing what it right, and the foolishness of ignoring his instructions. It’s like the difference in building a house on rock or on sand.

Christianity without obedience is Christianity without Christ. Too often those who claim to be Christ followers believe that all they have to do is say “I believe!”

We teach and rightly so all these wonderful truths about grace and mercy and forgiveness and love, but people somehow hear that all they have to do is accept these and they don’t really have to follow Jesus.

They’ve made a commitment to a set of religious facts about a religious figure thinking this is just a head game. The test for authentic conversion isn’t just doctrinal, it’s also behavioral.
Someone suggested that we are like **gun collectors**. We buy a Bible, go to church, take good notes, sing the songs but we never go out and shoot anything.

We have to do more than just talk about our faith. We have to share it with those who don’t know. That’s obedience. That’s **doing** the right thing, not just **knowing** the right thing.