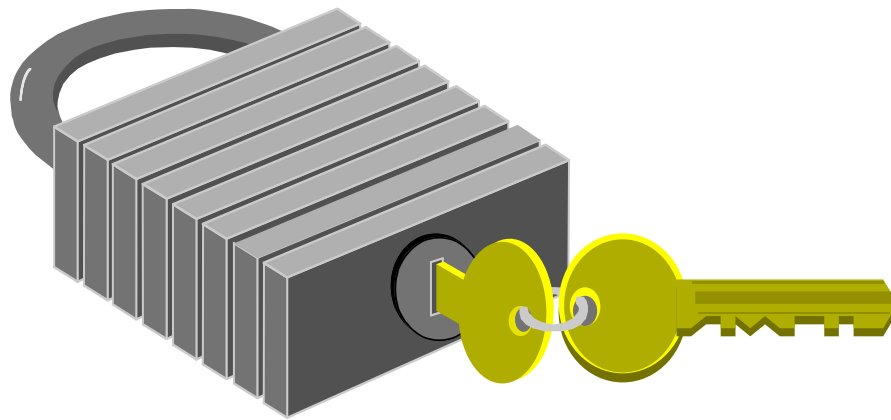


CHRISTIAN YOUTH KEYS



**DO YOU HAVE THE KEY THAT OPENS THE
LOCK TO CHRISTIAN YOUTH SUCCESS?
IF NOT, *CHRISTIAN YOUTH KEYS* ARE GUARANTEED TO FIT AND
OPEN THE LOCKS THAT MAY BE GRIPPING YOU.**

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I. BEING ONE WITH GOD

How can a group of Christian Youth be one with God?

Before answering this question, let's understand that the number one in this context does not refer to a literal number, but consensual believers make up the one. As Christian Youth consenting and doing the will of God, you become one with God and not one as a number.

The Holy Bible is the rulebook and reads that, We all walk by the same rule (*Philippians 3:16*). We can only be together with God when we are believers in God. The scripture reads: All that believed were together (*Acts 2:44*). This does not insinuate that all Christian Youth will always see issues the same way and live happily ever after. Christian Youth will be involved in discrepancies and even be exposed to troubles. The scripture reads: In the world ye shall have tribulation.... (*St. John 16:33*). The tribulation may come from both internal and external sources. Sometimes your troubles may be self-inflicted; meaning you create them all by yourself. Have you heard the saying that, "You are your worse enemy?" How true! On the other hand, you can do all of the right things and still have troubles. Although the troubles may stem from an internal source (maybe another group member), by and large you have external sources working against you as well.

Now to answer the question, is it possible to be one with God? Yes. Only when you behold God as your first and foremost priority. So, how Christian Youth can be one with God is to put God first.

II. SEEK YE FIRST

Accept the Holy scripture directive, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.... (*St. Matthew 6:33*). Let's take a more in-depth study on the "Seek ye first" directive. What does it really mean?

Christian Youth should establish priorities in life early on rather than later, perhaps after undue pressures and challenges are at hand. For example, renting an apartment, cohabiting, fornicating and having a child out of wedlock will definitely create undue pressures and chaos, and not be pleasing to God. The situations mentioned in this example are certainly not prioritized in a way that puts God first. On the other hand, seeking marriage as your foremost priority can likewise result in a devastating outcome. Christian Youth can take charge and establish their

own priorities. It is wise to pray and ask God to bless with a spouse only after seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. God has no need for your services, and by searching chat rooms, Internet and other means of making acquaintance for a partner, only indicate that you have doubts of God knowing who is best for you.

The Bible gives a passage for which you can glean an understanding; Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you (*St. Matthew 6:33*). The natural things are important, but must be prioritized. Pretend you are twenty-one years old. Here is something you can do. Place a number next to each item in terms of its priority, with 1 being the most and 8 the least important priority:

- ___ Seek God for marriage partner
- ___ Get a job
- ___ Buy or rent a home
- ___ Have a child
- ___ Pay tithes and offerings
- ___ Buy a new or used vehicle
- ___ Repent, be baptized in Jesus name, receive Holy Ghost
- ___ Do God's will

As Christian Youth, you can take full charge and responsibility for your actions. God will not force you to do or not to do anything. The choices you make as Christian Youth must be made to please God first. God has willed spiritual strength to the Christian Youth so that they can grow up as a vessel unto honor (*2 Timothy 2:21*). Seek ye first, has a direct regard to one's spiritual life, but does not discount the fact that certain natural needs exist.

The Scripture reads: But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (*Philippians 4:19*). Therefore, your need is important to God, but by far the greater need is the spiritual.

If you are earnestly living and seeking to be one with God, you will be won with God.

III. A GODLY RELATIONSHIP

Before Christian Youth can have a Godly relationship with others and begin to witness to others it is a necessity to first have a relationship with Jesus Christ. The scripture reads, But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (*1 John 1:7*).

How can you effectively witness to others about Jesus Christ if you have not established a spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ? It is strongly suggested that any Christian Youth desiring to establish a relationship with others be a light by walking after the spirit and not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

Your relationship with others must represent God pleasing behavior. Is God pleased with Christian Youth having a relationship of fornication? Is God pleased with Christian Youth keeping company with sinners? Of course not! But this isn't to say that you cannot talk with and do good unto sinners. The scripture reads: As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith (*Galatians 6:10*). You can do good unto all men, and still not establish a relationship as worldly friends do.

Witnessing is usually thought of in terms of going out and talking with or passing out tracts and literature to others. While this depicts a valid definition of witnessing, has it ever occurred to you Christian Youth that you are witnessing before a word is ever spoken or any literature is distributed to others? As people visually see you they often read you and put interpretations to what they read. The scripture reads: Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: (*2 Corinthians 3:2*). Negatively or positively, right or wrong, good or bad, is how others perceive you as a witness. If you display erroneous behavior you are witnessing to others in a reproachful way. Although, you are seen visually with the eye, be mindful also that you are seen in the minds of others by what they hear you speak. The scripture reads: Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few (*Ecclesiastes 5:2*); and, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (*St. Matthew 5:16*). These two scriptures support the fact that what is seen is so important even before you speak. The scripture reads: I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully (*1 Timothy 5:14*). An occasion can be seen, heard or perceived.

In having a relationship with others you must realize that you have full control and responsibility for visual and audible occasions. Therefore, do unto others, as you would have them do unto you so long as your doing pleases God.

In having a relationship with others there is an element that extends beyond your control. The element is "perception." People form perceptions based on what is heard, seen, imagined, believed, felt, told or otherwise. You have no control over people's perceptions; however, your behavior possibly will impact their perceptions of you. It is not that you must please and satisfy the desires of others so that they will accept you. But rather, do those things, which are pleasing to God and let the perceptions fall where they fall. When Christian Youth are shining as lights pleasing unto God, your light is also shining before others.

The scripture reads: And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of (*1 Peter 2:2*). When you do good as Christian Youth it is a fact that it will be evil spoken of by some. Does this mean the scripture is in error? No, not at all. The scripture is teaching a lesson on doing right circumspectly. Youth must always be doing right wherever you are so that the message portrayed to others is right.

For example, when you are doing right according to the scripture which reads: Abstain from all appearance of evil (*1 Thessalonians 5:22*) this means you are careful in how you do the right thing as much as where you do the right thing. To explain farther, If you have established a conversational relationship with someone of the opposite sex at the church and in the company of others, and neither of you have thoughts beyond a conversational relationship this is good.

Now let's take the same good conversational relationship and place the same two youth together in a car at the community park. The good conversational relationship is now placed in jeopardy, and is suspect to being evil spoken of. Why is this? Remember that you are shining as lights to others before you say anything to them. You may have witnessed unto them verbally that boyfriend and girlfriend relationships are non-pleasing to God. They have seen you talking with someone of the opposite sex in a parked car at the Community Park and this may cause them to speak evil of your good conversation. This is because the appearance portrayed in this situation tends to depict a relationship as boyfriend and girlfriend. In this case you would be contributing to someone forming a negative perception of you.

IV. SOCIAL LIFE

Christian Youth can have a fruitful and joyful social life and yet shine as lights only when God is first in your life.

As Christian Youth do you struggle with these questions? Where can I go? What can I do? Who can I see? When can I do? How can I do? Sure you struggle with these questions.

It is a truth that humans don't usually plan to fail, but rather they fail to plan. Without a plan it becomes difficult to assess if you are going the way you need to go. Likewise, having no plan for addressing your social life activities can lead to any outcome.

The scripture reads: Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth (*3 John 1:2*). It is the will of God that we please him so that our prospering will be profitable. The scripture reads: When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him (*Proverbs 16:7*). So therefore, in all of your prospering, let it please the Lord.

So, where are some places for Christian Youth to go and yet fulfill your mission to acknowledge God? When deciding on where to go and what to do, it is wise to take this self-test and ask yourself another question. Would God be pleased and honored with me going to this place or doing this deed? The scripture reads: And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (*1 Colossians 3:17*).

In the situations below, take a look at these deeds and check off those choices that please God:

- a) Going out to dinner as a group of youth to an appropriate restaurant.
- b) Going out to dinner as single male and female couple to an appropriate restaurant.
- c) Single male and female couple driving or riding around with each other sightseeing.
- d) Small or large group of youth (mixed sexes) driving or riding around sight seeing.
- e) Going to view a movie, attend a party as a group
- f) Going where God would go as a group of youth, mixed sexes.

As you can see the impossibility of making an all-inclusive list on

what can be done, and where youth can go, the cliché, “let your conscience be your guide” is not advisable. Why not take the position of letting the Bible be your guide. In it you will find the guidance and direction you need to live for and to the glory of God.

When a question arises around the right or wrong of a situation for which you are unsure, why not seek out other Christian adults whom you hold as trustworthy in the faith? Let’s also expound upon the question, “Is it right or wrong or unsure.” The right or wrong and unsure is the same as the black, white and gray areas.

Often times it is easy for an adult to quickly respond by saying, “that is right or wrong.” However, speaking on gray areas with elder adults tend to show silence on their part, and even behavior that might be uncomfortable. You probably have encountered situations as youth that fit into the gray area.

V. THE GRAY MATTER

First of all, the word told is rather strong. Unfortunately, very few elder adults actually take the time or perhaps lack the wherewithal to listen to Christian Youth without judgment.

Secondly, it is not unusual for an elder adult to hold to one way, and that is his/her own way, even at times when it may be unadvisable.

What support does the Bible give to addressing the gray areas? The Scripture reads: One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind (*Romans 14:5*). It is wise for Christian Youth to hear sound instruction from Christian adults who are examples, and process their sound instruction. Maybe you are not able at that time to understand their instruction, or perhaps you are not convinced to go with their instruction. You are still in keeping with the scripture above if you are fully persuaded in your own mind. However, by considering sound instruction, and even praying on the situation, God has a way of feeding you with knowledge, through his people. Should it be that you cannot be moved from your understanding or way of thinking, learn early how to not be at war with the one holding a different viewpoint. Remember that this is a gray area, and not one that is necessarily right or wrong.

VI. MAINTAINING PURITY IN CHRIST

With so many lacking in abstinence from fleshly, lustful, and primarily sexual behavior outside of marriage, it is no wonder why God is displeased.

Unfortunately, the world has made major strides in publicizing, promoting and condoning society in doing what makes you feel good. This is not what God has endorsed for society, and therefore, the purity and sacredness ordained by God is rarely observed.

Christian Youth be examples to the purity in Christ by separating yourself from living in cohabitation, which leads to engaging in sexual behavior – fornication. Cohabitation is the co-mingling as boyfriend and girlfriend and specifically when living together regardless to the frequency. An unmarried male and female who stay together once or more a week, or indefinitely is certainly on the road leading to a sexual relationship. Fornication is the result of engaging in sexual behavior by unmarried partners. Married Christian Youth be examples to the unmarried youth by your behavior and communications while in the presence of the unmarried. While certain gestures and behaviors may be appropriate for the married, perhaps this behavior while in the presence of unmarried youth may be enticing. The scripture reads, He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. (*1 John 2:10*).

As modern technology continues to develop so do temptations associated with the technologies. For example, the latest technologically advanced forum is the Internet or the World Wide Web.

Christian Youth desiring to please God will not be caught up in the misuse of the Internet. Christians are not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world. The lust of the eye and the pride of life are against the will of God.

The accessing of inappropriate adult web sites and chat rooms are major areas that snag so many viewers, and unfortunately, even Christian youth. Sadly, for more and more people the misuse of the Internet has become the interconnection leading to sin. Lusting on and over inappropriate sites on the internet, indulging in unholy adult chat room conversations, and making arrangements to meet partners of the opposite sex are all contrary to God's Word. True Christian Youth will abstain from these sinful behaviors knowing they lead away from God and into temptations of the devil. Youth must be mindful that while accessing

the Internet alone, any yield to the notion to launch out onto exploratory sites, there is an all-seeing eye watching you.

The scriptures are against fornication, and in no wise do they support doing what makes you feel good.

...Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body (*1 Corinthians 6:13*).

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body (*1 Corinthians 6:18*).

For this is the will of God; even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication (*1 Thessalonians 4:3*).

...Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? (*St. Matthew 19:4-5*).

Christian Youth desiring to shine as lights and be witnesses for others will choose purity. From the beginning of time after God had created Adam, God did not fail to realize it was not good that Adam should be alone. The scripture reads: And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him (*Genesis 2:18*). So God performed the first operation without anesthesia. God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, and took a rib from Adam and made Eve, the first woman and brought Eve unto Adam. The scripture reads: And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man (*Genesis 2:21-22*).

After the creation of Adam the scripture reads: Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (*Genesis 2:24*). Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? (*St. Matthew 19:4-5*).

From the beginning of time it is clear to see that God has not endorsed boyfriend and girlfriend, male with male or female with female cohabitation or fornication, but marriage.

VII. STAYING ON COURSE

The scripture reads: God is a present help in trouble (*Psalms 46:11*), even when the trouble is a temptation to sin. You can stay on your course of virginity or abstinence should you be tempted to stray from purity.

Staying on your course of virginity is accomplished only by keeping yourself free from fornication, something only you can do. The scripture reads, That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; (*1 Thessalonians 4:4*).

Staying on your course of abstinence is accomplished the same way by keeping yourself free from fornication. One might say that virginity and abstinence is one of the same, but not quite. Anyone who has already committed fornication has lost virginity. When one repents to God for the sin and practices abstinence going forward you can stay on course.

Now let's address one thing right now. Do not think as Christian Youth you may commit fornication and keep committing fornication and just repent for it. Not so for a child of God. Why not? Isn't God a forgiving God? Yes, God is a forgiving God. Christian Youth are those who have consented to do the will of God, to shine as lights in the world and to be witnesses of Jesus Christ. Committing sin willfully, which is pleasing the flesh, to then repent afterwards is not true repentance and neither is pleasing to God. In addition living life after this manner can lead to death. After all, the scripture reads: For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (*Romans 6:23*). Though the death may not be a physical death, it will be a death to the spiritual life. When true repentance is demonstrated there is no intent to commit the sin again and you are pricked in your heart and sorrowful for the sin. After all, repent means to become godly sorrowful. Is there a godly sorrowing present when you intend to commit the same sin over and over again? No. Having an attitude such as this one about sin only demonstrates you are living to please the flesh and fulfill the lusts thereof. Doing so will leave you dead to the will of God.

Be mindful also of Satan's devices and how he may feed you with dreams of committing lustful acts. Truly, these may cause you to feel sorrowful as a Christian Youth, but God does not charge you with these dreams unless they are carried out in reality. On the other hand, if you are a male youth and look on a female, and have thoughts of engaging in sexual behavior you have already been charged with the sin. The scripture reads: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (*St.*

Matthew 5:28).

Living a straight life and keeping yourself unspotted from the world is the only way to stay on your course and fulfill purity in Christ.

VIII. MARRIAGE IS HONOURABLE – BUT NOT ALL HAVE AN HONOURABLE MARRIAGE

The scripture reads: Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge (*Hebrews 13:4*).

God has ordained marriage for the human family, and in doing so he made it clear from the beginning that marriage is only intended between male and female. Does this mean that as Christian Youth you can marry anyone so long as the couple is male and female? No. Not according to the scripture Christian Youth. Be not deceived in thinking that God is so pleased with marriage between male and female that it is irrelevant to whom you marry. God wants you to be equally yoked together as a Christian Youth couple. Right away this means you should not marry one who is divorced or not a true worshipper of Jesus Christ. The scriptures read:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (*2 Corinthians 6:14*).

Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband (*1 Corinthians 7:2*).

As a man, you cannot marry a woman who has already been married even if she is divorced, abandoned or separated from her husband. All who do so have married someone else's wife, and not their own. Likewise, as a woman, you cannot marry a man whom has already been married even if he is divorced, abandoned or separated from his wife. All who do so have married someone else's husband, and not their own.

While it is true from the scripture that marriage is honourable, on the other hand, not all married couples experience an honourable marriage. Why not? Usually they ignore God's plan for marriage and substitute their own. God tends to work too slowly at times for so many, even Christian Youth, and because this may be the belief you hold at times, it may be felt that you must help God out. Christian Youth, if your goal is to prepare to

make and bake a Betty Crocker cake, how would you accomplish this goal? You might say that baking a cake has no comparison to having an honourable marriage. Here is the analogy; by following Betty Crocker's plan for making her cake you will get Betty Crocker results. Likewise, when two are equally yoked and embrace God's plan for marriage and the Christian life the result will yield an honourable marriage. View an honourable marriage as one that you might desire to mirror.

So how can marriage be honourable and yet so many couples don't have an honourable marriage? There is any number of reasons why an honourable marriage is missing, but it is definite that God's plan of marriage is not being exercised properly.

One of the most crucial and irrevocable vows ever made in natural life is the exchanging of vows made to God and before a company of people as in a wedding ceremony. Christian Youth don't take this vow lightly – it will change your life forever. You don't get a second chance should your mind start wondering if you made the right choice. You don't stay married as long as all is well and get unmarried when marriage seems to be producing more valleys than peaks. You don't get the opportunity to vow to God and enter into marriage for a test drive, and make a trade in later. The marriage vows made to God are until death you do part. The scripture reads: Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity...(*Ecclesiastes 9:9*).

The scripture reads: The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord (*1 Corinthians 7:39*). Therefore, to avoid starting off wrong in marriage and hoping to end up right, Christian Youth start off right by marrying only in the Lord – a partner who is a believer of the faith. Should a single Christian male be saved, having consented to marry a female who is in agreement, he can only marry a single Christian female who is also saved. Otherwise, both will be unequally yoked and God is not pleased with this arrangement. On the other hand, what if a single Christian male is unsaved and seeking salvation, having consented to marry? First, it is unadvisable to give consent to marry prior to being saved. Second, should the male give consent and be in agreement to marry the female he can only marry a female who is unsaved and seeking salvation. Third, Christian Youth, be aware that as an unsaved Christian Youth seeker matures in life the aspirations, interests and spiritual understanding will change particularly after becoming saved. There is no second chance once saved to void the marriage because of having a different view. This very well might be an example of being married, but not having an honorable marriage.

IX. PHYSICAL HEALTH

The scripture reads: Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth (*3 John 2*). Don't be carried away with so many winds and doctrines of the religious world concerning financial blessing plans, etc. God is rich in good works and holds the key to our physical, financial and spiritual health.

Physical health is very similar to that of spiritual prosperity. God gives varying degrees of the manifestation of the Spirit. Everyone does not possess the same spiritual gifts, nor do they grow at the same rate just because they have the spirit. Likewise, physical health varies from person to person.

Bodily exercise also is a means to strengthen physical health, although the profit may be little as the scripture reads, For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. (*1 Timothy 4:8*). Often times it is just that little exercise the body needs. The body is not made to be abused, so therefore it is critical to be mindful what stress and demands are placed on the body. Too much work, not enough of rest, too much food consumption, not enough exercise of judgment all can overburden your physical health. If a particular type of food is against your body it is wise to refrain from such, rather than pray over it and consume it knowing it will cause discomfort.

X. FINANCIAL HEALTH

The scripture reads, ...If riches increase, set not your heart *upon them*. (*Psalms 62:10*).

Many youth associate prosperity largely to having a certain dollar amount. Desiring to make a living and a decent salary is not unreasonable. Be mindful however that certain jobs which pay well might place other stresses on you to the point you must choose between job and being with the Saints of God.

Usually, the longer you stay away from the Saints is the less you feel compelled to be with the Saints, even when you can be present. The scripture reads, But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced

themselves through with many sorrows. (*1 Timothy 6:9-10*).

As the partridge sitteth on *eggs*, and hatcheth *them* not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool. (*Jeremiah 17:11*).

Christian Youth is well aware that although money and riches can buy many things in life, riches will never be able to buy or guarantee salvation.

XI. SPIRITUAL HEALTH

While physical and financial health may not be easily replaced and may be esteemed highly in life, by far spiritual health is the most important of the three.

Spiritual health in this article is referred to as spiritual growth or spiritual salvation. Knowing that you meet the bible requirements and are yet striving daily to continue in God's plan of salvation is the assurance you are in sufficiency of spiritual health. The scripture reads, Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; (*2 Corinthians 3:5*).

Spiritual health cannot be purchased, loaned, borrowed or transferred from one to another. It must come directly from God. While it is true that your physical and financial health can impact that of the spiritual, it is more comforting to know that these can never replace spiritual health.

If you would have the poorest of physical health, the least of financial health but solid spiritual health you are acceptable in God's sight.

In conclusion the scriptures read, Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. (*Proverbs 4:5*).

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. (*Proverbs 4:7*).

How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver! (*Proverbs 16:16*).

If you are blessed with physical or financial health thank God for it, but exercise understanding in seeking for physical and financial gain.

Spiritual health is given by God for us to profit. The scripture reads: But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit... (*1 Corinthians 12:7-8*).

In seeking physical and financial prosperity, it is wise to ask the question, Will it make me a better servant of Christ?

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