

**Names**

Kefa – Peter

Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ in the Greek means to be smudged – anointed

Moshe – Moses

Shaul – Paul

Shlomo – Solomon

Yeshua – Jesus' real name

Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)

Y'hudah – Judah

Yochanan – John

Yosef – Joseph

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets

Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible

Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah

Miketz – 10th Torah portion

The portion for this week is Miketz and means, "at the end of." The portion Miketz begins with Pharaoh having two dreams.

I would like to begin today by saying that we are to work at understanding the Torah. We can fellowship and sing, but not studying the Torah means we have nothing to apply. In essence, we are living by blank pages spiritually.

I was at a Messianic Congregation once that gave me the impression that the singing and music was what mattered and nothing much else. If I was a new believer in the Messiah, I might have gotten the impression that the singing and music was all there is to believing in the Messiah. Of course, the Bible says that God's commandments give us 'wisdom and understanding' (see Deuteronomy 4:6) and are "right and good" (Deuteronomy 6:17-18). I am not so simple minded to not understand that some people's faith lacks any substance and denies the truths of the Bible and God's commandments.

I have experienced this for myself. I thought that believers in God would naturally want to do what an all-knowing and good God would command us to do. I went to a meeting once where the pastor asked the some 100 people present if anyone present cared about God's commandments. I was about to raise my hand, but no one there did. Isn't that the weirdest kind of faith in God? Some think that all they have to do is say they believe in God or in Jesus. They will even say they believe in the Bible, but their actions say otherwise. Each person then makes up what they believe. Some will say we are to love God and others and then those people do the same thing. They are making up what they think is right.

It is God's commandments that are "right and good" (again, reference Deuteronomy 6:17-18). And loving God is to keep His commandments. Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always." The best way to love others is to keep God's commandments because they are "right and good." They come from an all-knowing and loving God who knows what is

best. Singing and fellowship is great, but we need the truths of the Bible for everyday life.

Chanukkah in our era can become a manufactured holiday for some. We sing songs and give presents and celebrate and have good food. It has its roots in more than that though. The Greeks were trying to eliminate the faith of the Bible. Many believers gave their lives and fought against the Greek tyranny so that the teachings of the Bible and the truths of God's word could continue. At that time, some were martyred because they would not disobey God's commandments. Chanukkah means dedication and it not only commemorates their victory over the Greeks, but the rededication of the Temple took 8 days. The dedication of the Mishkan (the Tent of Meeting) in the wilderness took 8 days as commanded by God; that is why Chanukkah lasts 8 days. Do not be confused by other theories.

People in the world often have their heart set on either worldly things or spiritual things. Some of the people of that time lived worldly Greek lives and did not care. Some though stood up for truth no matter the consequences. What will we do when confronted by worldly thinking?

Also, it is a misconception that a spiritually minded person does not accomplish much in life. The spiritually minded person can accomplish just as much or even more because their lives are more ordered by doing what is "right and good." And the Holy Spirit can lead and encourage believers in the Messiah. I believe the Holy Spirit helped me to excel while I was in college. When I was having trouble in a class, I did not give up, but worked hard to understand the material because the Holy Spirit told me to work harder.

God also empowers the lives of those who want to do what is right and brings supernatural blessings. In the last portion, we see God favoring Yosef and helping him in life through the prophetic. Yosef ends up saving a whole region of the world through his prophetic gifting. It amazes me that more people do not pay more attention to what God does through the prophetic. Do not minimize what God can do through the life of a believer, so stay faithful.

Sometimes people put their Bible on a coffee table and never open it. The Bible contains words inspired by God and there is genuine power inside it. It is worth our while to open up our Bible and begin unlocking its wonderful truths. God says He will bless us for keeping His commandments so believe the Bible and claim His promises.

Deuteronomy 28:2-4, 6, 8-9, 11-12NKJV

2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:

3 "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country.

4 "Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

6 "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

8 "The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

9 "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.

11 And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.

12 The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand.

It is obvious that these are some amazing promises. Perhaps you don't have any livestock, but God can bless you in your job. From these promises we understand that God desires that we prosper and be in health. We may also need to pray to acquire these promises and of course, apply ourselves well in order to receive them. Yochanan perhaps refers to these verses when he says in 3 John 1:2-4 NKJV, "I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

Notice it says we are to live the truths of life we learn. Do you serve and obey God's or do you follow your own thoughts and desires? Line up your life with God's commandments as you do the things of life.

What do we seek during this time of year? Are we looking for peace, prosperity, or satisfaction? Yeshua the Messiah said in Matthew 6:32-33 NKJV, "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Of course, things do not just magically appear, but sometimes they do for believers or at least the opportunities do. I once liked a coat that cost \$500 and thought to myself if only it was \$50. I went back to the store a few months later and the coat was marked down to \$50. That is just one of the stunning things that has happened to me. I say stunning because I could hardly believe that I got that coat for \$50.

We must apply ourselves to life and do what is "right and good." We must live the right way. How do we put God in His proper place? We make Him our king and become subject to His commandments. What do you think will give you satisfaction in life? I remember someone singing a song about getting a car. Another song I remember is about celebrating. What is at the root of your desires in life? Yeshua said we need to put God ahead of our desires in life and we do that by keeping His commandments and following Him as we live out our lives.

How do get our minds in the right place? Do we put all our effort into worldly things in order to get peace? Psalm 23 is perhaps one of the most well-known of psalms.

Psalms 23 NKJV

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the

LORD forever.

Is Yěhōvāh¹ your shepherd? Do we follow Him? What do we want more than Him? God can provide and give us good things; He helps us to live right through His word and the Holy Spirit. We face troubles, but we have comfort and goodness through Him all the days of our lives. We have to decide to abide in God all our lives. Psalm 23 ends with a commitment to do what is right and good.

Rest in God and not in worthless things. This concept is a tough one. We struggle between worldly satisfaction and being satisfied in the things of God. Does our life demonstrate a true satisfaction in God? Do we only aspire to worldly things? 1 John 2:15-17 NKJV says, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

What is God's will? It is to keep His commandments. He is the Creator Yěhōvāh who knows what is best. Do we make excuses and in doing so, relegate God's will below our own? God's will is the most loving thing to do.

God is great and His work is what matters. A lot of people like trucks because they are useful. Some like them because they give them a sense of safety. Some like them because it gives them a sense of pride.

God benefits us a million times better — perhaps trillions of times better. All 40 trillion² cells in our bodies can be revived and God can do so much more than that. Isaiah 40:31 NKJV says, "But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

I once heard of a study years ago that said that believers had better DNA than unbelievers. I think that is amazing. Shaul said that our new bodies will be changed in the future eternal kingdom. Yeshua was recognizable after He rose from the dead. Shaul says that we will have to put on our eternal nature. All our cells will be changed to an eternal nature.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 NKJV

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast,

¹ The word LORD is the word Yěhōvāh.

² Cell Biology - Wiki

immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

I just love scriptures that are about God's goodness and power, don't you?

1 Chronicles 29:11 NKJV

"The power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all."

Jeremiah 32:17-19 NKJV

"Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them—the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts. You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings."

Jeremiah 32:27 NKJV

"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"

Here is another one. Yeshua said in Matthew 19:26 NKJV. "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Yeshua also said that He would raise up believers from the dead to everlasting life. John 6:40 NKJV, "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." We should understand that includes believers from all of time. Old Testament believers believed in the work of a coming Messiah. John 8:56 NKJV says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day."

The things of this world will come to nothing. We tend to think our reality is in what we see, but Shaul says our reality is what we don't see. 2 Corinthians 4:18 NKJV says, "While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Why is that? 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 NKJV says:

For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

We take seriously how we live. We please God first and foremost. Just a couple verses later in 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 NKJV it says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether

good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord." The word for "seat" is the Greek word *Bema*. In Jewish Synagogues, the Torah is read at the Bema. Yeshua will judge us by how we have kept the Torah, the Old Testament commandments.

Some of Christianity has no idea what Shaul means. They just make up their own theology and philosophy (man-made doctrine). And man-made doctrine is just like man-made stone idols. Like Kefa said in 2 Peter 3:15-16, "As also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." They twist what? "The scriptures" – there was no New Testament at the time. They twist the Old Testament scriptures to their own destruction. Don't go to the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8) with them.

Torah Study

Miketz means, "at the end of." The portion Miketz begins with Pharaoh having two dreams. One dream is about 7 good looking cows getting eaten by 7 lean looking cows and the other is about 7 fully ripe and good looking ears of corn getting eaten up by 7 bad looking ears of corn. Pharaoh is upset and asks all his magicians and wise men if they can interpret the dreams, but no one can. It has been two years since the cup bearer returned to Pharaoh's court and he then remembers Yosef interpreting his dream and it coming to pass.

Yosef tells Pharaoh that the dream was repeated twice because it is going to happen. God can repeat things either to get our attention or to establish something. God told Pharaoh that there will be 7 good years followed by 7 years of famine and that Pharaoh should find someone who will manage and gather food during the good years. Pharaoh says to his officials that Yosef would be good for the job because the Spirit of God is in him and they pick Yosef to be in charge. Pharaoh gives Yosef the authority of second in command when Yosef was only thirty years old and gives Yosef his signet ring and the people bowed down before him.

The Pharaoh seems to be familiar with the power of the true God. Perhaps some of Shem's (Melchizedek's) followers had introduced Pharaoh to the true God because Salem is not that far from Egypt. Salem is the ancient name for Jerusalem where Shem, the son of Noah, had a school of prophecy and worshiped El Elyon, God Most High.

Shaul tells us to seek God's spiritual gifts. "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy;" 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV. There are believers in Messiah that say we are not to prophesy and contradict the Bible. Are believers in the Messiah somehow less than those in the Old Testament portion? Of course they are not less powerful; it says in Acts 2 there will be lots of prophecy. Acts 2:17-18 NKJV (ref. Joel 2:28-29) referring to the Messianic age we now live in; "I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy." We live in an age of anemic weak believers.

Yosef gathers grain for seven years before the famine hits and then sells the grain to the people needing it during the famine. Jacob's family hears there is grain in Egypt and go there to trade for some grain. Yosef just happened to be at the place where they traded for grain when some

of his brothers arrived. He didn't tell them who he was. He accuses them of being spies perhaps to find out more about them and perhaps to see if they mistreated their younger brother as they mistreated him. He keeps Simon in prison. Yosef's brothers returned home and also find the money in their packs that they gave for the grain.

After they had depleted all the food they had traded for, Yosef's brothers returned to Egypt, but they had to bring their younger brother with them as Yosef had demanded. Ya'akov was very upset and Judah says that he will be responsible and take his place if anything should happen. They bring gifts to Yosef and also the money they found that they should have originally paid for the grain. When they arrive, Yosef sees his brother Benjamin and he is overwhelmed emotionally; he decides to have his brothers dine with him. He seats them by birth order.

Yosef returns Shimon to them and he orders their packs filled with supplies and for them to put a goblet in Benjamin's pack. After they start their journey back, he orders their belongings searched and they find the goblet in Benjamin's pack. As the portion ends, Yosef tells his brothers that they can return, but Benjamin has to stay there and be his slave. We see in the next portion that Judah offers to give himself for Benjamin. Just as Yeshua gave himself for us, Judah is a Messianic type who was willing to give himself for Benjamin.

Yosef's success can clearly be attributed to God. It was not an easy road of success, but God made Yosef to prosper because he listened to God. It appears that Pharaoh also sees that Yosef hears from God and is willing to use him to prosper all of Egypt. This should remind us that listening to God is the best way to live to bring the blessings of God to us and others in every way; physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

Yosef's success came from God.

Yosef brings deliverance to his family and the whole region because he hears from God, he is another messianic type. Yosef and Yeshua were both rejected, but both end up saving others. There are many similarities between Yosef and the Messiah Yeshua. Both are favored by their fathers. Yeshua's Father was God who created life in Miryam's womb.

The Haftarah for Miketz is 1 Kings 3:15-4:1; Zechariah 2:14-4:7 is the Haftarah read during Chanukkah. In the Haftarah for Miketz in 1 Kings, King Shlomo had just been given wisdom and a long life by God. Like God helped Yosef, God is going to help Shlomo and give him wisdom and understanding. Two women come to Shlomo and are fighting over a child. He is able to trick the woman into revealing who the real mother is and the people hear about Shlomo's wisdom. Just as through God's Spirit, Yosef was to become a great leader in Egypt, Shlomo through God's Spirit became a great king with wisdom. 1 Kings 3:28 CJB says, "All Israel heard of the decision the king had made and held the king in awe, for they saw that God's wisdom was in him, enabling him to render justice properly."

Zechariah is read for the Haftarah during Hanukkah. We will include it today because it is still near Chanukkah and is relevant to this portion. It begins by saying that someday God will live among His people Israel and also that many nations will believe in the true God. Obviously this is a prophecy about the Messiah Yeshua who not only came and lived among mankind, but will someday come back and reign as our king.

Y'hoshua was chosen to be the Cohen Gadol after Israel returned from captivity and was given clean robes in Zechariah's vision and charged to live right. God says that He will bring His servant the Tzemach (sprout) someday and remove their guilt in one day. This obviously refers to Yeshua and is a reference to Isaiah 53. Zechariah is then looking at a menorah and there were two olive trees on each side of the menorah. They are God's anointed ones. He is to say to Zerubbabel that it is not through force or power, but through God's Spirit.

Zechariah 4:6 CJB says, "Then he answered me, 'This is the word of ADONAI to Z'rubavel: 'Not by force, and not by power, but by my Spirit,' says ADONAI-Tzva'ot."

We know historically that God has brought Israel back from the Babylonian captivity. God also delivered Israel from the Greeks and as a result we celebrate Hanukkah which means dedication; it is also called the Feast of Lights, even in antiquity. Josephus called it chag ha'or, the light feast. Without God's deliverance we would have no Bible and no Messiah.

Yeshua (which means salvation) as He was commonly called in His time is a shortened name for Y'hoshua (which means the Lord is salvation) and is the name of the Cohen Gadol in this portion. Yeshua is the light of the world who was the living Mishkan and presence of God. The presence of God was restored at the building of the second Temple and at the rededication of the second Temple; Yeshua was the living presence of God who came as a light to the world.

The word "lived" in John 1:14 is translated from the Greek word for "tent" probably referring to the Mishkan where the presence of God was while Israel was in the desert. The intended meaning then is that the presence of God came in the form of Yeshua. John 1:14 CJB, "The Word became a human being and lived (tent) with us, and we saw his Sh'khinah."

Yeshua declares that He is the light of the world and then He opens the eyes of a man blind from birth just before the Feast of Lights. The ancient Rabbis said that one of the signs of the Messiah was that He would heal the eyesight of a man that was born blind. John 9:5-7 CJB says, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, put the mud on the man's eyes, and said to him, 'Go, wash off in the Pool of Shiloach!' (The name means "sent.") So he went and washed and came away seeing."

According to Josephus, Shlomo's colonnade was the site of the first Temple. So Yeshua was standing at the site of the first Temple speaking to the crowd in the following passages. The ancient Rabbis said that the Messiah would reveal Himself at the site of the First Temple. That is why they are asking Him to reveal who He was. He cryptically reveals He is the Messiah by saying He already told them; then in verse thirty He tells them that He is one with the Father God conclusively revealing who He is. They pick up stones because they realize that He is saying that He is God even though they understood the Messiah would be God (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

Yeshua revealed that He absolutely is the Messiah.

John 10:22-25 CJB says, "Then came Hanukkah in Yerushalayim. It was winter, and Yeshua was walking around inside the Temple area, in Shlomo's Colonnade. So the Judeans surrounded him and said to him, "How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us publicly!" Yeshua answered them, "I have already told you, and you don't trust me. Also, John 10:30-31 CJB says, "'I and the Father are one.' Once again the Judeans picked up rocks in order to stone him."

Yosef interprets Pharaoh's dreams and then is tasked by the Pharaoh of saving Egypt from the upcoming famine. Yosef saves the entire region including his family through God's power and the prophetic gifting. Believers in the Messiah are also given this powerful gifting and encouraged to use God's powerful gifts that we receive through the Holy Spirit that is given to believers in Yeshua HaMashiach in this Messianic age.

Commandments and Implied Commandments in this Portion.
(We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible.)

It is up to God to give the interpretation of a dream or vision. When a believer receives a dream or vision, the interpretation of a dream or vision is given to the person who receives it. That information may just be knowledge or sometimes there is accompanying wisdom that needs to be acted on. The knowledge that Yosef received was the impending famine. The wisdom was to prepare by collecting food. We may seek additional confirmation at times; especially for big endeavors as was the case with Pharaoh's two dreams. God gave an unbeliever a dream, but it required a believer to interpret it unless God chooses to give the unbeliever the understanding. We are to never come up with our own ideas and say it was from God. Genesis 41:16, 32-36.

It is good practice to find out others intentions as Yosef did with his brothers in this portion. This should especially be done for big decisions. For example, I made sure my future wife was a committed believer before I married her.

Form Good Patterns for Life
(Accompanying teaching for the Torah portion Miketz)
by Moshe Schwab

Believers in God can struggle with giving God charge of their lives or forming godly spiritual patterns. Shaul tells not to destroy our lives over worldly matters. "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers;" 2 Timothy 2:14 NKJV.

Is the driving motivation in your life divided? (When it matters, do we trust in God to come through or help us?)

There is often a struggle in life for us to take charge or do we let God take charge? Whether I am thinking about something that I need or something that God wants me to do, I sometimes need to stop what I am thinking and just trust in God. I trust that God will do better than what I can do. Rabbi Shaul tells us not to be anxious, but to talk to God about the situation or problem.

Just as a reminder; Shaul was a Jewish leader. When he identifies himself as a Jewish leader, the other leaders present don't argue that he isn't a Jewish leader, but they argue about the resurrection. It says in Acts 23:6-8, "But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, 'Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!' And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both."

I've heard people say that Shaul wasn't Jewish; it just isn't true. In fact, Shaul identifies himself in several places in the Bible as being Jewish. **He also says he keeps the Jewish laws in the Old Testament portion and believes in them.** Shaul said, "I worship the God of my fathers, **believing** all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. Acts 24:14-15 NKJV. He says he believes in them and he keeps God's commandments from the Old Testament portion. Again, he said he believes in them; so much for people saying that he didn't. You'd better get your thinking turned around. Shaul also said, "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." Romans 3:31 NKJV. Shaul emphatically says the laws of God in the Old Testament portion are NOT DONE AWAY WITH; They are "Certainly not" done away with.

Back to the topic. Shaul tells us not to be anxious. Philippians 4:3-7 NKJV says:

"My fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

We understand that Shaul is giving us some inspired advice. Have joy, be gentle, and pray instead of being anxious.

Notice also that Shaul refers to the book of life that Yeshua also talks about. Yeshua says, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life;" Revelation 3:5 NKJV. Note how Yeshua says that we are to be faithful to God and overcome sin or we will be blotted out of the book of life. So, don't have a divided heart towards God. Ya'akov said in James "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind;" James 1:6 NKJV. We are supposed to live in faith, live like God tells us to live, and trust in God.

What we do is the message of our life. Give a godly message by how you live.

Do you celebrate God's feasts? If you don't, what kind of message is that to others or to God? God said that these are His feasts. Leviticus 23:2 NKJV says, "The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts." So what makes people think they can dismiss God's feasts. People keep secular holidays. They don't decide not to keep them and tell their bosses they want to work.

There are a lot of messages we send to others when we don't keep God's commandments. I understand that your company doesn't like to give you days off for God's holidays and that can be an issue. We have to work in order to eat. What other messages do we give to others by our permissive attitudes. I try to make sure people know that I want to be a good person. Yet people would try to get me to sin. You need to be ready to let people know that you want to be a kind and caring person who does what is right.

1 Peter 4:3-5 NKJV talks about the attitudes of these evil people: "For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead." There is nothing wrong with telling them that wrong behaviors bring pain and hurt others and themselves. Especially if they are flaunting their evil activities at you. God says they will be judged for their behaviors. Let God judge them; don't react. If you do react, make sure you apologize and say God cares about you.

Is your glass filled with worldly things or the light and power of God?

We've all probably heard the expression, 'you are what you eat.' It means that you should eat healthy food. Having your glass filled with worldly things then means we are living on worldly things. Just like eating healthy food makes you healthy, having your life filled with the light and power of God makes you a healthy person spiritually.

Perhaps you think of these scriptures when you think of being a person of light; light often refers to a person of understanding.

Deuteronomy 4:5-8 NKJV:

Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for **this is your wisdom and your understanding** in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation **is a wise and understanding people.**' "For what great nation is there that has **God so near** to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such **statutes and righteous judgments** as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

God's commandments are truly a light for our paths. God wants us to succeed so He gave us good statutes to live by. Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is **right and good** in the sight of the LORD."

Shaul talks about keeping God's commandments in Ephesians 5:8-11 NKJV, "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all **goodness, righteousness**, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." Don't sin; instead, do what is right and good.

Since we understand that light refers to understanding, Shaul is actually referring to the Old Testament portion. Being a person of light means we are keeping God's commandments. We are not a people of darkness; namely, those who don't keep God's commandments. We live right (righteousness) and don't live with sinful patterns in our lives.

Glorify God through godly life patterns, and not worldly patterns of life and wrong beliefs or superstitious beliefs.

First of all, what does it mean to be godly? It means to keep God's commandments and imitate God's nature. For example, God is loving and caring, so being loving and caring should be our first line of thought instead of being defensive, selfish, and having values that differ from God's commandments. Keeping God's commandments is the most loving thing to do because God is the creator and knows what is best for mankind.

"You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy;" Leviticus 19:2 NKJV.

"Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them;" Leviticus 20:7-8 NKJV.

"And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine;" Leviticus 20:26 NKJV.

We are to be holy like God is holy. One of the ways to do that is to keep God's commandments. If we don't keep God's commandments, that is like saying to God that we can live life without God. Think about it. If someone gave you some good advice and you decided not to follow it, you have decided that you don't need their advice.

We often live our lives through the patterns that we develop. If we think and develop worldly patterns or keep false doctrine our lives are worldly and devoid of God. In essence, we brainwash our minds to remove godly values. People who do not follow God are brainwashed into living without God. Titus 3:3 NKJV says, "For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." This sounds terrible doesn't it.

Yeshua said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin;" John 8:34 NKJV. Because we form patterns of behavior, when we do things the wrong way, we go back to doing those things over and over the wrong way. We actually become slaves to doing evil instead of doing good. I don't want to be foolish, deceived, and living in hate. It sounds like an awful way to live; what mindless person would want to live that way?

Don't brainwash your mind with evil.

Say that you are an auto mechanic and on all the cars you worked on, you tightened the fan belts too tight so that it broke the components connected to the belts (the generator and the water pump). You did it wrong so that every car you did this to ended up breaking down. Instead of helping people, you were messing up their cars.

That is like living your life wrong in sin. Instead of leading people to live right, our example is teaching others the hurt and pain of sin. We should want to do what is right; that's what makes sense. Shaul said in Romans 6:17-18 NKJV, "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And

having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." We are a people who are rescued so that we can do what is right.

We used to be slaves to doing things the wrong way, but now we have formed good patterns in life where we do what is right. Righteousness means to live right. We change our patterns of life where we did wrong and now live right. In whatever we do, we become slaves to those behaviors; why not become a slave of doing what is right and bring goodness and blessing to this world?