Matthew 5:16 (NKJV)
Let your light so shine before men, that **they may see your good works** and glorify your Father in heaven.

Colossians 3:12 (NKJV)
Therefore, **as the elect of God, holy and beloved**, **put on** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;
Colossians 3:13 (NKJV)
bearing with one another, and **forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; even **as Christ forgave you, so you also must do**.
Colossians 3:14 (NKJV)
But **above all** these things **put on love**, which is the bond of perfection.

Philippians 2:14–15 (NKJV)
"**Do all things without complaining and disputing**, that you may become blameless and harmless, **children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation**, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

Proverbs 15:1 (NKJV)
"**A soft answer turns away** wrath, But a **harsh word stirs up anger**."

The world will never see Jesus in your arguments, but it will see Him in your peace. Be the calm center of every situation, not part of the storm.

Practical Applications

1. **Create a simple, meaningful Christmas ritual.** Focus on the story of Jesus through a nativity scene, reading Luke 2 together, singing carols, or serving others.
2. **Limit social media comparisons.** Mute accounts that trigger envy or pressure. Fill your feed with encouragement instead.
3. **Serve someone in need.** Volunteer at a shelter, deliver meals to a lonely neighbor, or sponsor a child through a mission organization. Service redirects focus from self to others.
4. **Speak life over your household.** Greet family members with warmth, affirm their strengths, and avoid sarcasm or criticism.
5. **Plan rest into your schedule.** Overcommitment leads to irritability. Say no to some invitations so you can say yes to peace.
6. **Share the gospel gently.** When opportunities arise, share your hope naturally. Your lifestyle is the first part of the message; words come second.
7. **End each gathering with prayer.** Invite family members to share one thing they are grateful for, then close with a brief prayer of blessing.

ImpactChurch
Church That Makes A Difference

RECOGNIZING TRAPS AND SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, November 22, 2026

We cannot always control the atmosphere around us, but through the Holy Spirit within us, we can control how we respond to it.

Point 1: Remember Who Is Inside You — Revelation of God's Greatness Changes Your Perspective

1 John 4:4 (NKJV)
You are of God, little children, and **have overcome** them, because **He who is in you is greater** than he who is in the world.

Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV)
Now **to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all** that we ask or think, according to the **power that works in us**,

2 Corinthians 3:5 (NKJV)
Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but **our sufficiency is from God,**

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)
I can do all things **through Christ** who strengthens me.

"The greatness of the opposition around me cannot cancel the greatness of the God who lives within me!"

Practical Applications

1. **Start each morning with worship.** Before checking emails, phones, or to-do lists, spend five minutes thanking God for who He is and what He has done.
2. **Declare Scripture over your day/week.** Speak Philippians 4:13 and 2 Corinthians 3:5–6 aloud before difficult conversations or events.
3. **Make a list of reminders.** Write down three attributes of God (faithful, loving, sovereign) and review them daily to anchor your mind in truth.
4. **Practice gratitude intentionally.** Each night, name three specific things you are thankful for. Gratitude reprograms the mind from lack to abundance.

Point 2: Lay Down the Foundation — Time in God's Word and Prayer Are Non-Negotiable

Joshua 1:8 (NKJV)
This Book of the Law **shall not depart from your mouth**, but you shall **meditate in it day and night**, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For **then you will make your way** prosperous, and then you will have good success.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NKJV)
pray **without ceasing**,

Matthew 7:24 (NKJV)
"Therefore **whoever hears** these sayings of Mine, **and does them**, I will liken him to a **wise man** who **built his house** on the rock:
Matthew 7:25 (NKJV)
and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was **founded on the rock**.

The strength of your response under pressure is determined by the depth of your relationship with God before the pressure comes.

Practical Applications

1. **Set a consistent daily devotional time.** Even 15–20 minutes counts. Choose a fixed time and place to make it habitual.
2. **Use a structured reading plan.** A one-year Bible reading plan or a thematic study on peace, love, or forgiveness can provide direction.
3. **Pray specifically over your family.** Name individuals, situations, and conversations in prayer before they happen. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you words of life.
4. **Keep a prayer journal.** Record requests and answers. Over time, this builds faith by showing you God's faithfulness.
5. **Fast if leading up to a difficult event.** Fasting intensifies focus on God and detaches us from fleshly reactions.

Point 3: Love First — The Greatest Commandment Includes Those Who Hurt Us

Mark 12:30 (NKJV)
And you shall **love the Lord your God with all** your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.
Mark 12:31 (NKJV)
And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall **love your neighbor as yourself**.' There is **no other commandment greater than these**.

Matthew 5:44 (NKJV)
But I say to you, **love** your enemies, **bless** those who curse you, **do good** to those who hate you, and **pray for those** who spitefully use you and persecute you,

1 Corinthians 13:4–5 (NKJV) Love Refuses to Keep Score
Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil.

Romans 5:5 (NKJV)
Now hope does not disappoint, because **the love of God has been poured out in our hearts** by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

I don't love people because they always deserve it. I love people because God's love has been poured into my heart, and I choose to let that love flow through me!

Practical Applications

1. **Identify one person in your family you struggle to love.** Begin praying for them daily using Matthew 5:44 as your script.
2. **Write a blessing letter.** Express appreciation, forgiveness, or encouragement to someone you have had tension with. Deliver it in person, by mail, or text.
3. **Practice listening without defending.** When a conversation gets heated, pause and ask, "Help me understand where you're coming from."
4. **Give generously.** A thoughtful gift, meal, or act of service can break cycles of resentment.
5. **Set healthy boundaries with love.** Loving someone does not mean tolerating harmful behavior. Boundaries expressed with grace protect both parties.
6. **Forgive repeatedly.** Forgiveness is often a process, not a single event. Return to it as needed.

Point 4: Be Salt and Light — Let Your Influence Bring Peace, Not Pressure

Matthew 5:13 (NKJV)
"**You are** the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.
Matthew 5:14 (NKJV)
"**You are** the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.