

# *Shopping List*

SIX INGREDIENTS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH



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*Carole Combs*



Scripture taken from the King James Version.

*Shopping List: Six Ingredients for Spiritual Growth*

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# *Preface*

I HAVE BEEN KNOWN to go into a grocery store with a certain ingredient in mind but leave with a different purchase, totally forgetting what I originally had gone into the store for. Similarly, at times in life we get distracted and forget the ingredients, unless we have a shopping list. This book was written to help you and me to never forget or take for granted the ingredients we need for spiritual growth.

God owns an overflowing warehouse of spiritual items that will never run out! His “goods” are not like the sale items at your local store: you go to the store, thinking you’re the first one there, only to find the item you want is already gone. Instead, God has an endless supply waiting just for you. You can take a “shopping cart” and push it through all the store’s aisles. But it will be empty if you do not personally take items off the shelves and place them into your cart.

If you are a shopaholic, you may think that just one more purchase will bring you happiness or will satisfy you. But this kind of shopping will ultimately disappoint you and wear away at your finances. God’s spiritual ingredients, on the other hand, are free, with no hidden fees or strings attached. And they satisfy—abundantly.

Much prayer has gone into this book with you in mind. I wish I knew your personal story and how this book came to be in your hands. Even though I don’t know, I am thrilled to share with you the personal spiritual growth I experienced because I put these six ingredients on my shopping list and “shopped” in God’s warehouse.



So fill your cart with these **six ingredients!**





# *God's Plan of Salvation*

Carefully ponder these Scripture verses, as they explain how you can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. God loves you and wants you to enjoy the abundant life He offers you.

- **John 3:16**—“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
- **John 10:10**—Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

All people sin, and their sin separates them from God.

- **Romans 3:23**—“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”
- **Romans 6:23**—“For the wages of sin is death [separation from God].”

Jesus Christ's death is the only provision God has made to pay for people's sin.

- **Romans 5:8**—“But God commendeth [demonstrates] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet [still] sinners, Christ died for us.”
- **John 14:6**—“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

You must receive Jesus Christ as your Savior before you can personally experience His love for you and the abundant life He has planned for you.

- **John 1:12**—“But as many as received him, to them gave he power [the right] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

You can receive Jesus Christ as your Savior right now by an act of faith.

- **Ephesians 2:8–9**—“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Are you ready to believe on Jesus as your Savior? Use the following prayer as a guide to help you express your desire to God: “Lord God, I know I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe Jesus died to take the punishment that I deserve for my sins. Right now I receive Him as my Savior. Take control of my life.”

If you have prayed this prayer, tell your Bible study leader or a friend who has been trying to help you.

Learn to trust God’s Word—not your feelings—when doubts come.

- **Romans 10:13**—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
- **1 John 5:11–13**—“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

## *How to Use This Book*

This Bible study is conveniently organized into six lessons, each of which is divided by six days of the week. You can work through a lesson at your own pace, sitting down to complete it all at once or in more frequent visits, taking a section of the lesson each day.

The questions in a lesson are numbered consecutively, rather than beginning again with each new day. This will make it easier to identify questions if you discuss them in a group setting.

Rather than one key verse, you will find several verses sprinkled throughout each lesson. You may want to rehearse the verses you already know and memorize any that are new to you.

Happy shopping!



## L E S S O N 1



**YOU AND I USE FAITH DOZENS OF TIMES A DAY.** Did you turn on any electrical switches? Sit in any chairs? Turn on any faucets? Drive any vehicles? How about ride the longest elevator in the world (160 stories in Dubai)? I could continue my list, but I think you get my point. Faith is a part of our lives.

God wants our faith in Him to be genuine. If it is, we will desire the things of God, and our desire will be revealed in our actions, reactions, conversations, and private thoughts. Wherever your faith level is, or even if it's nonexistent, put faith in your shopping cart. It is free to all who want to receive it.

**Freebie:** *“Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).*

### **DAY 1 Faith Comes from Hearing the Word of God**

My husband and I have fourteen grandchildren. We were able to take all our children and grandchildren to Florida one

year, in part thanks to friends who allowed us to use their condo. My youngest granddaughter at the time, Ellie, loved being in the swimming pool. She loved it even more when she jumped off the pool deck into my reaching arms. Ellie and I played this faith-in-action game over and over. I watched her keenly because her faith was strong that “Gamma” would catch her. She began to jump based only on the expectation that I would be there. She knew that Gamma would protect and care for her, and that was the truth.

1. What “faith in action story” have you personally seen or experienced?
  
2. What characteristics of God do you know about?

As Ellie has observed my consistent character over the years, her faith in me has grown stronger. She knows she can trust me.

3. Read Romans 15:4, 2 Timothy 3:16–17, and 1 Peter 2:2. According to these verses, how does a believer’s faith grow?

God’s Word allows you and me to learn God’s character and see Him in action. You cannot literally see Him of course, but He sees you. He sees everything about you, and He unconditionally loves you! He knows where you have been, and He wants to be where you’re going.

Faith is a growing process, but it has a beginning. Start by placing your faith in God, Who loves you so much that He wants you to be with Him for all eternity. Then put your faith into action.

4. Read Romans 3:23, 5:12, and 6:23, as well as 2 Corinthians 5:21. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior from the penalty and power of sin? If not, turn to page 9 to learn how you can begin your own faith journey.
5. If you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior, when was the last time you saw growth in your faith in God, His character, and His Word?

## **DAY 2** Discern between Genuine and Counterfeit

For centuries, people have gone to great lengths to counterfeit money, paintings, signatures, memorabilia, collectables, fashions, and an endless amount of almost anything. People have even counterfeited faith. They have deceived others into believing they have a relationship with Holy God, when in fact they are just faith frauds.

The Bible tells us that there will be counterfeit Christians giving a counterfeit message about God and the things of God. We need to be wise in our judgment.

6. Read 2 Peter 2:1–3.
  - (a) Where will counterfeit teachers be?
  
  - (b) How will they deceive people?
7. How can believers distinguish between a genuine message from God and a counterfeit message?





should match your faith. What you do should line up with God's standards.

**Freebie:** | “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command  
| you” (John 15:14).

The book of James explains faith and actions. You and I cannot say that we have faith without having godly actions to back up our words.

10. Read James 2:14–26. Was James teaching that good works are for earning salvation or that they should accompany and flow from salvation?
  
11. What good works characterize you since you received Jesus as your Savior?

## **DAY 4 Be Genuine in Your Reactions**

My husband likes to work on motors. He is very knowledgeable about what makes a motor run properly. His knowledge came in handy for our four boys and all their motor toys.

When I thought about Christians' reactions being genuine according to our faith, a phrase came to my mind: “He blew a gasket!” I went to the best mechanic I know (my husband) and asked him the purpose of a gasket. A gasket is used for sealing. When there is too much pressure where the gasket is being used, the pressure can break the gasket, causing whatever is being sealed to blow out. When a person blows a gasket, it's usually not a good thing.

12. What do Proverbs 16:23, Matthew 12:34, and Matthew 15:18 indicate about a person's heart?

If a gasket is improperly connected because of gunk (“an unpleasantly sticky or messy substance”) around the seal, the gasket will blow.

Do not hide or mask what is going on inside your heart. If you are genuinely seeking after God, you will want to remove the “gunk.” Removing it may not be an easy or quick job. Sometimes it can be painful. The gunk might come from your childhood, from a past relationship, or just from living life. We all have gunk. You’re not alone. Allow your sisters in Christ to come alongside you. Allow God to start removing the gunk, or ungodly things, of your life. He will speak to your heart through His Word.

## **DAY 5 Be Genuine in Your Conversations**

**Freebie:** | *“Lying lips are abomination to the LORD”*  
| *(Proverbs 12:22).*

Talk is cheap! Of course we do not pay in monetary value for each word that comes from our lips, but words can cost us deeply. It is easier to say we will do something than to actually do it. A woman who claims to be a follower of Christ should be genuine in her conversation. Her talk should match her walk.

Many people who say they are followers of Christ have had conversations with those who do not know Christ. However, the unbelievers only hear “wah, wah, wah” (like what Charlie Brown hears when his teacher speaks), because those who profess Christ have not lived consistently. Their talk doesn’t match their walk.

13. Describe a time when your life and words did not match.

14. Read Luke 6:43–45.

(a) What comes out from the heart of a good person?

(b) What comes out from the heart of an evil person?

(c) Which comes out from your heart more often?

It is easy to get caught up in conversations at work, school, and home that, frankly, as a follower of Christ you should not participate in. You cannot avoid or remove yourself from certain environments. But you can be the person who brings uplifting, positive words into a conversation.

Be the person that coworkers, classmates, and family members know will not participate in slander sessions. Remove from your mouth the words that do not please God. Replace them with good words. You will not have overnight success, because this is a lifestyle-changing process. Be intentional, consistent, and persistent in working to be genuine in your conversation.

## **DAY 6 Be Genuine in Your Thoughts**

Today we can find self-help books on just about every subject, including hoarding, stress management, and happiness. There is nothing wrong with self-help material. However, I suggest not allowing self-help materials to take precedence over help from God's Word.

God knows how powerful your mind is, because He created you it. His Word will guide you to be genuine in your thoughts.

The word *genuine* means "actually having the reputed or apparent qualities or character." A follower of Christ should reflect Christ in her conduct and conversation. This begins in the mind.

**Freebie:** *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).*

The Bible teaches that minds can be renewed. You can change your thinking. You can be genuine in your thoughts if you choose to think about God-pleasing things instead of ungodly things. Ungodly thoughts are destructive and may lead to destructive behavior.

15. Read Philippians 3:13–15.

(a) What are you supposed to forget?

(b) What direction are you supposed to move toward in your thinking?

Keep moving forward in your personal walk with Christ. Allow Him free rein in your mind to change your thoughts to be more like His thoughts.

16. Read 2 Corinthians 10:4–5. If you are allowing counterfeit thinking to control your thoughts, what does God’s Word teach you to do?

**Freebie:** | *“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).*

Our minds are a raging battlefield. In our minds are stored words from childhood, telling us how smart or how not-so-smart we were. We have media ads playing scenes over and over in our minds, telling us how we should look. In our minds we replay advice that isn’t always the best counsel. Talk shows and reality shows have inundated our minds with the idea that media personalities have all the answers and are living the best lives. We see videos and photos of family and friends through social media, which might make our own lives look miserable by comparison.

Then add the real enemy, Satan. He loves to throw the book at us—his book of lies. He wants to impose counterfeit truths on us. Do not go into the battle alone. Be geared up with the truth of the Word of God. You do not have to think the way anyone else says you have to think. Think and be who you and God agree for you to think and be!

17. Read Philippians 4:8–9. Define the things God tells believers to think about that will renew their minds. Whatever is . . .

True—

Honest—

Just—

Pure—

Lovely—

Of good report—

Virtue—

Praise—

18. If you live and think what God teaches, where will God's peace be?

The Bible will direct your thoughts so you have a correct view of yourself and can make wise decisions. It will direct your thinking to new, godly ways instead of old, ungodly, destructive ways.

If you have not allowed God to renew your mind, begin today. Allow His power to transform your thinking from counterfeit to genuine.

**Freebie:** | *“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).*



Add **genuine, growing faith** to your shopping cart.