



# *Devotional Study Guide Journal*

February 14<sup>th</sup>

## ***The List You Made***

As my life got complicated by the normal course of aspects being added on to it, such as college, caring for myself, being married, taking care of our home, and then one, two, three children. As my responsibilities in ministry grew, it became necessary to make lists to help me focus on completing my many tasks.

Most adults have lists, even if they are just in their minds. Some things need to get done, and we are the ones who need to do them.

“Today, I must do these things,” the list would begin. Then, “I should do these things. “Finally, the list added one more category, “I would like to do these.”

Added to the normal list anyone might make, we also had an increasing list of “spiritual disciplines” to accomplish. Pray daily for at least one hour. Read at least ten chapters in the Bible, go to church each time the church doors opened, be involved in the ministries of the church, give a prescribed amount of your income, produce the fruits of the Spirit, live as Jesus would, love each other by helping them when needed, spend time together with people from the church, and be an example at work and to unsaved friends and family.

All of these things seemed necessary, and they were done out of love for God, for family, for friends, and for the lost. But at almost every day’s end, the truth that my lists had not been completed hung over me like a dark cloud. It wasn’t always thought out in words, but just this sense that I had fallen short of God’s best for me. Pleasing God was my primary goal, so this sense of disappointing Him hung heavily.

Even after our grace awakening and God set us free from the religious expectations that nearly killed us, lists were still a necessity because life was very full of responsibilities that could only be accomplished by me. Every night, the clouds would gather, and I would find myself apologizing to God for falling short and feeling inadequate.

One glorious evening, as this routine was being played out in my mind, the Lord spoke very clearly to my heart. It was one of those moments when He somehow got my attention, and He said, “Cathy.” There seemed to be a pause to give me a second to realize He was addressing me personally.

“I am not disappointed in you for not completing the list YOU made.”

Instantly realizing that He had spoken to me, my heart exploded with revelation and joy when I heard those liberating words. God wasn't disappointed in me. Not finishing my long to-do list had nothing to do with my relationship with Him. He cared for me personally—not about how well I finished my list. Jesus said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” That's what I felt at that moment. Free.

Under the Old Covenant, God had a list called the Law. If one did the list, he would be blessed. If one failed to do the list, that person would be cursed. The Law provided temporary forgiveness, but the requirements still existed, constantly nagging and accusing. But then our Savior came and died for us, and in doing so, He fulfilled the law for us.

### **Galatians 3:10-14**

*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in **all** things which are written in the book of the law, **to do** them.”<sup>11</sup> But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “**the just shall live by faith**.”<sup>12</sup> Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”<sup>13</sup> Christ has **redeemed us** from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),<sup>14</sup> that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit **through faith**.*

We have to organize our time, and yes, even make lists, but let us not confuse this natural necessity with God's estimation of us. He isn't disappointed if we don't finish the lists WE make. Rather, He is there to encourage us for what we do accomplish, comfort us when we fall short of our own standards, and teach us to be gracious, even to ourselves.

