

TOUCHPOINTS™

TouchPoints™
FOR STUDENTS
Second Edition

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TouchPoints for Students

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INTRODUCTION

PSALM 119:105 | *Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.*

PSALM 119:111, 162 | *Your laws are my treasure; they are my heart's delight. . . . I rejoice in your word like one who discovers a great treasure.*

PSALM 119:91, 160 | *Your regulations remain true to this day, for everything serves your plans. . . . The very essence of your words is truth; all your just regulations will stand forever.*

What a treasure we have in the living Word of God! The Holy Bible is relevant to today's issues and gives solid guidance for daily living. In this book you will find over one hundred topics that apply to your everyday life as well as what the Bible says about each one. The topics are presented alphabetically, along with several questions, Scriptures, and comments addressing each one. In the table of contents in the front of this book you will find a complete listing of all of them for quick reference. While we could not cover all topics, questions, and Scriptures related to students, the subject of this book, our prayer is that you will continue to deliberately search God's Word to grow closer to him and

discover how his way of living is the best path to joy and satisfaction. Whether you read through this book page by page or you use it as a reference guide for topics of particular interest to you, may you find answers in God's Word as he longs to be your daily Guide.

Enjoy your treasure hunt.

The editors

2 TIMOTHY 3:16 | *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.*

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ABSENCE

Why do I sometimes feel that God is absent?

PSALM 10:1 | *O LORD, why do you stand so far away? Why do you hide when I am in trouble?*

PSALM 139:2, 7 | *You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. . . . I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence!*

The greater your troubles, the farther away God sometimes seems. In your darkest hour, you may feel that God has left you. In times like this, when it seems as if God is absent, don't trust your feelings; trust God's promise that he will never leave you. Rely on what the Bible tells you is true, not on what your feelings are telling you.

ISAIAH 59:1-2 | *Listen! The LORD's arm is not too weak to save you, nor is his ear too deaf to hear you call. It's your sins that have cut you off from God.*

When God seems far away, it may be because you have moved away from him, not because he has moved away from you. Sometimes there might be a sin you are not willing to let go of that causes you to feel cut off from God and miss the joy of friendship with him. Is there some sin that is keeping you from

moving toward God? Tear down the wall of sin by confessing it to God, and you will find him on the other side.

Promise from God MATTHEW 28:20 | [*Jesus said,*] “*Be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*”

ABSOLUTES

There seems to be so many gray areas when it comes to right and wrong. How can I tell what is really right?

EXODUS 20:1 | *God gave the people all these instructions.*

JOHN 14:15 | [*Jesus said,*] “*If you love me, obey my commandments.*”

God has given you his Word, the Bible, which clearly tells you the things that are absolutely right and absolutely wrong.

ROMANS 8:5 | *Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.*

GALATIANS 5:16 | *Let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.*

God has given you the Holy Spirit, who will help you live obediently and teach you absolute truth, even when your old sinful nature is trying to take over and distort the truth.

Some friends make fun of me for doing right. How do I deal with that?

ROMANS 2:10 | *There will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good.*

1 PETER 3:14 | *If you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it.*

Have you ever wondered why you feel good after doing something you know is right? That peace is God's reward to you for doing what is right.

Why do I need absolutes? Can't I just do my own thing?

JUDGES 21:25 | *In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.*

PROVERBS 21:2 | *People may be right in their own eyes, but the LORD examines their heart.*

JAMES 4:11 | *Your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you.*

From the beginning of time, people who did what was right in their own eyes reaped catastrophic consequences for themselves and others. The Bible teaches that you are born with the desire to sin, so doing your own thing will always lead you away from God. Your job is not to pass judgment on God's ways by devising your own, but to follow God and all he says. If you buy something that needs assembling, and you purposely go against the instruction manual, what you assemble will not work properly. It's the same with life. Follow God's instruction manual, the Bible.

Promise from God 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 | *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.*

ACCEPTANCE

What makes me acceptable to God?

ROMANS 3:27 | *Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith.*

No one can earn God's acceptance. Nothing you do could ever compensate for your sin. The only way to be accepted by God is to believe that his Son, Jesus, died for your sins so that you could be free to enjoy eternal life with him. When you accept his forgiveness and let him be Lord of your life, he completely accepts you into his presence. It's that simple.

What if a person has committed a terrible sin? Should I still accept him or her?

ROMANS 8:39 | *Nothing . . . will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Nothing can separate a person from God's love. In the same way, you should always love others, no matter how great their sin. This does not mean that you accept or condone their sinful actions or ignore the appropriate discipline but that you view and accept them as unique and special creations of God. It is only through love that you bring sinful people back into fellowship with God and others.

How do I learn to accept those who are different from me?

MATTHEW 9:11-12 | *The Pharisees . . . asked [Jesus] disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with such scum?” When Jesus heard this, he said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do.”*

Every person is a unique creation of God and is loved by God. If God loves everyone, shouldn’t you?

Promise from God ROMANS 15:7 | *Accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

What is the right perspective on my accomplishments?

ECCLESIASTES 12:13 | *Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone’s duty.*

Obeying God is life’s greatest accomplishment.

ROMANS 1:17 | *This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”*

Salvation, the greatest of accomplishments, is not accomplished through your own work but through the work of God in your heart. It is simply by faith: believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins so that you can live forever with him.

How can I achieve my God-given potential?

JOHN 5:19 | *Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does."*

JOHN 15:5 | *[Jesus said,] "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."*

By staying in a healthy relationship with God. The product of a growing relationship with God is a deepened faith in who he is and what he can do. Achieving your God-given potential means accepting what God has given you to do and using his power to accomplish it.

Is it wrong to be proud of my accomplishments?

1 CORINTHIANS 4:7 | *What gives you the right to make such a judgment? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift?*

Accomplishment brings a healthy sense of satisfaction, which then should lead you to thank God for what he has done through you.

How do I make the most of my accomplishments?

ECCLESIASTES 4:9 | *Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed.*

Accomplishments are multiplied through a team. You can't play football or soccer without teamwork. How encouraging to note that two people can do more than

twice as much as one, as long as they are pulling in the same direction!

What is a good model for accomplishing things?

ISAIAH 25:1 | *O LORD, I will honor and praise your name, for you are my God. You do such wonderful things! You planned them long ago, and now you have accomplished them.*

Accomplishments follow good planning. God planned before he accomplished—a good model for you to follow.

Promise from God PSALM 60:12 | *With God's help we will do mighty things.*

ACCOUNTABILITY

Why is accountability so important?

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10, 12 | *Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. . . . A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.*

A person standing alone against the world is vulnerable. You need mutual support and companionship. Enlisting a Christian friend as an accountability partner will more than double your spiritual strength. Include the Lord in that relationship and you become “triple-braided.”

How do I become more accountable?

JEREMIAH 23:24 | *“Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?” says the LORD.*

If you’re going to take accountability seriously, you have to begin with God. You will better understand what you are doing and why you are doing it when you understand for whom you are doing it. God knows all the secrets of your heart anyway, so why try to hide anything from him? Be honest with him; tell him the struggles you have in following him.

PSALM 119:9, 66 | *How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. . . . I believe in your commands; now teach me good judgment and knowledge.*

To become more accountable, follow God’s commands as outlined in his Word, the Bible.

PSALM 1:1 | *Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.*

PROVERBS 27:6 | *Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.*

Purposefully choose wise friends who will hold you accountable. Their honesty may hurt at times but can save you from greater pain down the road.

Does God really hold me accountable for all my actions?

ECCLESIASTES 11:9 | *Young people, it’s wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it. Do everything you want to do; take it all in. But remember that you must give an account to God for everything you do.*

Enjoy life, but stay within God's guidelines. Live today as though you will be with God in eternity tomorrow. Yes, God will hold you accountable for everything you do, and who wants to try to explain ungodliness to a holy God on the Day of Judgment?

JEREMIAH 12:2-3 | *Your name is on their lips, but you are far from their hearts. But as for me, LORD, you know my heart. You see me and test my thoughts.*

Others may be able to judge your actions, but only God knows your motives, thoughts, and feelings.

How can I effectively hold someone else accountable?

EXODUS 18:21-22 | *Select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. . . . They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you.*

Before you can help others be accountable, you must not only know God's commands but be committed to obeying them yourself. You must also be able to use good judgment. If you are going to hold others accountable, you must work to be wise, honest, godly, trustworthy, and kind.

How can I choose the right people to hold me accountable?

1 KINGS 12:8, 10-11 | *Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older men and instead asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him. . . . The young men replied, "This is what you should tell those complainers . . . 'Yes, my father laid heavy*

burdens on you, but I'm going to make them even heavier! My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!"

Your closest friends may not always be the best advisers, especially if their counsel is not consistent with God's Word.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:8 | *To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge.*

Choose people who are especially wise and godly, who will not hesitate to help you see when you need to realign yourself with God.

What happens when there is no accountability?

JUDGES 17:6 | *In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.*

Left unaccountable, people will always lean toward sin, which eventually hurts them and others and pulls them away from God. This could happen to you, as well.

Promise from God PSALM 37:30 | *The godly offer good counsel; they teach right from wrong.*

ADDICTION

Am I addicted?

ROMANS 6:12 | *Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires.*

JOHN 8:34 | *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin."*

2 PETER 2:19 | *You are a slave to whatever controls you.*

You become addicted when you let something control you. Sin, your greatest addiction, is often alluring and attractive, offering short-term pleasure. It is easy to justify giving in “just this once,” because you think you have things under control. But soon you realize that what you are giving in to has become a habit you can’t break. It is now controlling you. Sin’s control often comes from the loss of self-control.

How can God break the power of addiction in my life?

GALATIANS 5:22-23 | *The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

God breaks the power of addiction when you give him control of your life. He will come into your life and change your heart and your desires. Surrender to the Holy Spirit, and God will replace addictive drives with life-affirming desires.

ROMANS 6:16 | *Don’t you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.*

Submission is a choice to obey something or someone. Every day you stand at a crossroads, choosing sinful ways or God’s way. The choice is yours. Admit your need to God in prayer, release all your anxieties to him, and rely fully on the promise of God’s help.

EPHESIANS 5:18 | *Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.*

It is imperative to admit your addiction and acknowledge its destructiveness. While it is healthy and important to seek the help of others, with God's help you have the ultimate power to overcome addiction.

PROVERBS 13:14 | *The instruction of the wise is like a life-giving fountain; those who accept it avoid the snares of death.*

It is almost impossible to overcome addiction by yourself. You need the consistent support of other people who love you, tell you the truth, and hold you accountable. Participating in an addiction-recovery support group is often valuable, perhaps even essential, in order to overcome an addiction. God often works through other people to help you.

ROMANS 12:2 | *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

Freedom from addiction comes as you change your focus and the way you think. You do this by trusting Christ to transform you and give you the power to resist temptation.

Promise from God ROMANS 6:16 | *Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.*

ADVICE

Do I need advice from others? Why can't I just rely on my own wisdom?

PROVERBS 12:15 | *Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others.*

Wisdom is recognizing your own inadequacies. Foolishness is thinking you have none. It is better to recognize your limitations and seek good counsel at the beginning of a problem than to discover that your limitations have made the situation worse. Avoid getting into a position where you say to yourself, *If only I had asked someone sooner.*

Where do I look for good advice?

PSALM 37:30 | *The godly offer good counsel; they teach right from wrong.*

COLOSSIANS 3:16 | *Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives.*

First, look for advice from God through prayer and by reading his Word. Next, seek advice from godly people who have the gift of wisdom. These are people who have proven themselves to be faithful, godly, honest, and trustworthy.

How do I evaluate the advice of others?

2 JOHN 1:9 | *Anyone who wanders away from this teaching has no relationship with God. But anyone who remains in the teaching of Christ has a relationship with both the Father and the Son.*

MATTHEW 7:16, 20 | *You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. . . . Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.*

One way to test advice is to evaluate the advisers. Do their actions match their words? Does their advice square with the truth of God's Word? If it contradicts the Bible, it's bad advice.

How do I give good advice to others?

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 | *Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*

In giving advice, make sure your motives are right—to offer the best possible advice for the situation, not to offer advice that might improve your own situation. Point to the Bible, and don't use advice as an excuse to lecture. Pray about what you need to say, and have the other person's best interests in mind.

How valuable is wise advice?

PROVERBS 25:11 | *Timely advice is lovely, like golden apples in a silver basket.*

Timely advice is not merely helpful; it is beautiful and essential because it comes just when you need it. Having a godly counselor to coach you at your time of need is a blessing because it helps you avoid pain and heartache.

Promise from God PSALM 32:8 | *The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you."*