Practicing The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes are the foundational tools that we have to not only possess, we have to learn how to use them in real life. First we have to understand what they are and what they do. Then we have to allow God to put them in our lives so they are ready for use, when we face a life situation that requires them.

We are taking the people God handpicked to be in His Bible and using the main ones as examples. Some of these people succeeded in using these principles and won at life. Others failed to use them and were damaged in various aspects of their lives. By our being able to see how these Beatitude tools work in these Biblical examples, we will see how to use them in our own lives.

Noah And Family

The third example comes to us as a man with a wife and three sons; we are related to him in that he came from the blood line of Seth, Adam and Eve's third child. All us humans, on this planet, were born through the linage of Seth. Abel was murdered; and all Cain's linage died in the flood. Only those who were born through Noah, who came through Seth, live on the earth now.

Noah started out just like us as an innocent baby (not knowing the difference between right and wrong), then, one day, his conscience came alive and he knew the difference between good and evil. When he started out being innocent, he wasn't responsible for any spiritual mistakes he made. But then God spoke to him through his conscience, and when he sinned against it, he became a sinner.

Once Noah received this law in his conscience, he faced the same temptations we face as the Holy Spirit speaks to our conscience and tells us what is right and wrong. Satan came to him just like he comes to us; he didn't come to him in the form of a serpent; he came to him in his mind and in his feelings. So, let's get started comparing his life with ours as we see how to use the Beatitudes to win at life.

Going Against The Sinful Nature:
Gen 6:9 (NIV) This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

Noah made a choice; he DECIDED that he wanted to yield to the attitudes that God offers all humans. Even though he didn't have the Beatitudes in written form like we do, he responded to his conscience. He allowed God to give him the attitudes that his conscience was dealing with him about.

Noah was a righteous man means that he yielded to a desire to do good to himself, others, and God's plan. He also yielded to a desire to NOT do bad things to himself, others, and God's plan. **Noah was…blameless among the people of his time** didn't mean he was perfect; he had to offer blood sacrifices for his sins. He had problems and struggles with his sinful nature just like us and everyone else. So, what was the difference between Noah and those who aren't righteous?

God was providing Noah with the Beatitude issues in his conscience; Noah was hearing these things from God and yielding to them. So, let's see how the Beatitude items helped Noah and help us move into righteousness.

Using The Beatitudes To Get God's Righteousness

- **Poor In Spirit** is to have a teachable attitude. This means that Noah had to and we need to BE WILLING to learn all those things we are going to need during a temptation to sin. Our body wants certain things that require we do things that hurt us and those around us. Noah had to and we all must be ready for these temptations BEFORE we get into them. If Noah had come into the temptations of life with self-confidence, he would have failed to get God's righteousness; but instead, he had a teachable attitude.

  Pride:
  If Noah had been or we are being tempted with pride, for example, our emotions would come to us with feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem. Our mind would try to come up with a reason for why we are so much better than many of those around us. It would reason out all our accomplishments and the circumstances that point to the fact that we are superior.

  Rather than using the poor in spirit attitude and coming to God with the issue, we and Noah would try to diagnose and solve our own problems. Pride would cause us to neglect to use the provisions that God has given us to fight temptation to do bad things to ourselves and others. We would be using our own thought processes to try to decide what to do about each temptation.

Let's make this our statement of faith as it relates to being poor in spirit:
1 John 2:1-3 (NIV) My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have One Who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands.

Our Prayer Of Faith:
Heavenly Father I believe in Your power to help me not sin; but, when I fail to take advantage of Your power and do sin, I believe in the One Who speaks to You, my Father, in my defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is my atoning sacrifice for my sins, and not only for my sins but also for the sins of the whole world. I know that I have come to know Him by obeying His commands.

Animal Sacrifices Compared To Jesus' Sacrifice:
Jesus is our atoning sacrifice for our sins; but, in the Noah situation, he had to make his statement of faith through animal sacrifices. **Gen 8:20 (NIV) Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.** Our situation is so much better than Noah's.

Heb 10:1 (NIV) The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

Illustrating The New Testament:
The Old Testament and its law were **only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves.** The animal sacrifices and the law were just giving the Old Testament people an example of what we now see and experience. That is why they had to keep offering **the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year.**

The Old Testament system had to be brought into existence so God could get humans ready for Jesus to come. In the program, Devotions With Jesus, we do a whole series of devotions that explain why Jesus couldn't come during Old Testament times. It explains what it took for our heavenly Father to get Jesus here as our Savior. In The Pursuit Of The Father devotions; it explains why God did what He did in the Old Testament so Jesus could come to earth.

The Power Of Jesus' Sacrifice:
Once Jesus came to earth and became our **atoning sacrifice for our sins,** we had a sacrifice that only had to be offered once. Since we have accepted Jesus as our **atoning sacrifice for our sins,** we don't have to keep coming back over and over again for salvation. Noah, on the other hand, had to keep offering sacrifices for his sins year after year. This proves how powerful and effective Jesus' sacrifice was for our sins. It shows a characteristic about salvation that we all need to understand.

Heb 10:2 (NIV) If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed <u>ONCE FOR ALL, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins</u>.

If the animal sacrifices could have done what Jesus' sacrifice did, **would they not have stopped being offered?** The animal sacrifices offered by Noah didn't offer him the salvation Jesus has provided us. If it had, **the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, <u>and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins</u>.**

Feeling Guilty Or Feeling Bad:
This is where the issue of feeling guilty and feeling bad comes into play. Simply put, the law makes us feel guilty; love makes us feel bad. The law points out that we have done something wrong by breaking it; that makes us feel guilty. Love points out that we have HURT ourselves, other people, and God's plan; that makes us feel bad.

The Beatitudes take us into the realm of love; the Old Testament law takes us into legality. The law tells us what is right and what is wrong; the New Testament love tells us what is good for us and others and what is bad for us.

The New Will:
Heb 10:10 (NIV) And by that Will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ <u>once for all</u>.

A will and a testament are basically the same thing. The Old Testament and the Old Will would mean the same thing. **And by that Will** is talking about the New Testament or New Will. **And by that Will, we have been made holy** is saying that the New Testament or Will has made us righteous with the righteousness of God.

The Perfection Of The New Testament Or Will:
We are righteous but not perfect; however, our record between us and God is holy; it says we are perfectly righteous or holy. We were credited with God's righteousness, which is holy. Now, we are learning how to use that righteousness or holiness of God to get our behavior PERFECTED.

Mat 5:48 (NIV) Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

This is our goal; just because perfection isn't obtainable in our current body, doesn't mean we don't even try. Love helps us realize that EVERY mistake we make hurts us, other people, and the efforts of God. Love keeps us from giving up on perfection.

Hurting For Other People:
Matthew 5:48 is telling us that our record is PERFECTLY clean; only the **atoning sacrifice for our sins** that Jesus provided us could do this. So, as we move into mourning, we aren't talking about deep feelings of guilt; we are talking about deep feelings of remorse for the hurtful things we have done to ourselves, to others, and to the wonderful work of God.

We Christians have a clean record to start with; when we sin, the sin is covered by the BLOOD of Jesus, so we can come as a Christian, who needs forgiveness and a better way of treating people. Rather than coming as a sinner, who needs salvation, every time we sin, we remain Christians; we just need to learn how to BE better Christians.

- **Mourning** is allowing God to show us what our real problem is within ourselves. If we are or Noah was being tempted with a relationship issue like friendship, business clients, divorce, marriage, or child raising, for example, we may assume that the other person is the problem.

  Rather than allowing God to go through OUR heart and show US where WE are part of the problem, we can resist mourning and try to justify or forgive our part of the problem. This keeps us from seeing things that are hurting us, other people, and all those things that God is trying to do in and through us.

  Hurting People Without Feeling Bad About It:
  Gen 6:5-6 (NIV) The LORD saw <u>how great man's wickedness</u> on the earth had become, and that <u>every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time</u>. The LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and <u>His heart was filled with pain</u>.

  Wickedness is a condition where we can't see things from other people's perspective. It is a condition where we are selfish, self-centered, self-confident, and have self-esteem. Everything is all about us and what we want in life. We concentrate on what we want, what we need, how we feel, and what others have that we need to get from them.

  Being Willing To Feel Bad:
  Love is a condition where we STILL see things from our perspective; but, we use it to see how others are feeling. Even though we can't actually feel someone else's feelings, we can allow love to create SIMILAR feeling inside our heart.

  The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become is dealing with a spiritual growth into evil. These people were seeking, studying, training, and growing into more and more wickedness. The more evil they treated each other with, the more the mistreated people retaliated and did evil things back. Love stops the cycle and helps us end the wickedness that has been done to us.

Stopping The Cycle Of Evil:
Luke 6:27-28 (NIV) "But I tell <u>you who hear Me</u>: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

This keeps wickedness from spreading from person to person; it even keeps wickedness from getting inside us. Rather than Noah joining all these people by doing to them those things they did to him, he loved them and prayed for them.

Receiving Evil, Giving Good:
Luke 6:29-30 (NIV) If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

The people of Noah's day found this principle to be impossible. Because they didn't allow love to take them into mourning, they grew in their hate, their immorality, their dishonesty, and their selfishness. Noah allowed love to take him into feeling bad about those things he did against himself, those around him, and to God's plan.

Learning How To Love Others:
Luke 6:31 (NIV) Do to others as you would have them do to you.

As God's love helps us identify with others, it brings us right back to ourselves. God's love awakens our realization of how much sin is hurting US. Mourning isn't just feeling bad about what we have done to others; it has to help us regret all the bad things we have done to ourselves. If we are going **do to others as** [we] **would have them do to** [us], then we have to know what we want done to us. And, we also have to know what we don't want done to us.

Our bodies make us be separate from what is going on in someone else's body. But, we will still know how they feel, if we know how we feel about things. Mourning helps us see what is hurting us; it THEN helps us see what we do that is hurting others. The more we know about those things that are hurting us, the more we know how to treat others.

Now, let's make our statement of faith as it relates to mourning:
James 4:8-10 (NIV) Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Our Prayer Of Faith:
Heavenly Father, I come near to You; and, I believe You have come near to me. By faith in Your power, I believe my hands are washed in the blood of the forgiveness and healing of Jesus; I accept Your purifying of my heart.

I have been double-minded in my approach to life. I grieve, mourn, and wail about those things I have done to hurt myself, other people, and Your plan. I give up all careless attitudes of laughter for now and yield to the attitude of mourning. I lay down my joy for a moment and yield to gloom concerning what I have done. I humble myself before You, Lord; I know You are now lifting me up.

The Noah Attitude:
In the Noah attitude, his statement of faith was expressed in animal sacrifices. He did his mourning over the bad things he had done through those sacrifices. Those things God was saying to his conscience about bad things he was doing was being mourned over.

The Noah attitude allows God to help us go over our thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds and helps us feel bad about those things wrong in them. It allows our heart to open and let God show us what evil thoughts we are thinking. It helps us yield to mourning and start feeling bad about what we are planning. It keeps us from resisting God's words, thoughts, and feelings; and keeps us from just embracing our own thoughts and feelings.

- **Meekness** is accepting professionals and experts as being people we need to put some part of our life in their hands. If we are being tempted with a moral issue, for example, we may decide to try to handle it with our own skills, talents, power, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Or, we may choose some person who isn't a Christian to be our expert or give us professional help.

  Meekness is the process of us accepting God as our only expert in the area where we need help. If we are poor in spirit (teachable) with someone other than God and the people He picks for us, then we have become meek with the wrong person or group.

What Does God Know About Boats?
Gen 6:13-14 (NIV) So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.

Gen 6:15-16 (NIV) <u>This is how you are to build it</u>: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.

Getting Expert Advice:
Noah might have said, look God, I have a lot of friends who have been building boats for a long time. They come from a long line of boat builders; if I am going to be putting me and my family in a boat, I want them to build it for me.

That may sound strange, as we look at this Biblical passage. But, this is what we do a lot of the time in picking who is going to give us expert or professional advice. We look at the degrees on their walls, the professionalism of their office, and the respect they command in their community and choose their advice over getting it from God.

Now, let's make our statement of faith as it relates to meekness:
Heb 4:13-14 (NIV) Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a Great High Priest Who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

Heb 4:15-16 (NIV) For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have One Who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Our Prayer Of Faith:
Heavenly Father, nothing in all creation is hidden from Your sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before You to Whom we must give account. Therefore I yield to You as my expert, my God for helping me with my problems.

Since I have a Great High Priest Who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, I believe in His power to help me hold firmly to the faith I profess. For I don't have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with my weaknesses, But I have One Who has been tempted in every way, just like I am—yet was without sin. I now approach Your throne of grace with confidence in You, I do this so that I may receive mercy and find grace to help me in my time of need.

The Meekness Attitude:
In the Noah attitude, he made his statement of faith concerning meekness through his animal sacrifices. By offering those sacrifices, he demonstrated that God was the One he respected and accepted as his authority. The Noah attitude accepts God as our expert or professional in the matter. It causes us to consider Him to be the expert and professional for our life. Rather than putting ourselves in the decision making position, it causes us to keep God there.

- **Righteousness** is the attitude and act of doing those things that are good for us, those around us, and God's plan. It is also the avoidance of all those things that are bad for us, others, and God's plan. However, the definition of what is good and what is bad is established only through what God says they are.

  If we are being tempted to lie, for example, to hunger and thirst after righteousness is to go to our heavenly Father and ask Him to show us what is the good way to treat people and what is the bad way. We should ask Him to show us who is being benefited by the system of lying, we are using, and who is being hurt.

  Going Against Popular Opinion:
  Gen 6:8-9 (NIV) But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

  When almost every other person on the planet was being wicked and evil, Noah was being righteous. Noah is proof that God can help us humans live a life that is very different from those around us. It takes a miracle of God to be **blameless among the people of his time.**

  Noah couldn't count on any of his friends supporting him in his decisions to serve and walk with God. He didn't have anyone to pattern after as a good example of how to be righteous. He couldn't even look to his parents for help and advice. It all had to be coming from the Beatitude principles that God was putting in his conscience and heart.

  Now, let's make our statement of faith as it relates to righteousness:
  Heb 5:11-12 (NIV) We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

  Heb 5:13-14 (NIV) Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, <u>who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil</u>.

Our Prayer Of Faith:
Heavenly Father, You have much to teach me about righteousness, but it has been hard to explain to me because I have been slow to learn. In fact, though by this time I ought to be a teacher, I still need someone to teach me the elementary truths of Your Word all over again. I am still needing milk, not solid food!

I admit that anyone who lives on milk, being still a spiritual infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. I believe that solid food is for the mature Christians, who by their constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. I am right now praying for this solid food so I can distinguish good from evil.

The Noah Attitude:
In the Noah attitude, he made his statement of faith concerning righteousness through his animal sacrifices. The Noah attitude helps us open our heart to the righteousness of God. It gives us the ability to decide to ask God to help us yield to those things that are good for us, those around us, and His plan.

Being Willing To Be Willing:
There was a part of Noah that didn't want God's help just like there is in us, it wanted to go on yielding to the desires of his body. But, there was another part of Noah that could say, God, I can't seem to come up with a desire to be helped with this attitude. My feelings and desires are so strong I can't seem to want your help with this. But, I am willing for You to make me willing to seek Your help.

This is the type of prayer we can pray, when we are seemingly filled with a complete desire to do wrong. It is a moment when it looks like our mind is made up. It appears all is lost and we are going to sin no matter what. Even though we aren't willing, at the moment, to accept God's help, we can pray and ask God to help us be willing to reach out for His help. Just say: "God I am willing to be helped with being willing to reach out for Your help."

- **Mercy** is to give someone something good that they don't deserve or to refuse to punish them for doing something they deserve punishment, retaliation, or brought to justice for.

Leaving Judgment Up To God:
Deu 32:35 (NIV) <u>It is mine to avenge</u>; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them."

Vengeance belongs to God; we don't qualify for judging people and deciding who, when, and how they should be punished. It is our job to either stay away from an evil person or give them mercy. If mercy can't change them and help them come to the saving grace of Jesus, then we need to stay as far away from them as possible.

Ezek 7:9 (NIV) I will not look on you with pity or spare you; I will repay you <u>in accordance with your conduct and the detestable practices among you</u>. Then you will know that it is I the LORD Who strikes the blow.

Only God knows when it is time to punish a person or group. He alone knows every feeling, thought, word, and deed of every person on earth. We need to simply trust Him with the job of punishing people and making sure they pay for their crimes against us and other people.

Know How To Escape Judgment:
Gen 6:5-6 (NIV) The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth, <u>and His heart was filled with pain</u>.

Gen 6:7-8 (NIV) So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them." <u>But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD</u>.

Yielding To Mercy Brings Mercy To Us:
God's grace and mercy saved mankind; God's heart was filled with pain regarding the way humans were treating each other. It was a sad moment; **But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.** That means he found grace and mercy in the eyes of the Lord. In other words, we are still on this planet because of grace and mercy.

God showed mercy to Noah was because he was yielding to His power of mercy for others. **Gen 6:9b (NIV) Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, <u>and he walked with God</u>.**

Having Mercy On Those Who Don't Deserve It:
Being **blameless among the people of his time** meant Noah showed mercy to people who were wicked. Mercy is all about doing good to people who do not deserve it. If people deserve the good we do, then we aren't giving them mercy.

Mat 5:7 (NIV) Blessed are the merciful, <u>for they will be shown mercy</u>.

The reason Noah received mercy from God was because he was showing mercy to those around him. The reason Noah was able to show mercy to those around him was because he yielded to the mercy that God provides through the Beatitude items. When Noah **walked with God,** that exposure to God provided him with power to show mercy.

If Noah hadn't had the power of God to show others mercy, he wouldn't have **found favor in the eyes of the LORD.** If he hadn't found favor in the eyes of the Lord, we wouldn't be here right now. And, the way Noah had the power of God to show others mercy was **he walked with God.**

Now, let's make our statement of faith as it relates to mercy:
Rom 12:1 (NIV) Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

Rom 12:2 (NIV) Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will.

Our Prayer Of Faith:
Heavenly Father, in view of Your mercy to us humans and in view of it to me, I offer my body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to You--this is the spiritual act of worship I want to demonstrate to You.

Empower me to not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of my mind. Then I know and believe that I will be able to test and approve what Your will is--Your good, pleasing and perfect will. I pray and confess this in faith that I might be able to show mercy to all those around me.

- **A Pure Heart** is to have motives that are filled with love and righteousness. It is to have God's love that is listed in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a and the righteousness listed in Galatians 5:22-23. This is a place where we have to ask God to search our heart. Since our heart is buried in a deep place where it can't be analyzed by us, and since it can't be reasoned with by our mind, we need the Holy Spirit to guide us with the prayers we must have (Romans 8:26-27).

Receive Power To Influence Rather Than Being Influenced:
Gen 6:5 (NIV) The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that <u>every inclination of the THOUGHTS OF HIS HEART was only evil all the time</u>. And yet, **Noah was a righteous man, blameless <u>among the people of his time</u>, and he walked with God (Gen 6:9b).**

We don't get the power to have a pure heart through any other source than through God. If Noah had looked to other people for his attitudes and character, he wouldn't have received a pure heart. If he had based his treatment of others on how they treated and worked with him, their evil would have pulled him down.

Our world has some real problems with evil; we are surrounded by philosophies, training, concepts, and theories that are against what God teaches. Our schools, our relationships, our entertainment, and even some of our government are all pushing us toward doing wrong things.

Now, let's make our statement of faith as it relates to a pure heart:
Eph 1:18-21 (NIV) I pray also that <u>the eyes of your heart</u> may be enlightened IN ORDER THAT you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, AND <u>His incomparably great power for us who believe</u>.

<u>That power</u> is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Our Prayer Of Faith:
I pray also that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened in order that I may know the hope to which You have called me, the riches of Your glorious inheritance in the saints, and Your incomparably great power for us who believe.

And I confess in faith that this power is like the working of Your mighty strength, which You exerted in Christ when You raised Him from the dead and seated Him at Your right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Because of this truth, I believe that You are in the process of purifying my heart so I can live out the pure life.

- **A Peacemaker** is a person who has God's peace already in their own heart and life. They are those who are willing to share this peace with those who are struggling with having peace in their own life and in their relationship with other people.

Having Peace In The Midst Of Great Turmoil:
Noah had peace in his own heart; **Gen 6:18 (NIV) But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark--<u>you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you</u>.** Noah's peace came from walking with God; God gave him the peace he needed in order for him to be able to pass it on to his family. He passed his power of peace on to all who would receive his peacemaking attitudes.

When we are surrounded by as much evil as Noah was surrounded with, we have to be careful how we treat people. **Prov 15:1 (NIV) A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.** We have to not do things that set them off; they are governed and pushed by evil philosophies, thoughts, and feelings.

Mat 7:6 (NIV) Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

Born With A Strong Will:
We can start out as a baby with a strong will; we can have strong emotional reactions as a normal way for us to deal with the issues of life. We can be born with a volatile personality that responds differently from most people. However, that doesn't mean that is the way we are supposed to be.

Noah didn't excuse himself with statements like, that is just the way I am. He didn't justify his actions by deciding that someone else "made him mad;" he didn't decide that they deserved his reactions; instead he received a peacemaking attitude from God.

Noah didn't blame people and circumstances for most, if not all, of his problems and behavior. If someone proved to him he was wrong, he didn't quickly forgive himself. He didn't forgive himself through deciding he was born that way and couldn't change. Because he had peace in his own life, he was able to be a peacemaker around some VERY evil people.

Let's make our statement of faith for being a peacemaker:
Mat 5:43-45 (NIV) You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Mat 5:46-48 (NIV) If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Our Prayer Of Faith:
Heavenly Father, help me not just love my neighbor and hate my enemy. Empower me to love and have a peaceful relationship with my enemies and pray for those who persecute me, that I may be a child of You, my Father in heaven. I believe that You cause Your sun to rise on the evil and the good, and You send rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

I confess that if I love those who love me, what reward will I get? Confess that even most sinners are doing that? And if I greet only my Christian brothers, what am I doing more than others? I confess that even pagans do that? Help me be perfect in my peacemaking just like You do, heavenly Father, in Your perfection.

- **Persecution** is any outside human resistance against what we believe and know God has told us to believe and know. In this situation with Noah, his attitude was one that was like what Jesus told us to have.

  Receiving Power To Remain Faithful To God:
  Mat 5:11-12 (NIV) <u>Blessed</u> are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. <u>Rejoice and be glad</u>, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

  It is doubtful that Noah built the ark and didn't get any persecution for it. With such an evil population as was on the planet at the time, his being persecuted could have been some of the worst. But, **Noah did all that the LORD commanded him (Gen 7:5b).**

  No One Can Make Us Give Up On Jesus:
  Heb 11:35-36 (NIV) Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured <u>and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection</u>. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison.

  Heb 11:37-38 (NIV) They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated--<u>the world was not worthy of them</u>. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

  Heb 11:39-40 (NIV) <u>These were all commended for their faith</u>, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us SO THAT <u>only together with us would they be made perfect</u>.

  We Make The Final Decision:
  Satan, circumstance, and other people couldn't force Noah to change his beliefs or training through his conscience. All these things were able to do was try to convince him to do the changing himself. We don't go the direction we go by being forced; people, ideas, feelings, and circumstances have to convince us to make the change; the FINAL decision is ours.

  Persecution is more of an effort to force us to change our beliefs and truths. It can come as a verbal attack of making fun of us, criticizing us, accusing us falsely, gossiping against us, and saying all kinds of evil things about us. It can come as a rejection socially, cutting us off relationally, or punishing us through governmental systems.

Persecution can come as a physical attack of hitting us, abusing us physically, torturing us, or even killing us. It is all aimed at trying to FORCE us to give up on Jesus and His words. However, the Noah spiritual condition is a condition where a person is trained, thinks, and believes Godly things (the good things that God thinks).

Let's make our statement of faith for being a winner over persecution:
Heb 11:7 (NIV) By faith Noah, when warned about <u>things not yet seen</u>, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. <u>By his faith</u> he condemned the world and became heir of <u>the righteousness that comes by faith</u>.

Our Prayer Of Faith:
Heavenly Father, help me live by faith like Noah did. Help me, when warned about things I still do not yet see, to respond in holy fear to do whatever You are instructing me to do. By my faith, help me to set the world free from being condemned. And empower me to become an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

A Change Of Purpose:
Noah's ministry was to bring God's condemnation on the whole world. It was his job to build an ark to the righteous could be saved and the unrighteous could be judged. However, that isn't our ministry; we are called to bring salvation to the people who have been born after the flood.

John 3:17 (NIV) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.

This prayer of faith, we just prayed, is from the fact that Jesus came to save everyone; He actually produced salvation for every person.

It Takes Faith:
John 3:18 (NIV) <u>WHOEVER believes in Him is not condemned</u>, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

God's decision is based on our decision; God's plan is only fulfilled in those who respond to it in faith.