

Spiritual Problem Solving: (a practical approach that works every time it's tried)

- 1. Make sure it is a “spiritual” problem first.** Being conflicted on what make, model, color, or option package of automobile to buy is NOT a spiritual problem, for example. By contrast, being lazy and not wanting to actually work for a living (and pay your own debts) IS a spiritual problem. 2Thess.3:10-12, *“For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.”* Having determined that yours is a “spiritual” problem (and many if not most of them are), then proceed to Step #2.
- 2. Consult the “Original Manufacturer’s Manual.”** Find out how “this” product (aka, “life”) is supposed to work according to the Original Manufacturer’s “Operation Manual”- God’s Word. Get help as needed from others who’ve either used the product without the difficulties you’re experiencing, or from those who’ve experienced similar problems and have been able to resolve them using the “Manual.” Seeking help from those with similar but unresolved problems of their own with the “product,” or who have nothing but complaints and criticisms of the “product,” is almost always unhelpful, and usually yields either incorrect and/or dangerous advice. *“My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Your word. I have told of my ways, and You have answered me; Teach me Your statutes. Make me understand the way of Your precepts, So I will meditate on Your wonders. My soul weeps because of grief; Strengthen me according to Your word. Remove the false way from me, And graciously grant me Your law,”* Psa.119:25-29.
- 3. Go to the “Troubleshooting” section of the Original Manufacturer’s Manual.** Find the section that deals with the particular issue/problem you are having, read it carefully several times (again, get help from the sources mentioned in #2 as prescribed), then follow the “corrective procedures” carefully and fully. Gen.4:3-7 *“So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.’”*
- 4. Believe what the “Manual” says.** “But that’s not the way I’ve always done it” and “I’m not sure that’s right” regarding what “Operator’s” or “Troubleshooting” Manual says is what got you in the situation or problem you’re experiencing. *“THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN,”* Matt.15:8-9; and by contrast, 1Thess.2:13, *“For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work*

in you who believe.” The “Original Manufacturer” of “life” really DOES know more about how it’s supposed to “Operate,” and how to “Troubleshoot” it than you do.

- 5. Follow the instructions in the “Manual”- precisely, fully, and the utmost of your abilities.** This applies to both the “Operators” and “Troubleshooting” sections. It will please God and resolve your situation/problem; perhaps not in the way you wanted or thought, but it WILL solve/resolve the issue(s) between you and God! *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. “And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. “The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall,” Matt.7:24-27.*

Find the Manual. Read the Manual. Believe the Manual. Follow the Manual. It not only makes sense, but works well too! (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)