Five simple things you can do to guarantee failure!

- Intro:
  - sometimes it’s helpful to look at things from a negative perspective rather than the positive
  - illus. savings: to make sure you are miserable in retirement, spend all your money while you’re working, don’t save - not have money for anything other than subsistence living – emphasizes must save
  - illus. car: if you want to make sure your car doesn't last very long, never change the oil
  - illus. school: if you want to fail, never study and never do your homework
  - title: Five simple things you can do, to guarantee your failure as a Christian!

- To fail as a Christian, don’t do your best to assemble with the saints – a top priority of our week
  - put a higher priority on work and recreation than on church (assembly with the saints).
    - illus:
      - recreation:
        - stay out late on Saturday, sleep in on Sunday mornings
        - recreation activities vs. assembling with saints, Bible study – pleasure vs. worship
      - work, youth: work on Sunday rather than worship – not have to work
        - Matt. 16:26 exchange soul for $21.00, 3 hours work
        - If Jesus comes this morning (Sunday), where do you want to be - church or work? – call in work, tell can’t come

  - What do you miss, when you miss church (assembly with saints)?
    - miss out being encouraged and stimulated to love and good deeds (obey and serve God)
      - Heb. 10:23-25 stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking assembling
    - miss the opportunity to proclaim Christ's death and be spiritually strengthened
      - 1 Cor. 11:26 proclaim the Lord's death until He comes
      - 1 Cor. 11:27-30 Lord’s Supper, if not partake properly become weak and sick and spiritually sleep

  - What do you tell others, when you neglect the assembly of the saints - purposefully neglect
    - God and Jesus:
      - “I have quite on God.” – someone who quits church has quite on God, Jesus
      - “I am more concerned about wealth and pleasure than God.” – serving and obeying, worshiping
      - “I have forgotten my purification from sin.” – Jesus, cross, baptism, first love, first commitment
        - 2 Pet. 1:8-9 (Peter, 8 graces) lack these qualities, forgotten purification from former sins
      - “If I’m not crucifying Jesus again, I’m getting ready to.”
        - Heb. 6:6b again crucify to themselves the Son of God
        - Heb. 10:29b trampled Son of God under foot

  - friends and family:
    - “Other things are more important than God, Jesus, church, salvation.” – recreation, $ and work, school
    - “I’m not concerned about going to heaven.” – more concerned about selfish desires
    - “I'm not concerned enough about your soul, to set a god example and help you go to heaven.”

  - brethren:
    - “I don't care if you're weak, struggling, suffering.” – not considering you (Heb. 10:24-25)
    - “I'm not concerned about my soul, your soul, or anyone's soul.”
To fail as a Christian, **don't study God's word** (alone, other Christians, Bible class at church).

- **What does God want us to do?**
  - 1 Tim. 2:4 God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge (*epignosis*) of the truth
  - *illus.: surgeon*, cheated in school and never learned his lessons, doesn't keep up with his continuing education, he will fail and people will die
  - *Christians*: not learn our lessons, not keep up with continuing education – you will die (spiritually, hell), people you influence will die (spiritually, hell)

- **What benefits do you miss when you neglect to study** and learn God's word?
  - 1 Th. 2:13 miss out on God’s word performing it’s work in you
  - Col. 3:10 miss out on putting on the new man, renewed to a true knowledge (*epignosis*)
  - Eph. 3:16-20 miss out on having the power of God working with you

To fail as a Christian, **run yourself into the ground** – chasing after fame and fortune, could make other choices

- *illus.: someone working 16 hours a day*, Monday through Saturday (96 hours a week)
  - *some of these people*: sleep in Sunday and neglect their families, rest, justifying their actions, thinking they have to work that much to support their families
  - *truth*: just feeding their greed, not humbling themselves to live within their means
  - *some of these people*: sick or not feeling well most Sundays, but always able to go to work
  - *truth*: making excuses, not honest with themselves or others
  - *some of these people*: "pew warmers" - thinking showing up for church, too exhausted to participate, take active role, worship in spirit is good enough
  - *truth*: self deceived - believing can put God second, give Him leftovers (time, energy, effort)
  - *few of these people*: can keep up with all their responsibilities - God, family, neighbors
  - *truth*: they run on high octane, can do and accomplish more than the average person without neglecting any of their responsibilities

- **Ephesus and Laodicea:**
  - Rev. 2:2-6 Ephesian brethren, lost first love, had to repent to go to heaven
  - Rev. 3:15-19 Laodicean brethren, lukewarm, had to repent to go to heaven

- **What does God require?** – **everything**
  - Mk. 12:30 love God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength
  - *God wants to be first* - receive the best you have to offer of ourselves - **all**
  - *if you don’t give God your best*, you’re guaranteed to fail
  - *if you run yourself into the ground* (working, school, recreational activities), you are giving God your leftovers (not what He requires), guaranteed to fail
To fail as a Christian, surround yourself with evil influences.
- 1 Cor. 15:33 bad company (evil company) corrupts good morals (good habits, NKJV)
  - evil companions influence good people to become evil — visa versa
  - saying: if you lie with dogs, you will get flees
- illus.: Sexual Music Produces More Sexual Teens – attached
- illus.: 18 yr. old boy murdered a 15 yr. old boy
  - murder trial: Sydney, AU, found guilty 12/6/2000
    - Matthew O'Grady, lured 15 year-old Chris Brown into remote bushland west of Sydney after a party and shot him repeatedly
    - O'Grady had come off drugs and decided killing would provide him with a high
- O'Grady's attorney blamed his client's actions on his obsession with violent videos, particularly snuff movies, which depict real killings. "The videos had a very significant effect, (they) desensitized him into killing humans," O'Grady's attorney argued.

To fail as a Christian, treat other people badly - look out for self, be selfish and self-centered.
- Matt. 22:39 the second greatest commandment, love your neighbor as yourself
- - 1 Pet. 3:7, 10-12 when you treat others badly, your prayers are hindered – illus.: husbands (vs. 7)
  - you are guaranteed to fail as Christians, unless you treating others the way you are commanded by God – family, brethren, friends, everyone we contact

Summary / Inv.:
- Summary: To fail:
  - don’t do your best to assemble with the saints (a top priority of your week).
  - don’t study God's word (alone, with other Christians).
  - run ourselves into the ground - chasing after fame and fortune.
  - surround yourself with evil influences.
  - treat other people badly.

- But, to succeed: - opposite – improve, better in 2007 than years previous
  - do your best to assemble with the saints (a top priority of your week).
  - study God's word (alone, with other Christians).
  - not run ourselves into the ground - chasing after fame and fortune.
  - surround yourself with good and holy influences.
  - treat other people with love (like Jesus).

inv.
- be a faithful Christian – doing your best in 2007 – pleasing and acceptable to God