

THE SACRED JOURNAL
(A Spiritual Health Self-exam)

By: John Wilson Abbott

Copyright © John Wilson Abbott

All rights reserved.

ISBN:

THE SACRED JOURNAL
Epoch 7: THE KINGDOM ETERNAL
THE MASTER'S WORK SERIES
(A Spiritual Health Self-exam)
You shall never be the same!

Preface

To Consider:

God's life in us is the issue, not sin.....	95
When does man lose free will to choose?.....	341
Can salvation be forfeited?.....	91
Would God create a man and torture him for eternity?.....	345
Is Man Naturally Immortal?.....	325
How to be instantly delivered from addictions.....	357
Can pedophilia be cured?.....	243
Does hell last forever?.....	328
How is classical socialism anti-Christ?.....	284
"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." ² "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD." ³ We must "have the mind of Christ." ⁴ "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." ⁵ Jesus said: "I Am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the Light of Life." ⁶	

² Matt. 6: 10

⁴ 1 Cor. 2: 16

⁶ John 8: 12

³ Is. 1: 18

⁵ Phil. 2: 5

God's Kingdom Commission

"I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I Am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."⁷ "The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." Jesus said: "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto Me."⁸



⁷ Acts 26: 17, 18

⁸ John 12: 32

The Caduceus Symbol

The caduceus is often used as a symbol of medicine and healthcare. In this Sacred Journal, the symbol represents divine healing provided by Christ's sacrifice on the cross.



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: SPIRITUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT.....	2
CHAPTER 2: THE MIND OF THE REGENERATE.....	15
CHAPTER 3: DANGEROUS STATES OF MIND.....	85
CHAPTER 4: THE MIND OF THE UNREGENERATE.....	106
CHAPTER 5: THE KINGDOM MENTALITY.....	287
CONCLUSION.....	323
ARTICLES.....	324

OUTLINE

THE SACRED JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

SPIRITUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

ATTITUDE CHECK

Perception

Response

ENVIRONMENT

Mind-Set

Transcendence

VISION

Motive

Focus

CHAPTER 2

THE MIND OF THE REGENERATE

Qualities from Christ

Love

Objects of:

Father

Believers

Described as:

Personal

Sacrificial

Joy

Peace

Righteousness

QUALITIES TOWARD OTHERS

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

QUALITIES OF SELF

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-Control

CHAPTER 3

DANGEROUS STATES OF MIND

GUILT

DEPRESSION

SELF-DESTRUCTION

COMPLACENCY

CHAPTER 4

THE MIND OF THE UNREGENERATE

ATTITUDE

Fear

The Blame Game

Negative Comparisons

Hostility

Avoidance

ACTION

Toward God

Self-centered

Self-righteous

Toward Fellow Man

Neglect of:

Sabbath Observance

Family and Others

Intent

Murder

Theft

Dishonesty

Adultery

Covetous

Control

CHAPTER 5

THE KINGDOM MENTALITY

The Kingdom Described

Nature of the Kingdom

Keys to the Kingdom

Kingdom Membership

New Birth

Eternal Life Within

CONCLUSION

ARTICLES AND SUMMATION

INTRODUCTION

What is the ultimate reality of human life?



God created the universe, heaven, earth, and all things therein. Because it was created in love, everything in creation is good and special to God. Man was created in His image to have the mind of Christ and eternal life in the kingdom of God. Christ is the ultimate Reality of life.

CHAPTER 1

SPIRITUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

(An honest self-examination)

Requirements for Good Physical and Spiritual Health:

Pure water: "Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."⁹

Sunshine: "I Am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."¹⁰

Exercise: "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."¹¹

Clean air: " The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life."¹²

Cleanliness: " Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of My sight; stop doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice."¹³

⁹ John 4: 14

¹⁰ John 8: 12

¹¹ 1 Tim. 4: 7, 8

¹² Job 33: 4

¹³ Is. 1: 16, 17

Proper diet: Sleep; Rest; Correct temperatures; Relaxation and; A good mental and spiritual attitude. "The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."¹⁴ "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."¹⁵ Feed upon the word of God for "all scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."¹⁶

Health awareness:
Conviction, Confession and Repentance

The probability of (spiritual) disease, (sin) does not have to be equal to one diagnostic certainty in order for treatment to be justified, unless described and administered by the Holy Spirit of the Living God!

A comparison of physical diseases and spiritual health:

¹⁴ Philippians 4: 7, 8

¹⁵ Exodus 20: 8

¹⁶ 1 Tim. 3: 16

Anatomic refers to the affected organ or tissue, e.g., heart disease.

Spiritually, one's heart may have a blockage of the flow of God's love.¹⁷

Topographical refers to vascular or gastrointestinal diseases.

Spiritually, proper diet of God's word of truth and exercise of faith will promote proper digestion and function of the entire spiritual persona.¹⁸

Physiological includes diseases that affect function (such as metabolism) e.g., diabetes.

Spiritually, if one member of the 'body of Christ' isn't functioning properly then the entire body suffers.¹⁹

Pathological considers the nature of the disease, such as uncontrolled cell growth that is characteristic of cancer.

Spiritually, false doctrine can spread until the entire body is destroyed.²⁰

Epidemiological refers to the rate of occurrence, distribution and the control of the disease in a population. The key word is epidemic.

Spiritually, literal epidemics (pestilences) are prophesied²¹ and described.

¹⁷ Eph. 4: 18

¹⁸ John 7: 38

¹⁹ 1 Cor. 5: 1-8

²⁰ 1 John 4: 1-3

²¹ Matt. 24: 7,8; Eph.

6: 12

The 'spiritual self-exam' checklist would include consideration of: Attitude; Motives; True worship; Focus; Vision; Direction of travel; Diet; Immunity; Resistance to disease (sin); Habits; Pre-existing injuries; Misconceptions; Mis-interpretations and; Peer pressure.

To give an honest spiritual self-exam, one must see Jesus as the sole and perfect example.

The mind and character of Christ is observed in others but is still attributed to Christ whose Spirit lives within the heart and soul of the believer.

The Creator and Sustainer



Jesus made us and He knows how to fix us.²²
He died on the cross for our total healing.
"By His stripes we are healed."²³



²² Mark 5: 1–20; Luke
13: 10–13; John 9: 6,
7; Mark 8: 22–25

²³ Is. 53: 5

"He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed."

ATTITUDE CHECK

"Since Christ has suffered for us, we are to arm ourselves with the same mind."²⁴ We must have the attitude of Christ.

Perception

Mental/Spiritual Health

Moral Benefits of Wisdom

The LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding. He holds success in store for the upright, He is a Shield to those whose walk is blameless, for He guards the course of the just and protects the way of His faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul."²⁵

²⁴ 1 Peter 4: 1

²⁵ Prov. 2: 1-10

If you "accept My words and store up My commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding— indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you:



Look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

"The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out."²⁶ The fall of man has brought not

just separation from God, but also mental and emotional illnesses (dysfunction), of various types.²⁷ Man often attempts to treat symptoms of mental illnesses, rather than seek treatment for the root cause.

Mental health, to the secular humanist, would typically be averse to the concept of the "soul" of man.

²⁶ Prov. 18: 15

²⁷ From article by:
Jack Ashcraft

The transcendent/spiritual effect on one's mental health cannot be disregarded. Human health is wholistic, which to the believer includes faith and confidence in the 'Great Physician'.

Response

Our response to the goodness of God is to: Will and do God's good pleasure²⁸ and to be diligent and obedient to the divine command.²⁹

ENVIRONMENT

Mind-Set

"God placed all things under His (Christ's) feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fulfills everything in every way." The (abundance mindset)³⁰ is found in the unified body of the church. Those in the true church view life as a sum of collaborative efforts rather than that of competitive individuals.³¹

²⁸ Phil. 2: 13

²⁹ 2 Peter 1: 5

³⁰ 1 Peter 2: 9; 1 Peter
1: 5, 6; Ps. 73: 23;
Rom. 8: 1; 1 Pet. 3: 2

³¹ 1 Cor. 12: 12; Rom.
12: 4; Phil. 2: 1-30;
Acts 1: 14

Our mindset radically affects our choices and will determine the course of our life. How can the abundant mindset be cultivated?³²

Scarcity vs Abundant Mindset

A scarcity mindset limits how one sees life. This is the mindset that always sees limitations instead of possibilities. 'Scarcity' mindset believes that there are only a limited number of resources; that there's not enough love, friends, clients, or money to go around. And so, they must fight and compete with others to try and gain the upper hand. The scarcity mindset accepts the outward reality, conditions as truth, and feels helpless to change them. Many of those who lived through the depression continue to skimp, hoard, and save even when they have more than enough resources.

The spiritual scarcity mindset is orphaned from the connection with the Source, which is Jesus Christ. "God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross."³³ Once we were alienated from God and were enemies in our minds because of our evil behavior.

³² Sonia Vadlamani

But now He has reconciled us by Christ's physical body through death to present us holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation."³⁴ Bring every thought into the captivity of the obedience of Christ. Jesus says: "I Am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."³⁵

The abundant mindset accepts the reality that God is the Creator and source of all power and existence. The degree to which we're able to receive the limitless abundance all around us, is the degree to which we accept it as our sole reality.³⁶ The abundant mindset transcends external conditions. This is why Paul and Silas were able to pray and sing in prison while enduring extremely harsh conditions.³⁷ It understands that our world is created from the inside out. The (scarcity mindset) works in the opposite way.

The abundant mindset of the faithful knows that five loaves of bread and a couple of fish are enough to feed ten thousand people with twelve baskets left-over.³⁸ Our God will meet all our needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.³⁹ Those with the abundant mindset of Christ are not paralyzed by the accuser who tries to condemn and threaten with accusations.

³⁴ Col. 1: 19: 22

³⁵ John 10: 10

³⁶ Job 1: 21

³⁷ Acts 16: 25-34

³⁸ Matt. 14: 13-21

³⁹ Philippians 4: 19

To bring up the sins of the old man is the work of Satan, the accuser of the brethren, who seeks to kill steal and destroy. The shield of faith wards off these fiery darts of the enemy. The abundant mindset releases one from judgment, and accepts and appreciates everyone for where they are right now.

If there are active sins in one's life, then true repentance is in order and conviction is rightly accepted. The objective, abundant mindset seeks to support other people's truth, in the knowledge that it makes all of us stronger. 'Other's truth' to be considered must line up with the holy scriptures. However, the 'baby is not thrown out with the wash' in consideration that the truth will be realized by all when "every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."⁴⁰

Transcendence

Seek first the kingdom of God.⁴¹

Mind Over Matter; The Healthy Mindset

It is the power of God that works within the life of the believer that will accomplish all things.⁴²

⁴⁰ Phillip. 2: 10, 11

⁴¹ Matt. 6: 33

⁴² Matt. 19: 26

The experience and faith in this reality enables the believer to transcend any and all circumstances, even the fear of death." They triumphed over the accuser by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."⁴³

Believe in Infinite Possibilities with God!⁴⁴

VISION

Motive and Focus

Be ever mindful of the 2nd coming of Christ.

A Closer Look



⁴³ Rev. 12: 11

⁴⁴ Matt. 19: 26

Do we look forward to reading the Bible?

Do we look forward to spending time with God in prayer?

Do we forgive, pray for, and ask God to bless those who have hurt us?⁴⁵

How much time do we spend feeding our spiritual life and serving God and others?

Do we use our gifts and abilities to serve God in kingdom work?

Do we generously and cheerfully support the Lord's work financially?

Do we allow God to love others through us?

Do we make a sacrifice to meet someone's need?

Do we promote the gospel by praying for the salvation of lost persons, living a Christ-centered life, praising God enthusiastically in our worship service, giving financially to support evangelism, and being prepared to share our hope in Christ with others?

Do we look forward to and attend worship service?

Do we serve God through gratitude or because of coercion, tradition or intimidation?

Do we feel a deep need for God's grace?

Do we speak truth with love?

Is the life we live before others a reflection of the love of God?

⁴⁵ Matt. 5: 44

Spiritual Exercise



Grow in Christ: His strength; His righteousness; Faith and trust in Him. Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and rest upon the grace that is to be brought to you through revelation of Jesus Christ.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ 1 Pet. 1: 13; Matt.
11: 30

CHAPTER 2

THE MIND OF THE REGENERATE

"Do not conform 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."⁴⁷

What is the Mind?

The mind is our reasoning faculty of perception, remembrance, desire and purpose. Man is created in the "likeness of God,"⁴⁸ so, purpose, fulfillment and well-being are realized as one conforms to the character and person of our Creator.

Jesus is the Example!

Sin may be defined as "transgression of the law",⁴⁹ which means not living "Christ-like".⁵⁰ Sin may also be defined as 'spiritual sickness'⁵¹ or a life style which jeopardizes fellowship with the Father.

⁴⁷ Rom. 12: 2

⁴⁸ Gen. 1: 27

⁴⁹ 1 John 3: 4

⁵⁰ Phil. 4: 8, 9

⁵¹ Isaiah 4: 1-6

Spiritual maladies may be compared with physical illnesses but in the long-run of eternity, are infinitely deadlier. Treatment and cure for spiritual and physical disease includes: Symptom; Recognition; Diagnosis and; Treatment. This spiritual self-exam uses God's 'sacred medical journal' to show 'the Cure' for spiritual illnesses which will lead to life and life eternal.⁵²

Medical imaging: His Image;

Mental health: "Let this mind be in you..."⁵³

The Great Physician Provides Perfect Peace, Wellbeing and Contentment.⁵⁴

Jesus: our Protector, Healer and Savior



⁵² 1 John 5: 11

⁵³ Phil. 2: 5

⁵⁴ Is. 26: 3

The following is a comparison of physical illnesses with spiritual maladies. Just as sicknesses have symptoms; are diagnosed; and treatment prescribed, spiritual disfunctions may be identified. Operations or medications are applied to control, manage or cure. The mind controls the spiritual health of the individual.

Man is made in the Image of the Creator. God's Spirit was breathed into him and we have within us that 'Spark of the Divine'. The unique quality of man is that he has free will and can discern between evil and good. The knowledge of good and evil is not just experience of right and wrong, but a moral element in that spiritual development, through which the man created in the image of God is to conform to that Nature⁵⁵, which has already been planned in the likeness of God.⁵⁶ If one has the "mind of Christ"⁵⁷, then Christ Himself, the Great Physician, inspires and 'prescribes' the spiritually healthy life-style, diet and mindset that promotes the most fulfilling and satisfying life possible. This includes, and is the ultimate goal, of the believer to inherit eternal life. This mind set and faith to realize eternity with the Father transcends all earthly hardships.

⁵⁵ Rom. 8: 29

⁵⁶ Gen. 2: 17

⁵⁷ 1 Cor. 2: 16

The focus of this 'Sacred Journal' is to identify the qualities of the Mind of the Regenerate and, The Kingdom Mentality and lifestyle.

God's Analysis of the Human Condition

Diagnosis of an evil and spiritually dead heart unable to be fully restrained or spiritually functional;

Prognosis of permanent spiritual disease incapable of self-reform;

Prescription for the only cure for man's heart and the only salvation from God's just wrath: Jesus Christ.

We all have a propensity toward spiritual illness. It is called sin! Jesus is Our Example,⁵⁸ our only perfect example! (All else is defiled, impure and imperfect!)

The following analyzes spiritual sicknesses illustrating: Symptoms; Diagnosis and; Treatment.

The Prognosis

Judgment Starts at the House of God

"It is time for judgment to begin with God's household.

⁵⁸
<https://bible.knowing>

jesus.com/topics/Christ-Our-Example

If it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"⁵⁹ "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. "You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So, when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?

Do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed. God 'will repay each person according to what they have done.' To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, He will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ 1 Peter 4: 17

⁶⁰ Rom. 2: 1-8



Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take

the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."⁶¹ It is time to 'clean house!'

The Fact of Christ

Jesus, the historical figure, can be realized by faith and accepted as genuine by faith as well as by personal experience. The divine encounter is the convincing factor.⁶²

Healthy qualities of Life in Christ:

Christ's holiness is our holiness;

Christ's mercy is our mercy;

Christ's righteousness is our righteousness;

⁶¹ Matt. 7: 1-5

⁶² Acts 9: 4; Is. 63: 9

Christ's peace is our peace;

Christ's love is our love;

Christ's justification is our justification.

Therefore, each of these 'traits' of our Father is given for salvation.⁶³ We are then equipped as: Ambassadors of Christ; Mercenaries; Ministers of reconciliation; Forgivers; Healers; Peace makers; Gracious; Loving; Justifiers; Servants; and Living sacrifices. None of these qualities can be produced by our own effort. "It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves."⁶⁴ It is He that sustains us.⁶⁵

QUALITIES FROM CHRIST

The Holy Spirit gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Jesus is the Standard

The Word of God describes God's nature and character. To be 'Christ-like' would be life-style that conforms to who Christ is. Actions opposed to His nature is thereby sin. If one seeks to know God then one must 'read Him' in the Bible. "Law" may be known and somewhat followed but if it does not enter the heart and mind of the believer, then it is only 'dead work'.

⁶³ Provisionheirz

⁶⁴ Psalm 100: 3

⁶⁵ Psalm 23

Christ is the object of the Bible.⁶⁶ The law describes God's righteousness and character. The goal of the law is to bring us "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."⁶⁷ Jesus fulfilled the law in that He perfectly exemplified God's will in everything He did.⁶⁸ He personifies perfect love and kingdom theocracy. He is the perfect man, representing God in the flesh. He is the Standard; the Supreme and Perfect Example;⁶⁹ The pinnacle of all things a human can and should be.

The seven heavenly virtues:

Prudence; Justice; Temperance; Courage; Faith; Hope and Love.

Jesus the Great Physician

Three Cases of "Incurables":

Demon Possession;⁷⁰

Death;⁷¹

Disease.⁷²

Demon Possession⁶⁴

⁶⁶ Romans 10: 4

⁶⁷ Ephesians 4: 13

⁶⁸ Matthew 5: 17

⁶⁹ Ephesians 4: 11-15

⁷⁰ Mark 5: 1-20

⁷¹ Mark 5: 21-23; 35-

40

⁷² Mark 5: 25-34



"Jesus and the disciples went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet Him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. He had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills, he would cry out and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of Him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me! Jesus said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs.

The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and talked about the pigs as well."⁷³

One of the saddest events in the Bible:

"Jesus Left"⁶⁴

"Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with Him.

⁷³ Luke 8:26-39

Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you. So, the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.”⁷⁴

When Jesus shows up, everything changes.

Mark 5 provides what could be called “three cases of incurables.” However, when Jesus shows up, everything changes. Jesus is Lord over demons, disease, and even death! Our Lord is man’s Savior, the woman’s Savior, and the child’s Savior. He is indeed a friend of sinners and the Healer of the hurting and dying.

Jesus, the Perfect and Complete Cure
Jesus is not God Diminished!

“If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the Lord, Am your Healer.”⁷⁵



⁷⁴ Mark 5: 17-20

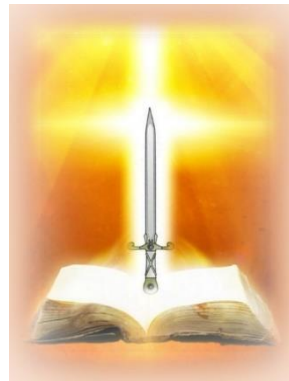
⁷⁵ Exodus 15: 26

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.⁷⁶ Jesus said: "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick."⁷⁷ "Come, let us return to the Lord for He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us."⁷⁸

Evil Deceptions

Healing may occur by faith and by 'miraculous', divine intervention. However, there are forces of evil that can empower and possess, giving the possessed super-human strength or abilities. "Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium who consults the dead."⁷⁹ The ways of anti-Christ only lead to death and destruction.⁸⁰

"The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."⁸¹



⁷⁶ Psalm 147: 3

⁷⁷ Matthew 9: 12

⁷⁸ Hosea 6: 1

⁷⁹ Deut. 18: 10

⁸⁰ Rom. 6: 23

⁸¹ Hebrews 4: 12

Dusty Bibles lead to dirty lives.

The Bible is Jesus in Print.

If we want to know God; Read God.

"Make every effort to confirm your calling and election for if you do these things, you will never stumble and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."⁸²

The experiences of life shape personality and an individual's view of the realities of their environment. We are created in God's image and likeness. As 'children of God', we are given qualities and systemic moral knowledge which are in His likeness. The absolutes of God's character are described in the Torah and in the fact of Jesus Christ. Satisfaction, well-being and purpose in life is found only in the conformity to the characteristics of the heavenly Father. This is life and life eternal. This is summarized as to: "Love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, soul and might, and thy neighbor as thyself."⁸³ Any other behavior, or disobedience of God's word, results in disfunction, death and estrangement from God.

⁸² 2 Pet. 1: 10, 11

⁸³ Deut. 6: 5-9

Love

Objects of: The Father

God Manifested in the Flesh

Jesus said: "You've seen the Father in Me." "All of the fulness of the Father dwells in Me." "He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory."⁸⁴

Believers

When God's Spirit lives within the heart of the believer, then God's love will be evident. This love becomes reality when the born-again follow the commandment to genuinely "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength," and to "love your neighbor as yourself."⁸⁵ The "golden rule" to follow is to: "Do to others as you would have them do to you."⁸⁶

God will not impute sin!

⁸⁴ 1 Tim. 3: 16

⁸⁵ Luke 10: 27

⁸⁶ Matt. 7: 12

"Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit."⁸⁷ "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."⁸⁸ "Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends."⁸⁹ "He that covers a transgression — That passes by and buries in oblivion a transgression that hath been committed against himself; or that conceals, as far as he may, other men's faults against their friends or neighbors; seeks love — takes the best course to preserve friendships and to make himself universally beloved. He that repeats a matter — who rakes up that fault again, and objects it afresh when it was forgotten; or that publishes and spreads it abroad; separates friends, breaks the strictest bonds of amity, and makes an irreconcilable separation."⁹⁰ "He that hides the transgression of another, or of his friend, committed against himself or against another, which he is privy to; but the matter being made up, and the offence forgiven, he forgets it, and no more speaks of it to his friend, or upbraids him with It, nor spreads it among others.

⁸⁷ Ps. 32: 1, 2

⁸⁸ 1 Peter 4: 8

⁸⁹ Prov. 17: 9

⁹⁰ Benson

Such a man shows that he loves his friend, and is desirous that love and friendship should be continued; and this is the way to continue it."⁹¹

Backbiting⁹², talebearing⁹³, whispering⁹⁴ and gossiping⁹⁵ are unloving characteristics of those with an anti-Christ spirit. A good self-check is to ask ourself: Would I have this conversation with the person I'm talking about?

God's love is described as: Personal

The Touch of God;
You will never be
the same!



When the woman touched the hem of His garment "Jesus realized that power had gone out from Him."⁹⁶ Jesus used touch in curing a leper, a person with a fever, and two blind men. He also raised the dead.⁹⁷ God delivers from drug addiction, and all diseases, including the fatal sickness of chronic sin.⁹⁸

⁹¹ Gill's Exposition

⁹² Prov. 16: 28; 25: 23

⁹³ Lev. 19: 16

⁹⁴ James 1: 26;

⁹⁵ Prov. 11: 12, 13; 20:

19

⁹⁶ Mark 5: 30

⁹⁷ Matthew 8: 2–3,

Luke 4: 39, Matthew

20: 34, Luke 7: 14

⁹⁸ Rom. 6: 23

The lack of love can be deadly.
(See Article #8, on page 353).

God's love is described as: Sacrificial

AGAPE: God's Sacrificial, Unconditional Love

'Agape' is a selfless, unconditional, giving, non-emotional love. Agape refers to a pure, willful, sacrificial love that intentionally desires another's highest good without expectation of anything in return. This is God's love and this is the love children of God have for others. The Bible describes this love as: Being "no greater than that someone would lay down their life for another";⁹⁹ God's love for us in that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us";¹⁰⁰ That "God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."¹⁰¹ "By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers";¹⁰² "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.

⁹⁹ John 15: 13

¹⁰⁰ Romans 5: 8

¹⁰¹ John 3: 16

¹⁰² 1 John 3: 16

It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away."¹⁰³

"Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."¹⁰⁴ "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful."

"By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."¹⁰⁵ "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love."¹⁰⁶ "Know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."¹⁰⁷ "We love because He first loved us."¹⁰⁸ If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete My joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

¹⁰³ 1 Corinthians 13:

4-8

¹⁰⁴ 1 John 4: 8

¹⁰⁵ John 13: 35

¹⁰⁶ 1 John 4: 18

¹⁰⁷ Ephesians 3: 19

¹⁰⁸ 1 John 4: 19

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus."¹⁰⁹ "Let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God."¹¹⁰ "The aim of our charge is love that comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."¹¹¹

"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I Am the Lord."¹¹² "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."¹¹³ "Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."¹¹⁴ "We have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."¹¹⁵ "Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."¹¹⁶

Christianity is unique in that God makes the sacrifice. All other religions require that the worshiper make the sacrifice. Jesus seeks the will of the Father: "I do not seek My own glory." "Not My will but His who sent Me."¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ Philippians 2: 1-11

¹¹⁰ 1 John 4: 7

¹¹¹ 1 Timothy 1: 5

¹¹² Leviticus 19: 18

¹¹³ Galatians 5: 13

¹¹⁴ Ephesians 5: 2

¹¹⁵ 1 John 4: 16

¹¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 13:

13

¹¹⁷ John 7: 16

Another unique fact of Christianity is that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."¹¹⁸ Also, what other god has come back from the dead?

Jesus always did the Father's will.

"Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ."¹¹⁹ Jesus: Relinquishes His place: He refused His prerogative; He renounced His privileges and; He restricted His presence. Jesus has all the attributes of man¹²⁰ and all the attributes of the Father.¹²¹

Following tradition instead of the Word,
nullifies the Word

The Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't Your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?" He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "'These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.'

¹¹⁸ John 1: 14

¹¹⁹ Phillip. 2: 3-11

¹²⁰ 1 John 1: 1-3

¹²¹ John 14: 9

You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions. You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! For Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.' But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)—then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. Thus, you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that." Again, Jesus called the crowd to Him and said, "Listen to Me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them."¹²²

Knowing Jesus (The Censer)

"Aaron took the Censer, just as



Moses had spoken, and ran out to the center of the assembly, where a plague had begun among the people. He set the incense on fire and atoned for the people."¹²³

¹²² Mark 7: 5-15

¹²³ 2 Chron. 26: 19

Hearing the message of the cross;
Understanding the message of the cross!



Christlikeness is Exemplified in the Sermon on the Mount¹²⁴

Influence and Righteousness

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Matthew 5, 6, 7

¹²⁵ Matt. 5: 17-20



Remission of Sin

This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."¹²⁶ "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."¹²⁷



'For the remission of sins'; that is, was very shortly to be shed, and since has been, for all the elect of God; for the many that were ordained to eternal life, and the many that were given to Christ, the many that are justified by Him, and the many sons He will bring to glory: whereby the full forgiveness of all their sins was procured, in a way consistent with, and honorable to the justice of God; full satisfaction being made to the law of God, for all their transgressions.

¹²⁶ Matt. 26: 28

¹²⁷ Jer. 31: 33, 34

"Many" is equivalent to "all." Redemption is universal, though all men do not accept the offer.

The Second Coming doctrine is only rightly understood and appreciated to the extent that a gracious Jesus is the motivating center of the teaching. The Godhead; the gift of creation; the community of believers; the doctrine of the church – every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. Nicodemus was able to grasp this fundamental principle: (It is only the truth as it is in Jesus!)

"The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."¹²⁸ "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."¹²⁹

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.'"¹³⁰ "But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.

¹²⁸ 1 John 2: 6

¹²⁹ 1 John 3: 15, 16

¹³⁰ Matthew 16: 24

It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave."¹³¹

"You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I Am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."¹³² "Be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."¹³³ "Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."¹³⁴ "For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an Example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth."¹³⁵

¹³¹ Matthew 20: 25-28

¹³² John 13: 13-16

¹³³ 1 Corinthians 11: 1

¹³⁴ Colossians 3: 13

¹³⁵ 1 Peter 2: 20-22



The Good Shepherd

Does the Good Shepherd lead the sheep or beat the sheep from behind?

Does the Good Shepherd need to administer medicine to the sheep every day?

Does the Good Shepherd feed the sheep a good balance of the Word that promotes spiritual growth and health?

It is "the goodness of God that leads you to repentance."¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Romans 2: 4

The Beautiful Bride¹³⁷



The depiction of the Bride from Song of Solomon¹³⁸ reveals Her desire and passion for Her Husband to be, as she waits for His return.

Jesus loves His Bride, the church, so much that

He laid down His life for her. An examination of our own love for God may be shown in the following example. Think of the most evil, hated person that you know or have heard of. Would you give them your heart for a transplant to save their life?

"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!"¹³⁹

Our Love and desire for Jesus

¹³⁷ Song of Solomon 4

¹³⁸ Song of Solomon
5: 2-8, 14

¹³⁹ Rom. 5: 8-10

"All night long on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for Him but did not find Him. I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares; I will search for the One my heart loves. So I looked for Him but did not find Him."¹⁴⁰

Jesus' death was on God's mind before the earth was created. "Jesus did not lay aside His deity. He was fully human and fully divine. He emptied Himself and made Himself of no reputation. He set aside His divine attributes that; He would identify Himself with us and us with Him. He experienced humanity in every way, yet without sin."¹⁴¹



The Battle
is in the Mind

The mind of Christ is:
Perfect wisdom; Fully
alive in creating and transforming; always full of Hope
and Redemption.

God's Goodness and Free Will

¹⁴⁰ Song of Songs 3: 1,

¹⁴¹ Heb. 4: 15

Is God's Goodness absolute and unconditional? The object of God's goodness is not to interfere with the just punishment of sin nor to deny men freedom to choose, but to lead men to repent of their sins, and so to obtain remission.

GOD is Love

To 'be' in His likeness, we love everyone. Hatred and unforgiveness is anti-Christ and has 'fallen from grace.'¹⁴² We must always see the 'potential' in others.



God's Faithful and Enduring Love for His People

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies."¹⁴³



¹⁴² Gal. 5: 4

¹⁴³ Ephesians 5: 25-32

Each in the Church needs that Holy, awakening encounter; be it as on the road to Damascus, at the burning bush, or on the Isle of Patmos. It is the humbling revelation of who He is¹⁴⁴ which illuminates who we are. Our position and state of being will then be clear.¹⁴⁵

"It is finished!"¹⁴⁶

The Greatest Accomplishment of All Time.¹⁴⁷

"Jesus knowing that all things were now finished, that the Scriptures should be fulfilled."¹⁴⁸ Now a new heaven and a new earth has been proclaimed. The universe has been renovated; redemption has been provided.

On the road to Emmaus Jesus, "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself."¹⁴⁹ He was telling them of what He had just accomplished on the cross. This is His 'Master Piece'; His perfect workmanship. He is telling us what He has accomplished; that being, our justification and redemption for all eternity! (See Article #4, page 334).



¹⁴⁴ Isaiah 6: 5

¹⁴⁵ 1 Cor. 13: 12

¹⁴⁶ John 19: 30

¹⁴⁷ See: Article #4 on
page 334

¹⁴⁸ Luke 23: 46

¹⁴⁹ Lk. 24: 27

More Than Conquerors

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died; more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."¹⁵⁰


¹⁵⁰ Romans 8

God's Revelation of Love

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave John, to show God's servants the things that must soon take place. "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near. To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood.¹⁵¹

Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His presence continually!¹⁵² "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen."¹⁵³ Self-seeking religion will place rules before people, law before grace and condemnation before compassion!

The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ

The unselfish heart, 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ', makes us 'free from the bondage of the law' and free from our own self-inflicted slavery.  Jesus' spontaneous sympathy is the revelation of God. The relief of human sorrow is always in season to let the oppressed go free.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Revelation 1: 1-20

¹⁵² 1 Chronicles 16: 11

¹⁵³ 1 John 4: 20

¹⁵⁴ Excerpts from
Ellicott and Gill's
Commentary

The crippled woman was most likely inflicted with Abnormal Curvature of the Spine or kyphosis. The Pharisee was crippled spiritually for he was constantly looking down, focused only on tradition and formality. He had not yet realized the redemptive freedom Messiah was exhibiting right in front of him.

"He made known His ways to Moses, His deeds to the people of Israel."¹⁵⁵ And to us today He declares: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways."¹⁵⁶ David exclaims: "I have seen You in the sanctuary and beheld Your power and Your glory. Because Your love is better than life, my lips will glorify You."¹⁵⁷ Paul proclaims: "I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things."¹⁵⁸

Jesus tells us: "If you love Me, keep My commands."¹⁵⁹ Loving God will produce obedience, but will obedience produce love for God? "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."¹⁶⁰

Love is treasuring God. Thinking is a means to it.

¹⁵⁵ Ps. 103: 7

¹⁵⁶ Is. 55: 8

¹⁵⁷ Ps. 63: 2, 3

¹⁵⁸ Phil. 3: 8

¹⁵⁹ John 14: 15

¹⁶⁰ Matt. 22: 36

"The LORD has sought out a man
after His own heart."¹⁶¹

Charity nearly always means "love" when it is referenced in the Bible. Charity to indicate "giving" is mentioned in Acts 9:36 which references a disciple named Tabitha who was full of good works and acts of charity. We exhibit charity, or love when we are unselfishly devoted to God and our neighbors. "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me...And the King will answer to them, Truly, I say to you, as you did it for the least of these My brothers, you did it to



Me."¹⁶² When we care for those in need, we are doing God's will. When we see a brother or sister and need and we have no empathy, love is not in us.

¹⁶¹ 1 Sam. 13: 14

¹⁶² Matthew 25: 34-
36, 40

The Mercy Seat has been appeased;
The Veil forever rent.
Now boldly stand before the throne;
Face Him who heaven sent.¹⁶³

Joy and Peace

“The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.”¹⁶⁴

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Jesus Christ.”¹⁶⁵ When we exhibit the virtue of joy, we recognize that happiness is rooted not in things of this world, like money, power or possessions but in being believers and followers of Christ.

Happiness: “Subjective well-being,” determined by 'happenstance', living conditions, and one's sense of meaning and purpose. To be 'happy' would usually be associated with monetary resources and assets. One may be 'happy' because everything is going their way.



¹⁶³ Provisionheirz

¹⁶⁴ Proverbs 10: 28

¹⁶⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:

16-18

Joy expresses elation, great pleasure and delight in the Spirit.¹⁶⁶ "Though you have not seen *Jesus*, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy."¹⁶⁷

Tears of Strife, Traded for Tears of Joy

The spiritual 'high' Jesus gives is like no other! It is "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Our obedience and trust in the Father bring Him joy. It is His joy that is our strength.

Sing joyfully to the LORD. Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy for the word of the LORD is right and true. He is faithful in all He does. The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of His unfailing love. The plans of the LORD stand firm forever. The eyes of the LORD are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. We wait in hope for the LORD; He is our help and our shield. In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Ps. 137: 6

¹⁶⁷ 1 Peter 1: 8

¹⁶⁸ From: Psalm 33

The Peace That Passes Understanding¹⁶⁹

In a world full of chaos, violence and turmoil, God promises us a peace that passes all understanding. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."¹⁷⁰ We are freed from the bondage of fear and worry when we have God in our heart, which allows us to experience inner peace. Christians in tune with this virtue pray for peace throughout the world.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain."¹⁷¹

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I Am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."¹⁷²

"Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do."¹⁷³ What is Solomon saying in this scripture?

¹⁶⁹ Phil. 4: 7

¹⁷⁰ John 14: 27

¹⁷¹ 1 Tim. 6: 6

¹⁷² Matt. 11: 28-30

¹⁷³ Eccl. 9: 7

"Go thy way, thou righteous man; and voluptuous persons have no need of the following exhortation, and the reason annexed is not suitable to them; but the whole agrees better with religious persons, who under distressing views of Providence, and from gloomy and melancholy apprehensions of things, and mistaken notions of mortification, deny themselves the free and lawful use of the good things of life; and seeing there is no enjoyment of them in the grave, and after death, therefore let the following advice be taken, than which of worldly things nothing is better for a man to do; eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; which includes all things necessary and convenient, and which should be used and enjoyed freely and cheerfully; not barely for refreshment, but recreation; not for necessity only, but for pleasure; yet with moderation, not to excess; and with thankfulness to God; and the rather joy and mirth should mix with these things, since to a good man they are in love. In his providence, God gives, our daily food and of the joys of heaven."¹⁷⁴

Turning the Other Cheek

¹⁷⁴ Gill's exposition

"I am the body of Christ and Satan hath no power over me. For I overcome evil with good."¹⁷⁵ "I will fear no evil for thou art with me Lord, your Word and your Spirit they comfort me."¹⁷⁶ "No weapon formed against me shall prosper, for my righteousness is of the Lord. But whatever I do will prosper for I'm like a tree that's planted by the rivers of water."¹⁷⁷ "He prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies."¹¹¹

Faith in God Brings Peace

Christians have access to peace with God by being justified by the faith that comes from our Lord Jesus Christ. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this Grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."¹⁷⁸ This hope transcends the pain and hardships of this world, looking toward a glorified body and fellowship with the Father. In this transcendence, God is the ultimate Reality; the ultimate Truth.

We must keep our attention on the 'Table' and the 'Face'.

¹⁷⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:
27; Romans 12: 21

¹⁷⁶ Psalm 23: 4

¹⁷⁷ Isaiah 54: 17;
Psalm 1: 3

¹⁷⁸ Romans 5: 1,2

The "Prince of Peace" encourages us to follow His example by loving everyone so we can live together in harmony. This doesn't mean that we love what they are doing but we, through hope of reconciliation, see their potential in Christ. We must not forget that we were once ungodly sinners but we were "washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God."¹⁷⁹ "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding and will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."¹⁸⁰ "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You."¹⁸¹

QUALITIES TOWARD OTHERS

Patience



"Take no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof."¹⁸² In other words, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

¹⁷⁹ 1 Cor. 6: 11

¹⁸⁰ Phil. 4: 6-8

¹⁸¹ Is. 26: 3

¹⁸² Matt. 6: 34

Thank the Lord for Hardships

'Negative' examples are often our best teachers. Persecution and hostility from others is the only way that some of us will determine our own true Godly patience and compassion. In our daily lives, we are confronted with difficulties. Patience allows us to endure these circumstances. "Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly."¹⁸³ When we treat others with tolerance and thoughtfulness, we are demonstrating patience. Because of patience, we don't give up in difficult situations, and can overcome temptations and suffering because we know that God is present.

"I had been fortified by trauma,
the way a bone once broken,
grows back stronger than it had been."¹⁸⁴

Paul instructs young Timothy: "Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David.

¹⁸³ Proverbs 14: 29

¹⁸⁴ Charles M. Blow

This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained."¹⁸⁵

Forbearance and Longsuffering

"Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed His name, the LORD. And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished.'"¹⁸⁶ Happiness is contingent upon one's Godly behavior and the renewing of the mind. "Do not conform 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."¹⁸⁷ The gift and curse of God is wrapped up in our free will. We may choose good or evil; life or death!



¹⁸⁵ 2 Tim. 2: 7-9

¹⁸⁶ Exodus 34: 5-7

¹⁸⁷ Rom. 12: 2

The Choice is Ours

"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."¹⁸⁸

Man's Total Depravity

Within himself, man can never be pleasing to God.

"Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness."¹⁸⁹

Without God,
there is no life,
neither in this life or the next.

¹⁸⁸ Joshua 24: 15

¹⁸⁹ Rom. 8: 8-10

Kindness



"The one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation."¹⁹⁰ We must "exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of us may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."¹⁹¹ We must "encourage one another and build one another up."¹⁹² "We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."¹⁹³

"If our purpose or activity is of human origin,
it will fail!"

¹⁹⁰ 1 Corinthians 14: 3

¹⁹¹ Hebrews 3: 13

¹⁹² 1 Thessalonians 5:

11

¹⁹³ Romans 8: 28

The 'Good' Pharisees¹⁹⁴

"Two people in leadership roles: The flexible, receptive Nicodemus, willing to be open to new ideas and; The rational, coherent Gamaliel with his compelling logic. These are the two lone examples we have in the New Testament of upright, wise, and honorable Pharisees.

The open-minded Nicodemus¹⁹⁵ was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish ruling council. Nicodemus had become convinced, early in Christ's ministry that God was working through Him. But Nicodemus also was aware of what he didn't know. And instead of bluffing his way through, he admitted his ignorance and went directly to Jesus for understanding. Once his questions were resolved, Nicodemus became an ardent believer and an avid supporter of the Way. He championed the Jewish legal principle of not condemning someone without first hearing from that person.¹⁹⁶ He ultimately joined Joseph of Arimathea in preparing Jesus' body for burial.¹⁹⁷

Gamaliel,¹⁹⁸ reasoned with the Sanhedrin, appealing for careful consideration of their course of action. Reminding the leaders of recent historical events, Gamaliel advised them to leave the apostles alone."¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁴ From: Stuart Tyner
2016

¹⁹⁵ John 3
¹⁹⁶ John 7: 50, 51

¹⁹⁷ John 19: 38, 39
¹⁹⁸ Acts 5: 33-39

"If it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."¹⁹⁵

We are to be a 'living sacrifice.'¹⁹⁹

Jesus: You broke
Your body for me.
Now break my
body and will for
You. I will be a
'living sacrifice'
for You.



Just Ask!

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

¹⁹⁹ Romans 12

So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."²⁰⁰

Be Ministers of Reconciliation

As "ministers of reconciliation"²⁰¹, we are actively involved with the addicted and the lost for recovery and salvation. We cannot be silent when it comes to responding to these needs. We should be deeply involved in the world we serve. When the church begins to serve others, faith is made stronger. When we invest time, money, gifts and effort to help, personal needs begin to look smaller. When we serve others, the "least of these", we are serving Jesus. We are never closer to Jesus than when we're serving, loving and engaging the poor and hurting.

Unconditional Generosity

Generosity by definition is the quality of being kind. When we practice the virtue of generosity, we are able to give even when we don't benefit from that giving, or there is a cost to ourselves. "In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way, we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus.

²⁰⁰ Matt. 7: 7-12

²⁰¹ 2 Cor. 5: 18

‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” We demonstrate generosity when we are open to sharing our possessions and gifts with others. This displays our desire to help others, even when it means sacrificing something that we have.

We all know the Golden Rule: 'Do unto others as you would have them to do unto you', or in other words, treat others the way you would like to be treated. The same goes for the kindness virtue, where we give people the same respect, we would like given to us. We exhibit kindness through generous acts of service. People who practice this are not only compassionate and considerate, but have the ability to see the best in others. "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."²⁰²

Goodness

The absolute, unconditional love we experienced the hour we first believed, is the love that we are to give to others.

What Should Be Our Response to Those Who Hate Us?

²⁰² Eph. 4: 32

"If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you."²⁰³ "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 children 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. 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 own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

These responses are illustrated in Jesus' life. The children of God react and respond in the same manner as their Father. This behavior is not natural for the 'man of flesh' but is that of the Holy Spirit of Christ. 'Perfection' means obedience and conformity to the will and nature of God. "Do not conform 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."²⁰⁴ We are to be "conformed to the Image of His Son."²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Prov. 25: 21, 22

²⁰⁴ Rom. 12: 2

²⁰⁵ Rom. 8: 29, 30

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."²⁰⁶

Our response to His goodness, grace and forgiveness is loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us."²⁰⁷ "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position."²⁰⁸ "Be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing."²⁰⁹

Grieving the Holy Spirit

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

²⁰⁶ Gal. 2: 20

²⁰⁸ Rom. 12: 13-16

²⁰⁷ Matt. 5: 44

²⁰⁹ 1 Peter 3: 8, 9

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you."²¹⁰

God Intended it for Good

Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children."²¹¹

Evangelism, Benevolence and, Edification

There are three areas of responsibility assigned to the church by Christ.²¹² They are: Evangelism, (the work of preaching and teaching the gospel so that the lost can be saved); Benevolence, (the work of doing good to all men and practicing pure and undefiled religion before God), and; Edification (the work of nurturing spiritual growth and maturity within the members of the body of Christ). In each of these divinely assigned areas of responsibility, God has made sufficient plans and provisions. The incarnate Christ victoriously conquered Satan and destroyed the works of the devil.

²¹⁰ Eph. 4: 29-32

²¹¹ Gen. 50: 19

²¹² See:

plainbibleteaching.com

Thus, He can graciously grant forgiveness and sonship to each member of His body. The ascended Christ gave gifts of revelation, confirmation, and instruction of the Word to some so that all the saints had all things pertaining to life and godliness. Thus, all the necessary equipment for edification was once for all time delivered to the saints. Because of the fullness and all-sufficiency of His provisions, every spiritual nutrient needed for growth into spiritual maturity could be found in the milk and meat of God's final revelation to humanity.

"I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."²¹³ Not even a sparrow "will fall to the ground outside your Father's care."²¹⁴



²¹³ Eph. 3: 16-19

²¹⁴ Matt. 10: 29

When the truth, (not the words of false doctrine), is spoken in love, spiritual growth and development will occur. When each member of the body does what it can do, the growing body will be healthy and able to edify itself in love. When we walk worthy of the calling with which we have been called and are content to follow God's plan and use His all-sufficient equipment, Christ is glorified and the church is edified.²¹⁵



Don't Be Weary in Well Doing

Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.²¹⁶

The virtue of 'goodness' requires that we be in tune with who we are, and our own actions. When we practice goodness, we are putting God first, particularly when it comes to our decision-making. We are conscious of sin and try to avoid it because we know it's not in line with a true life with Christ. We are able to experience goodness through God's great love for us.

²¹⁵ Ephesians 4: 7-16

²¹⁶ Gal. 6: 8-9

We can love others through goodness and do good things because we know it is what God wants from us.

The best guide for goodness and obedience is to: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength,"²¹⁷ and "your neighbor as yourself."²¹⁸

QUALITIES OF SELF



"Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction."²¹⁹

Faithfulness

What is Faith?

Faith is likened to looking to Christ as Christ was lifted up, as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness.²²⁰ As one looks with confidence upon the risen Savior, there is perfect healing.



²¹⁷ Deut. 6: 5

²¹⁹ Prov. 29: 18

²¹⁸ Matt. 19: 19

²²⁰ Num. 21: 4-9; John 3: 14, 15

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh, and I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws. Then you will live in the land I gave Icestors; you will be My people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness.²²¹

The one who overcomes the world is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.²²² We know that in order for us to reach salvation, we have to have faith, and that faith must be centered in our Lord, Jesus Christ. People who exhibit faithfulness are dependable, trustworthy and obedient, particularly to the teachings of Jesus Christ, and God's Word through the Scriptures. They have faith in God, not faith in worldly things.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."²²³ Faith in God's power enables one to perceive the highest potential in every situation. This is the ultimate reality and potential of the human spirit. Jesus said: "If anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them.

²²¹ Ezek. 36: 26-29

²²² 1 John 5: 5

²²³ Heb. 11: 6

Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."²²⁴

The 'Obedience of Faith'

Paul's Instructions to the Apostles

"We have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name."²²⁵
"Obedience of faith" implies one's full spiritual activity in the response to the grace of God. It involves an ongoing spiritual effort. It involves choice and action. God "will render to each according to his works."²²⁶

The Priority of a Diligent Mind

Doubting Thomas

For Thomas, 'seeing was believing'. Empirical thought is based on what is experienced, rather than on theory or faith. Faith is dependent upon the object. Faith and trust must be in God, the Ultimate Reality. Trust does not require understanding; thus, is superior to knowledge. We are called (believers), not (understanders).

I believe; therefore, I understand.

²²⁴ Mark 11: 23

²²⁵ Rom. 1:4, 5

²²⁶ Rom. 2: 6

Faith in Action

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."²²⁷

Jesus" was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."²²⁸ That which the Pharisees saw, they didn't want for their minds were already set on a 'different' type of King.



²²⁷ Heb. 11: 1-3

²²⁸ John 1: 10-13

Pulling Down Strongholds

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We



demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."²²⁹

"The Lord is good and is a (*blessed*) Stronghold and He knows those who trust in Him."²³⁰ The 'crisis moments' reveal that which people trust. When we get to the end of our rope with nothing to live for, and we ask God to help us and we surrender to Him, He will help us and save us.

Henry Ford stated, "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't – you're right." He was emphasizing how our attitude and beliefs determine our success or failure. Self-limiting thoughts can have a lasting negative impact on our lives.

²²⁹ 2 Cor. 10: 3-5

²³⁰ Nahum 7

Positive reinforcements and a bright outlook on life can help us make better choices, thus resulting in successful outcomes.

We are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. Our heart can take us where our head can't fit. Faith comes from the heart, not the mind. Faith does not develop through striving, but through surrender. Confidence in God results in the life-style of abandonment and trust. Keep praying. God hears and He will answer, be it No; Grow; Slow or; Go, He will answer.

The Attitude of Gratitude (The Thankful Heart)



The born-again believer knows from where their help comes.²³¹ "I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip— He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you— the LORD is your Shade at your Right Hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm.

²³¹ Ps. 46: 1

He will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."²³²

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."²³³ "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."²³⁴

Consider the Source: Then Connect with It.

Truth is not a concept, but a Person!

The Gospel Reveals the Righteousness of God.

"I Am the Way the Truth and the Life."²³⁵

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith."²³⁶

Faith and Deeds

What good is it if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

²³² Psalm 121

²³³ 1 Thess. 5: 18

²³⁴ Prov. 17: 22

²³⁵ John 14: 6

²³⁶ Romans 1: 16,17

A person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.²³⁷ Complete confidence in God will bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Gentleness

Empathy Spoken Softly

Gentleness is a practice that involves having a calm temperament. Gentleness acts calmly and avoids actions that might lead to anger or resentment. This mind-set usually includes forgiveness. When love is in the heart, we are led to gentleness, peace and grace.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!"²³⁸

²³⁷ From: James 2

²³⁸ Philippians 2: 3-8


Meek is Not Weak

Gentleness and humility are closely related. When Jesus came, He "relinquished His place." He lay aside His prerogative, making "Himself of no reputation". "He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."²³⁹ We Must Humble Ourselves Under the Mighty Hand of God.

Solomon's Temple



²³⁹ Philip. 2: 7-11

" The LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a temple for sacrifices. "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among My people, if My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.  Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that My Name may be there forever. My Eyes and My Heart will always be there. "As for you, if you walk before Me faithfully as David your father did, and do all I command, and observe My decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a successor to rule over Israel.' "But if you turn away and forsake the decrees and commands, I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will uproot Israel from My land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for My Name. I will make it a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. This temple will become a heap of rubble.

All who pass by will be appalled and say, ‘Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ People will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why He brought all this disaster on them.’ ”²⁴⁰

The Priority of a Dedicated Mind²⁴¹

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."²⁴² Jesus said that: "I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you."²⁴³

Who was the greatest disciple?

Supper was ended and everyone still had dirty feet. The servant was presumably missing, so Jesus washed their feet.²⁴⁴ Jesus takes the position of a slave, and was sold for the price of a slave. Now we'll find out who is the greatest in the kingdom.²⁴⁵ "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."²⁴⁶

Faith that results from the undeniable encounter.

²⁴⁰ 2 Chron. 7: 12-22

²⁴¹ From: What Do You Think by: David Jeremiah

²⁴² Philip. 2: 5

²⁴³ Jn 13: 15

²⁴⁴ Jn. 13: 2-4

²⁴⁵ Phil. 2: 9

²⁴⁶ Matt. 20: 16

The couple walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, invited Jesus into their home. We must invite Jesus in, otherwise we die. The Samaritan woman invited others to "come see a Man". They said: "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this Man really is the Savior of the world."²⁴⁷ This proclamation was made by the hated, unaccepted Samaritans; not by the 'religious' in Jerusalem.

Self-Control



Submission with Determination

The fruit of self-control is exhibiting the will to overcome temptation and living according to God's will. We can practice this through the discipline of our emotions and actions. Ask yourself if what you're doing promotes respect of God and respect of self. Am I living a modest life? When we have self-control, we are less likely to be sabotaged by the enemy because we are in line with Christ. We are modest when our thoughts and words are pure. This self-control centers our focus on God and how these actions are with in line with His will and His character.

²⁴⁷ John 4: 42

Are we focused on Christ or sin?



When Jesus died, He died once to break the power of sin. Now that He lives, He lives for the glory of God. So, we also should consider ourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.²⁴⁸ The strength of sin is the law which Christ has fulfilled. Now we can focus on Christ! Now we can boldly "approach God's throne of grace with confidence".²⁴⁹

Self-Discipline

The child of God must do their best to present their self to God as one approved, "a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."²⁵⁰ "If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success."²⁵¹

Controlling Carnal Desires

Christians are continually engaged in spiritual warfare.

²⁴⁸ Romans 6: 1-11;
Matt. 5: 17-20; 1 Cor.
15: 56

²⁴⁹ Heb. 4: 16
²⁵⁰ 2 Tim. 2: 15
²⁵¹ Eccl. 10: 10

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body in order to obey its lusts, nor yield your members to sin as weapons of unrighteousness.”²⁵² “You who were slaves of sin obeyed out of the heart”²⁵³ God's laws are "written in the hearts of mankind."²⁵⁴ Obedience comes from the heart and acts in line with Biblical teachings. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”²⁵⁵ We are in Pauls' words, providing a “service” which is an action of offering our bodies as a “living sacrifice.” “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”²⁵⁶



Christian Liberty and Freedom

²⁵² Rom. 6: 12

²⁵³ Rom. 6: 17

²⁵⁴ Rom. 2: 15

²⁵⁵ Rom. 12: 1

²⁵⁶ Rom. 12: 2

Jesus sets us free from the constraints of the law.

'Freedom is the length of a cord from a given stake'.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."²⁵⁷ Christian liberty is ultimately eternal life in Jesus, freedom from the normal consequence of sin which is death.

Christian liberty can also be taken to mean freedom from the constriction of the Jewish law and sacrificial system. "Through the law comes knowledge of sin."²⁵⁸ But the law can only expose sin and make us aware of it. "For by works of the law no human being will be justified"²⁵⁹, so it is clear that the law can take us to the knowledge of our sin but not do anything permanent about it. The law provided the sacrificial system whereby sin was covered, but the sacrifices had to be made every year. Jesus, on the other hand, shed His blood once for all. There is no need for a repeated sacrifice.²⁶⁰

"For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."²⁶¹ Christian liberty means that we no longer are controlled by sin, but by the righteousness of God.²⁶² "All things are lawful,' but not all things are helpful.

²⁵⁷ Rom. 6: 23

²⁵⁸ Romans 3: 20

²⁶⁰ Hebrews 9: 18–28

²⁶¹ Rom. 6: 14

²⁶² Romans 6: 18

'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor."²⁶³

In exercising our freedom, we must temper our actions with love. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."²⁶⁴ Our love for one another will cause us to want to restrict our own behavior so as not to hurt others, or cause them to stumble. Licentiousness on the one hand and hypocritical asceticism on the other are both wrong. Licentiousness, or lewdness, is not a sin of weakness but one of willful disobedience. We must continually seek the will of God to determine what is the right way to exercise or voluntarily restrict our liberty in each situation.

Our goals as Christians should be to glorify God, build up the church, and draw others to Christ. "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."²⁶⁵

What are those 'things that so easily beset us'?

"Tho we walk in the flesh (carnality), we do not war according to the flesh."

²⁶³ 1 Corinthians 10:
23

²⁶⁴ John 13: 34

²⁶⁵ Galatians 5: 13

One must bring "every thought into captivity according to the obedience of Christ."²⁶⁶ We are perfectly designed for obedience. To mistrust the Most Worthy One is a misuse of our designed nature.

Jesus "rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. He asked His disciples:

'Where is your faith?'

In fear and amazement, they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him."²⁶⁷



²⁶⁶ 2 Cor. 10: 4

²⁶⁷ Luke 8: 25

CHAPTER 3

DANGEROUS STATES OF MIND

Life's challenges and hardships often cause us to become short-sighted and develop distorted views of reality.²⁶⁸ Persecution will certainly test one's faith and commitment to God. What doesn't



kill us will strengthen us. If God is not our spiritual refuge, then we will be vulnerable to the destructive power of sin. The risen Christ sent messages to the first century church, informing them of their spiritual state, which for some, were dangerous deviations from the laws and character of God.

Jesus' diagnosis for the seven churches(Rev. 2&3)
Ephesus: The Church Whose Love Had Grown Cold;
Smyrna: The Suffering Church;

²⁶⁸ Matt. 7: 1-6

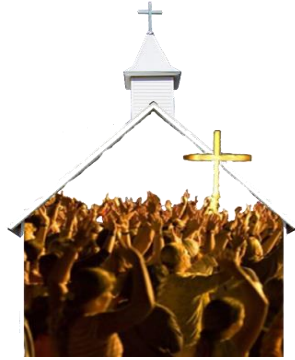
Pergamum: The Church that Tolerates Wrong Teaching;

Thyatira: The Church that Tolerates Sin;

Sardis: The Dead Church;

Philadelphia: The Faithful Church;

Laodicea: The Lukewarm Church.



Each believer is a part of the bride of Christ, the Church. The following shows some of the states of mind that threaten one's relationship and fellowship with the heavenly Father.

GUILT

Can we not forgive others, or even ourself?

If we cannot forgive ourself, then maybe we are attempting to set our principles higher than those of God who has forgiven us. It is called redemption. "Even while we were practicing sin, God forgave us. God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!

While we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."²⁶⁹

Symptoms of unforgiveness may include: An unforgiving Heart; Hard-heartedness (without normal affection) and; A lack of mercy and compassion.

Making mistakes is a part of everyone's life. Everyone sins; everyone makes mistakes.²⁷⁰ Repentance for those wrong doings enables God's forgiveness that has been provided through Christ. Yes, the memory and consequences are still there. These are the scars that remind us not to go there again. The scars in Jesus' feet and hands remind us that we have redemption through His sacrifice. We must be "born-again".²⁷¹



Guilt says: "I'm not forgiven";

Condemnation says: "My life is worthy of judgment";

Shame says: "it's still who I am."

²⁶⁹ Rom. 5: 8-11

²⁷⁰ Rom. 3: 23

²⁷¹ John 3: 1-21

Guilt, condemnation and shame were all nailed to the cross of Christ. He is the Great Physician that brings healing to all of our diseases²⁷² and mental and spiritual infirmities.²⁷³ As Christians, we can put an end to all Guilt, Shame and Condemnation, through the finished work of Jesus, and the eternal promise of: "I will remember their sins no more."²⁷⁴ The only sure method is accepting the One who paid the price for our sins on the cross and bearing them for us. Then the promise for our heavenly Father, that He will remember them no more can take effect, and we can end the Guilt and Shame and condemnation, that comes with all sin.



Jesus' sacrifice removed the Penalty of sin; Faith in Christ and the in-filling of the Holy Spirit removes the Power of sin; As members of the Kingdom of God, heaven will be free from the Presence of sin.

Shame off of me!
Healing of the Spirit ²⁷⁵



Christ died to cover the sins of the believer, as well as the sins of the heathen—who knows nothing of Jesus or His grace.

²⁷² Ps. 103: 3

²⁷³ Is. 53: 5

²⁷⁴ Hebrews 8: 12

²⁷⁵

www.healingofthespirit.org

Does the sinner's prayer ("Lord, forgive me of all my sins") suffice? We must be very specific about which sins. Such "general-all encompassing" prayers may provide temporary relief from darkness and bondage but the sin and its consequences may still remain.

Why do feelings of condemnation, shame, and guilt often continue to afflict those who have been forgiven? Often the forgiveness and redemption of Christ has not been fully believed or accepted.²⁷⁶ "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Forgiveness – Past, Present and Future²⁷⁷

When a person receives forgiveness from the Lord for sin, does it include past, present and future sin? If not, how is our life in Christ everlasting? When Christ died on the cross, all of our sins were future.

First, according to Lev. 5, when God forgives us, He removes our guilt. Guilt is liability to punishment, not a bad feeling about what we did wrong. Forgiveness removes our liability to punishment.

Second, the record of our sin is removed.²⁷⁸ God does not "forget" anything.

²⁷⁶ Psalm 103: 12

²⁷⁷ By: Dr. Philip
Brown

²⁷⁸ Jer. 31: 34; Psa.
32: 2; 103: 12

Forgiveness means God does not take into account the sins that have been confessed and forgiven when dealing with us. The record of our sin has been 'expunged'. To "expunge" is to "erase or remove completely." In courts of law, "expungement" is the process by which a record of criminal conviction is destroyed or sealed from state or federal record. An expungement order directs the court to treat the criminal conviction as if it had never occurred, essentially removing it from a defendant's criminal record as well as, ideally, the public record.

Third, we are reconciled to God. God restores us to relationship and fellowship with Himself.²⁷⁹ The relationship between Christ's atonement and forgiveness is this: Christ's atoning sacrifice was an infinitely sufficient provision on behalf of the sins of all humanity.²⁸⁰ God's wrath was actually propitiated at Calvary only for sins that had been committed and confessed.²⁸¹ God's judgment has been appeased by the Perfect Sacrifice. God applies Christ's atonement only to those who evidence their faith in Christ by confessing and forsaking their sins.²⁸²

Only sins that have actually been committed up to the point of repentance and faith are forgiven.

²⁷⁹ Eph. 2: 12-14;
Rom. 5: 10

²⁸⁰ 1 Tim. 4: 10; 1
John 2: 2

²⁸¹ Rom. 3: 25, 26
²⁸² 1 Tim. 4: 10

For sins to be forgiven which have been committed after salvation, there must be repentance. There is no forgiveness apart from repentance.²⁸³

As we walk in the light with God—doing right and avoiding all known sin—the blood of Jesus Christ His Son is cleansing us from all past sin as well as present sins we may commit unknowingly.²⁸⁴ It does not cleanse us from sin we have not committed.

The claim that God forgives our sins, past, present and future may come from several different angles. Some argue that Peter's statement "He bore our sins in His body on the tree" means Jesus actually paid the penalty for all our sins and, therefore, God's wrath was satisfied and our sins were all forgiven at Calvary. This is incorrect and necessarily leads either to universalism, Calvinism, or double indemnity (both Christ and the sinner are punished for the same sin).

Eternal Salvation

"What is everlasting life?" Some believe that since Christ is the source of "eternal salvation" for all those who obey Him²⁸⁵, that once a person is saved, they cannot be lost. This is known as "eternal security of the believer." This must imply that all their sins have been forgiven.

²⁸³ Heb. 6: 4-6

²⁸⁴ 1 John 1: 7

²⁸⁵ Heb. 5: 9

This involves an understanding of the biblical words: “eternal” or “everlasting.” When we use the words “eternal” or “everlasting,” we usually mean “without end” or “never ending.” “Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.”²⁸⁶ Eternal life is a relationship with God through Christ that has no inherent ending point.

Do we have positional relationship and fellowship with God? By choosing to willfully rebel and commit apostasy, does one terminate their relationship with God? If we cease to obey Him, do we terminate our saving relationship with Him?

“By one offering He perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”²⁸⁷ Since Christ’s self-sacrifice perfected us, are all our sins forgiven? Are all the benefits of Christ’s atonement provisionally ours the moment we are saved? The born-again receive God’s benefits in a God-determined sequence, much of which is determined by faith, trust, and God’s progressive sanctification of the believer.²⁸⁸

One must determine if the scriptures support the statements that: ‘forgiveness applies only to sins committed, confessed, and renounced’;

²⁸⁶ John 17: 3

²⁸⁷ Heb. 10: 14; Rom.
8: 29, 30

²⁸⁸ Provisionheirz

and/or that: salvation can be forfeited now or in the kingdom to come.²⁸⁹

"To not trust GOD is to trust something else
that will not save.

Typically, a Christian is someone who, through conviction of the Holy Spirit, repents of their sins, confesses to GOD and trusts in Christ for forgiveness and salvation. If one continues in sin deliberately for the rest of their lives without repentance, one may assume that they were never saved in the first place. Is this 'circular reasoning'? If they were saved and "back slid" into a sinful spiritual condition, what would be the state of their salvation? Have they forfeited their fellowship with GOD and their eternal security? It is "impossible to bring back to repentance those who were once enlightened, those who have experienced the good things of heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit; who have tasted the goodness of the word of GOD and the power of the age to come and then turn away from GOD."²⁹⁰ It is impossible to bring such people back to repentance.

²⁸⁹ Jude 1: 6

²⁹⁰ Heb. 6: 4-6

By rejecting the Son of GOD, they themselves are attempting to nail Him to the cross once again, holding Him up to public shame."²⁹¹ (See Article #3, page 328).

A man may be overtaken in a fault, or he may deliberately go into sin. Does this action renounce the Gospel or deny the LORD? Has their salvation been forfeited?²⁹² "If Jesus' sacrifice for sin is rejected, there remains no other sacrifice that can cleanse."²⁹³

The state of mind of those who fear losing their salvation is a sign that they are not fallen from grace for they are still longing for pardon and forgiveness. It is a sad situation if one can think that salvation could be lost so easily.

Jesus Himself tells us that "those the Father has given Him will come to Him and He will never reject them."²⁹⁴ He came down from heaven to do the will of GOD who sent Him, not to do His own will. "And this is the will of GOD, that I should not lose even one of all those He has given Me, but that I should raise them up at the last day."²⁹⁵ For it is My Father's will that all who see His Son and believe in Him should have eternal life."²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ From: The Crucible

p. 119

²⁹² Jude 1: 6

²⁹³ Heb. 10: 26

²⁹⁴ Jn. 6: 36-38; Heb.

6: 6

²⁹⁵ Jn. 6: 39

²⁹⁶ From: The Crucible

P. 298

The Kingdom Eternal

God's Life in Us

Does God hold our sins against us? "For until the Law sin was in the World: but sin is not imputed where there is no Law."²⁹⁷

Does God Impute Sin?

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."²⁹⁸ The Greek word for "never" in this verse is a double negative, meaning "never, not at all, not even a possibility." Sin is not imputed because Jesus has done away with sin.²⁹⁹

God's life in us is the issue, not sin.

Free Will

Can One Choose to Break Fellowship and Relationship with God? If So, Has Salvation Been Forfeited?

"What is mankind that You are mindful of them; human beings that You care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels."³⁰⁰

²⁹⁷ Rom. 5: 13

²⁹⁸ Romans 4: 8

²⁹⁹ John 3:16; 5:24;

6:47; Heb. 8: 12

³⁰⁰ Ps. 8: 4, 5

The angels in heaven, "who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these He has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day."³⁰¹ If angels in heaven can decide to leave God and be cast into hell, why would man not have free will to do the same? (See Article #2, page 325).

Think about this seriously!

People do not receive eternal life by having their sins forgiven. People end up separated eternally from God because they never received God's gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus. All sins, past, present, and future, of all people have already been done away with in Jesus Christ, through His death, burial, and resurrection. When Jesus paid the price for our redemption on the cross, all of our sins were future.



Is everyone 'covered' by the redeeming blood of Jesus?

"To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."³⁰² "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

³⁰¹ Joel 6

³⁰² Rev. 2: 7

But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven."³⁰³ "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."³⁰⁴

The righteousness of God must be received through faith. "Apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of His blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. He did it to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."³⁰⁵

³⁰³ Col. 1: 21-23

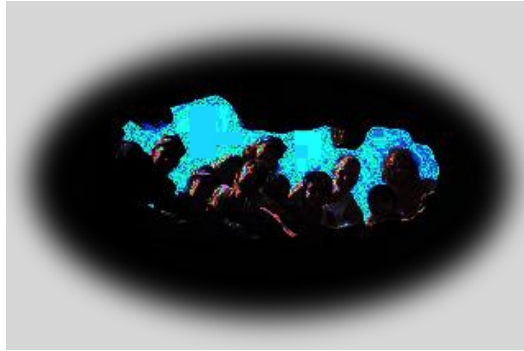
³⁰⁴ Philip. 1: 6

³⁰⁵ Romans 3: 21-26

The most somber, tragic statement in the universe will be when God says: 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!'³⁰⁶

DEPRESSION

Depression may be described as: 'Anger Turned Inward'.



Suppressed anxiety, unforgiveness or hatred will disable or paralyze an individual, even to the point of 'catatonic' depression where the depressed person withdraws completely, becoming dysfunctional and detached from reality. Clinical depression is often accompanied with paranoia and distrust.

When we don't feel strong or worthy enough to interact with friends, family, and colleagues as equals, this can greatly impact our mental health and well-being. Constantly second-guessing and shrinking oneself can sometimes lead to depression and frustration.

³⁰⁶ Matt. 7: 23

Those with this condition are predisposed to see the world as negative. They usually respond in the same way as people with hostile attitudes.

The depressive attitude stems from earlier life experiences and can develop from children who feel that their parents don't love them. They're too young to think that their parents are imperfect, so they assume that they are unloved because there's something wrong with their own self.

Those with depressive attitudes may: Appear sensitive and in need of help; Isolate themselves; Secretly want to hurt others; Encourage others to hurt them so they can feel depressed; Self-sabotage because they don't believe they deserve success.

SELF-DESTRUCTIVE

We must think of ourselves the same way that God thinks of us.

Histrionic Personality
Disorder



Symptoms:

Histrionic: Overly theatrical or melodramatic in character or style; Exaggerated dramatic behavior designed to attract attention; An actor.

Behavior often includes: Constantly seeking attention; Excessively emotional, dramatic or sexually provocative to gain attention; Speaks dramatically with strong opinions, but few facts or details to back them; Easily influenced by others; Shallow, rapidly changing emotions; Excessive concern with physical appearance; Thinks relationships with others are closer than they really are.

Self-Destructive Thoughts

Thoughts like these tend to reduce confidence, diminish performance, lower potential and eventually sabotage one's success. Self-destructive talk often starts from something as simple as "I can't", "I don't feel confident", or "I'm not good enough".

Drug Addiction as an Escape Mechanism

Rehabilitation

As with alcohol rehab, attending a peer support group is an important element of drug rehab.

In group therapy, individuals are encouraged to share their drug abuse stories, in a bid to help others who may be experiencing similar difficulties throughout the process.

The most effective programs with the most dramatic turn-around and recovery are those which are faith based.



Drug Addiction Testimonies

Lady S: “I was naïve to believe I could take heroin just the once. I didn’t realize how addictive the substance was and after one night I was hooked. I didn’t even realize I had a problem; I thought I was having the time of my life, completely detached from the rest of the world. It’s scary to think that a substance had so much control over my life. I have been clean for five and a half years now and the thought of taking any kind of drug has never crossed my mind since.”

Mr. B. realized he had a problem when his marriage came to an end because of his persistent cannabis use. “It was only when my ex-wife asked me to quit that I realized I had a problem. I was so sure that I could quit, you don’t hear of cannabis being addictive, but I suppose because I had smoked for so long, it was part of my routine.

I didn't seek help to start with; I was so scared of being seen as a drug addict. My wife caught me smoking and the next day she left. That's when I knew I had to get help."

Lady H. After she first tried Ketamine, she suffered from anxiety attacks and swore she would never take it again. "I remember being at a house party, all my friends were taking drugs and I felt bored, so I swallowed Ketamine. The effects were so different to the first time I took it and when I went on nights out after, it felt boring without the influence of the drug, so I took more. I became completely detached from everyone and everything, old friends stopped talking to me, I was completely detached from my family and work, nothing else mattered to me, I just wanted to go out. When I went for long periods without taking it, I experienced paranoia and really bad headaches, but I still didn't think I was addicted. It was only after my sister helped me come to my senses and guided me towards a treatment program that was right for me. I haven't taken drugs in six months. Although the first few weeks were hard, I am in a much better place now. I am still focusing on my recovery and piece by piece, fixing my life back together."

A Father's Influence

How is perception of GOD influenced by the father image?



What impact do our fathers have on our view of our heavenly Father and God's provision for healing the wounds broken fathers leave behind? Are we projecting our image of our earthly father onto our heavenly Father? We often expect God to respond to us in the same way our earthly father had. Disengaged, abusive fathers erect barriers that children must scale to experience their heavenly Father's unconditional love. Self-destructive perceptions and habits often result from individuals who have had abusive parents.

Overcoming Distant Fathers

C. S. Lewis's mother died when he was ten. Lewis was shipped off to school. The physically and emotionally distant relationship he had with his father no doubt played a role in his becoming an atheist. But the story doesn't end there. Christ pursued Lewis. Experiencing the love of his heavenly Father transformed Lewis into the great Christian author and influencer.

If we struggle with trusting God, feeling close to Him, or believing He loves us, look at the relationship we had with our father. Perhaps there is a good reason for these feelings. But those feelings don't reflect the truth about God or about who we are to Him. Jesus came to show us the Father. We transform our experience with the Father by getting to know Jesus better.

COMPLACENCY

Searing the conscious³⁰⁷
with complacency:

Neuropathy of the heart. "I



wish you were either cold or hot."³⁰⁸ Symptoms of slothfulness or complacency may include laziness; knowing to do good but refusing to do it. "The craving of a sluggard will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work."³⁰⁹ The slothful get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to."³¹⁰

Other dysfunctional and anti-social behaviors will include hypochondria, an intense need for control, dissociative states, depression, and anxiety.

³⁰⁷ 1 Timothy 4: 2

³⁰⁹ Prov. 21: 25

³⁰⁸ Rev. 3: 16

³¹⁰ 1 Tim. 5: 13

Mental states often involve delusions, paranoia, hallucinations, and difficult comprehension of reality. (For a comparison of psychosis and neurosis, see Article #6, page 344).

CHAPTER 4

THE MIND OF THE UNREGENERATE

Unregenerate describes one who is not reforming or showing repentance. Spiritually, the mind-set of the unregenerate would be that of 'anti-Christ' thinking and behavior.



Man is born with an inherited propensity toward rebellion and self-preservation. It is the curse of sin inherited from Adam.³¹¹ Sin is defined as rebellion against God.³¹² Some of the characteristics of the unregenerate would include: Worship of False gods; Social Injustice and; Sins of the flesh. Spiritual sins are those actions or motives which threaten the existence of the soul, now or in the hereafter. Sin is an immoral act considered to be a transgression against divine law. Sinful acts would be any action or life-style that is not Christ-like.

Sin can be classified into four kinds: Attitude, Action, Neglect, and Intent.

³¹¹ Romans 5: 12

³¹² Gen. 3: 1

ATTITUDE



The Lord's diagnosis of mankind is that we cannot heal ourselves. "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God."³¹³ We are born relationally and spiritually dead to God. Darkness and evil is anchored in every human heart and manifested by a self-centered life. Men will be lovers of money, which goes along with loving self.

The 'last days' generation will be boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful and unholy. So, these are the things that they will live for on the earth. And it all stems from, first of all, having a heart that is dark and a heart that is evil.

³¹³ John 3: 19, 20

Violence and hatred typify today's society. "Many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other."³¹⁴

Sins of attitude include false pride, unjust anger, bitter envy, maliciousness and hatred. Feelings are not sin but if left unbridled may lead to sinful actions. A lifestyle of bad thoughts creates a stronghold behind which sinful actions will emerge.

Fear

Inordinate fear is known as phobia. Fear of water is hydrophobia; altophobia is fear of heights and so on. Symptoms of fear concerning spiritual matters may include: Anxiety; Unbelief; Faithlessness; Fear of people or circumstances;³¹⁵ Fear of confessing Jesus to others.³¹⁶

Fear of Not Being Perfect

Some are afraid of making mistakes. They want to be a perfectionist in whatever they do. An extreme form would be "OCD"; an obsessive-compulsive mental health disorder characterized by repetitive actions that seem impossible to stop. "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen.

³¹⁴ Matt. 24: 10

³¹⁵ Psalms 112: 7

³¹⁶ John 12: 42

Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words."³¹⁷ Even though setting benchmarks and high standards might feel like the right way for effective motivation, losing joy in life and self-criticism for not doing something to the greatest potential, show the co-relation between perfectionism and unhappiness.

Paranoid Personality Disorder

Symptoms: Pervasive distrust and suspicion of others and their motives;

Unjustified belief that others are trying to harm or deceive; Unjustified suspicion of the loyalty or trustworthiness of others; Hesitancy to confide in others due to unreasonable fear that others will use the information against them; Perception of innocent remarks or nonthreatening situations as personal insults or attacks; Angry or hostile reaction to perceived slights or insults; Tendency to hold grudges; Unjustified, recurrent suspicion that spouse is unfaithful.

³¹⁷ Matt. 6: 6, 7

Scarcity Vs. Abundant Mindset

Those with a scarcity mindset sees the source of their problems as something outside their self. They often blame everything outside of their self for their physical reality. The abundant mindset takes radical responsibility for reality.

Those with the scarcity mindset, judge others by their own personal beliefs, and erroneously believes that everyone wants or needs the same thing. Without this connection to the Divine Source of abundance, the scarcity mindset turns on the people around them. They refuse to receive God's abundance that is their birthright, and so they try to steal this abundance from others. This is the mindset that puts other people down instead of lifting them up. The mindset that makes everyone else the source of their 'lack'.

Scarcity mindset stems from fear; be it the fear of inadequate resources or insufficient skill to achieve one's goals. "There is no fear in love but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because He first loved us."³¹⁸ It is the love and "goodness of God that leads us to repentance."³¹⁹

"Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

³¹⁸ 1 John 4: 18, 19

³¹⁹ Rom. 2: 4

If we have been united with Him in a death like His, we will certainly also be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him."³²⁰

The history of the Israelites is a good example of how a scarcity mindset will keep one from living in God's abundance. After they were liberated from Egypt, they wandered for 40 years on a journey that should have only taken them 11 days. Why? Because they doubted God.

Ezekiel comes across a pile of dried-up bones and God asks him if they can live.³²¹ If Ezekiel had a scarcity mindset, he would have immediately responded with "No it's impossible!" However, that is not what Ezekiel did. He responded with "Sovereign Lord, You alone know." Ezekiel's response and the actions he took after God told him what to do show us that Ezekiel trusted in God. He knew that God could ultimately do anything.

³²⁰ Rom. 6: 4-8

³²¹ Ezek. 37

So instead of throwing out excuses as to why the bones couldn't live, Ezekiel did exactly what God told him to do. He prophesied over the dry bones and they lived!

These dry bones that lived again represent the 'rebirth' of Israel. It seems impossible that such a small nation that had dispersed all over the face of the earth would become a nation again, which occurred in 1948. God speaks to Ezekiel saying: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore, prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: My people, I Am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, My people, will know that I Am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'" ³²² This is the spiritual, 'abundant' mindset that only comes from Jehovah Jireh, our God Provider!



³²² Ezek. 37: 11-14

Those "who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with His blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. Praise to God for a Living Hope. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for those who, through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while we may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of our faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy."³²³

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

³²³ 1 Peter 1: 2-8

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof."³²⁴

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight."³²⁵ "God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."³²⁶ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.



³²⁴ Matthew 6:33,34

³²⁵ Prov. 3: 5,6

³²⁶ 1 Cor. 1: 9

Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

What Is an Inferiority Complex?³²⁷

An inferiority complex encompasses feelings of inadequacy or inferiority. It isn’t uncommon for a person to appear withdrawn in the presence of others that make them feel insufficient.



Signs of an Inferiority Complex: Displaying signs of low self-esteem; A tendency to over-analyze criticisms and compliments; Persistently looking for validation and praise from others; Pulling away from family, friends, and colleagues, especially in social situations;

³²⁷ Excerpts from
article by: Elizabeth
Plumtre

Attempting to make others feel insecure to make up for feelings of inadequacy; The refusal to participate in competitive events for fear of being compared to others.

What Causes an Inferiority Complex?

Childhood Experiences

Feelings of inadequacy may result from negative events that took place at a much younger age. Children that grow up surrounded by adults, especially those who tended to care for their every need, may grow up feeling weak and incapable of caring for themselves without supervision. This can be made worse in situations where children are deliberately made to feel small and helpless. Likewise, where young ones are raised in an environment of cruelty, one that repeatedly makes them question their worth, they tend to grow up timid and unsure of their value where others are concerned.

Physical Characteristics

A person may consider their weight, facial features, or other bodily traits to be real causes for concern. This can lead to extreme self-consciousness. Other characteristics like living with a speech impediment can encourage feelings of inadequacy.

Destroy the Strongholds

"Because God has shed His love abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit, I love God more than life and I love myself and others with the love of God. I put God first, others second and myself last."³²⁸

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens, enables and empowers me. There is nothing I cannot do through Christ for with God all things are possible."³²⁹

"I Am the head and not the tail; above and not beneath."³³⁰



Jesus is our example of how to walk and talk victoriously. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."³³¹ "Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth can ruin everything."³³²

"Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."³³³

Overcoming an Inferiority Complex God's Way³³⁴

Mr. K: "I developed a terrible inferiority complex growing up, but not because I was ugly or had some physical defect.

³²⁸ Romans 5: 5; Mark 12: 30,31

³²⁹ Philippians 4: 13; Matthew 19: 26

³³⁰ Deuteronomy 28: 13

³³¹ Proverbs 18: 21

³³² Proverbs 13: 3

³³³ Psalm 141: 3

³³⁴ From an article by: Philip C. Jones

No, I had an alcoholic father that abused me with words that created in me very low self-esteem. But one day that all began to change. I got saved. And God being the merciful person He is, began to help me overcome my inferiority complex and He also helped me to forgive those that had wronged me. He showed me how I could become the person I was created to be, an overcomer, not a loser. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."³³⁵ "He showed me the battlefield is in the mind. So, for me to win the battle in my mind, God directed me to begin using His Word to lay siege to those destructive thought patterns that had held me captive so long to a defeated inner image."³³⁶

The Blame Game

Holding others responsible for your mistakes is where the blame game begins. While some people blame such negative attitude to their past, such as, having a dysfunctional family, failed relationships, socio-economic problems or health challenges as the reason for their unhappiness and failures in life.

³³⁵ 1 Jn. 5: 4

³³⁶ <https://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/how-to...>

We often mask our own insecurity by building ourself up, and putting others down. We are not the example but Christ.³³⁷ Pointing fingers at others might be an easy choice to make and to justify our life's unsatisfactory conditions or work problems, but it also disturbs one's well-being and causes bitterness, resentment and feeling of powerlessness. Blaming others reflect negatively on ourself as it makes ourself a prisoner of our own bitterness and resentment refraining us from achieving happiness and success in life.

Negative Comparisons

Depending on the Power of God

Who Jesus is can be seen for the power of the miracle and the power to endure. When the disciples could not cast the demons out of the young man, they took it to Jesus. Prayer and fasting puts the flesh in its rightful place, enabling the spirit of man to depend upon the power of God, rather than their own. One must remove the counter-productive negative thoughts and replace them with the mind of Christ.

³³⁷ Rom. 1: 16; Matt.
10: 38

Negative Attitudes & Behaviors³³⁸

How is one to manage negative attitudes and behavior at the right time. A negative attitude in life can affect one's health, happiness and well-being. People with a positive attitude are influenced by what goes on within rather than without.

One of the most common ways to feel negative about oneself is when we start comparing ourselves to others. We might believe that others are doing better than us or are achieving more goals in life or might be more physically attractive and richer, however, all these traits do not represent anyone's happiness.

Having a feeling of jealousy, inferiority or wishing to have something that others have, develops negative social comparison behavior. "'You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.'"³³⁹ Habitual negative social comparisons increase the chances of stress, anxiety, depression and self-defeating choices. It is also a sin.

³³⁸ From article by:
Jonas Muthoni and
Keith Harrell

³³⁹ Ex. 20: 17

Judging Others

If we focus on people's negatives, we probably have a negative attitude. If we forgive their flaws, we're more positive and definitely more Christ-like. Jesus teaches us that we are to "love those that persecute us."³⁴¹ We must "live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is Mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."³⁴²

Handling Hard Times

If we tend to blame others, minimize our own mistakes, hate change, and rile when challenged, we may have a negative attitude.

³⁴⁰ Posted by: Robert
Greene

³⁴¹ Matt. 5: 44

³⁴² Rom. 12: 16-19

Inspiring Responses in Others

If people fear us or are defensive, we may have a negative attitude.

Assuming Situations

Having a negative attitude is also indicated by how we handle a situation or an interaction. Many may see the glass half-empty, which becomes a habitual and automatic reaction to any situation. Whether we are annoyed by traffic, or the bills, it is our choice to relate these situations as a positive or negative experience. This important choice can make one stronger or weaker. To relate to a situation positively will avoid feeling victimized and will not assume things negatively.



Why is Mummering a Sin?³⁴³

"So, all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron.

³⁴³ From an article by:
Gene Taylor

The whole congregation said to them, 'If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?'"³⁴⁴

In the above text the Israelites murmured against their gracious and loving God. Many Christians are murmurers and complainers. In the home, on the job and in the local church they grumble, murmur, and complain. They can see nothing good. To them, everything is bad—their life is miserable, and they want to make it that way for everyone else. To murmur means to grumble or whine. It is not wrong to complain if correction is needed, but there should be no murmuring.

The Grecian widows had a just complaint.³⁴⁵ They were being neglected in the daily ministration. It was in order for them to complain but not to murmur. In relation to the local church, if you have a just complaint about services, the temperature of the building, the singing, the song leader, the elders, the preacher, Bible classes, etc., a complaint is in order. But if it is not corrected as you would have it, do not murmur. Such murmuring is wrong.

³⁴⁴ Num. 14: 1-3

³⁴⁵ Acts 6: 1-5

There are several examples of the sin of murmuring in the New Testament, like the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.³⁴⁶ They murmured because they had worked all day while others who had worked for a much shorter period received the same wages. They had received their just due but they still murmured.

The scribes and Pharisees_murmured against the disciples of Jesus because they ate and drank with publicans and sinners, but they were really striking out at Jesus.³⁴⁷ They did not care that the publicans and sinners needed Jesus. They were only concerned with their personal agenda. The Jews murmured about Jesus because He said He was the Bread of Life.³⁴⁸ Instead of investigating His claim in an effort to know the truth, they murmured.

"Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."³⁴⁹ "Be hospitable to one another without grumbling."³⁵⁰ It causes one to perish.³⁵¹ Christians are taught to be content with: Necessities³⁵²; What they have³⁵³; Their lot³⁵⁴ and; God's way.³⁵⁵

³⁴⁶ Matt. 20: 1-16

³⁴⁷ Luke 5: 29-32

³⁴⁸ John 6: 41

³⁴⁹ Phil. 2: 14,15

³⁵⁰ 1 Pet. 4: 9

³⁵¹ 1 Cor. 10: 10

³⁵² 1 Tim. 6: 7,8

³⁵³ Heb. 13: 5

³⁵⁴ Phil. 4: 11

³⁵⁵ Luke 5: 5

Selfishness is often a cause of murmuring.³⁵⁶ Selfish people want their way and do not like it if they do not get it, therefore, they murmur. Being discontent and selfish, one murmurs and whines, bringing condemnation to their self. Another product of their actions is division among God's people. Mummuring is an attempt get people to become sympathetic to their point of view and antagonistic toward the other point of view. The Word tells us that one of the seven things God hates is "one who sows discord among brethren".³⁵⁷

Let us not murmur. Rather, let us be content in life. Let us be happy and "rejoice always in the Lord".³⁵⁸ Let us be thankful for our blessings and be characterized by a spirit of gratitude.³⁵⁹ Let us never be selfish. Let us always regard others better than self and look out for the interests of others.³⁶⁰ Let us follow the things which make for peace and let all things be done unto edifying.³⁶¹

"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you."³⁶²

Putting Others Down to Build Oneself Up

³⁵⁶ Phil. 2: 4; Rom. 15:

2

³⁵⁷ Prov. 6:19

³⁵⁸ Phil. 4: 4

³⁵⁹ 1 Tim. 2: 1

³⁶⁰ Phil. 2: 3,4

³⁶¹ Rom. 14: 19; 1 Cor.

14: 26

³⁶² Eph. 4: 31,32

Quotes & Sayings

Mr. B: "The Ideas aren't the hard bit. They're a small component of the whole. Creating believable people who do more or less what you tell them to is much harder; and hardest by far is the process of simply sitting down and putting one word after another to construct whatever it is you're trying to build: making it interesting, making it new."

Dr. D: "Scrupulous indeed were the "religious" contemporaries of James; they would not enter where the image of Divus Cæsar had its votive flame, while they were ceremonially clean for the keeping of their Passover" they went not into the judgment hall lest they should be defiled."³⁶³

With adopting such negative attitudes and behaviors, one can never combat the difficult situations in life, and neither can they rise above the failures of life. Whether at home, at work or with your friends, if you do not learn to self-reflect and self-appreciate yourself, you will never lead a healthy and happy life."

The Mistake of 'Enabling' Struggling People

In our whole life, we meet hundreds of difficult people who will make us go through several challenges in life.

³⁶³ Ellicott

Some will make us the victim and holding themselves above us with power. Such attitudes and behaviors will weaken us if not checked. To offer financial assistance often only encourages continual substance abuse and dependance on pandering. So, in general, what can a caring, concerned person do to help another be delivered from addictions and the 'homeless' life-style? (See 'Faith Based Ministry', Article #10, page 357).

The key to changing our disempowering beliefs about troubled people is to shift our approach from being reactive to proactive. It is not important, whether we are dealing with a narcissist, a passive-aggressive, manipulator or someone who is intimidating and controlling. We should learn to strategize our skills in order to come above the situation and to neglect such negative behaviors.

It is believed that one should keep the past in the past and not cling to it for too long. The situations and hardships we have faced in the past may prevent us from seeing our full-potential and stop us from recognizing new opportunities coming our way.

It is better to accept the fact that one cannot change their past but can shape and influence their future. Do not judge or feel defeated by the mistakes we made in the past but try to look at the bright side of today and tomorrow.

As it is famously said, “Nothing is more important than this day. So, do not keep dwelling on the past, make better choices today and keep moving forward.” "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."³⁶⁴

To put one's hand to a plow is a proverbial expression to signify undertaking any business. In order that a plowman may accomplish his work, it is necessary to look onward – to be intent on his employment – not to be looking back with regret that he undertook it. So, in religion he that enters on it must do it with his whole heart.



³⁶⁴ Luke 9: 62

He that would enter heaven must come with a heart full of love to God; giving "all" into his hands, and prepared always to give up all his property, his health, his friends, his body, his soul to God, when he demands them, or he cannot be a Christian. Religion is everything or nothing. He that is not willing to sacrifice everything for the cause of God, is really willing to sacrifice nothing."³⁶⁵

Where is the Compassion?³⁶⁶



Jesus Heals a Woman
on the Sabbath



The Pharisee was indignant because Jesus had healed this woman on the Sabbath Day. This synagogue official has no eye for the beauty of Christ's pity, no heart to rejoice in the woman's deliverance, no ear for the music of her praise, only the blindness and cold-heartedness born of religious formalism. All that he sees is a violation of ecclesiastical order. That is the sin of sins in his eyes. He admits the reality of Christ's healing power, but that does not lead him to recognition of His mission.

³⁶⁵ Commentary by:
Barnes

³⁶⁶ Lk. 13: 10-17

What a strange state of mind it was that acknowledged the miracle, and then took offence at its being done on the Sabbath! He shows "disingenuous" cowardice in attacking the people when he meant Christ. He pretended to know less about it than he really did. Nobody had come to be healed. They had come to worship; and even if they had come for healing, the coming was no breach of Sabbath regulations, whatever the healing might be.

The Pharisees would rather that a hundred poor sufferers should continue bowed down than that one of their regulations should be broken in lifting them up. The more men are filled with the spirit of worship, the less importance will they attach to the adherence to its forms.

"For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."³⁶⁷

The mindset of the unregenerate would typically have characteristics which would be described as rebellious, hateful, mean, critical and selfish. The actions of the unregenerate would not be as those of Jesus. A negative attitude is often manifested when one is hostile, depressed, anxious, avoidant or resentful.

³⁶⁷ 2 Cor. 4: 2-5

Without the salvation of Christ, it is impossible for an individual to be 'spiritually healthy' and will always exhibit a negative attitude.

Anxiety

Those who are anxious are often afraid of losing control. They perceive that everyone will eventually let them down. Those with anxious attitudes often: Avoid new places and experiences; Mask their need for control as love; Act brittle to avoid criticism; Try to please people to head off unexpected future behavior; Are controlling micromanagers or perfectionists; Attempt to take charge of the home.

God's word has instructed us to "not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

"³⁶⁸

Resentful

Those with this attitude are self-centered and take everything personally. They always feel wronged and oppressed. They're looking for nonverbal cues that indicate disrespect and can't deal with unfairness.

³⁶⁸ Philip. 4: 6, 7

They don't lash out but instead stew and eventually retaliate. They sometimes become leaders. Those with resentful attitudes are typically: Arrogant; Opinionated; Bitter; and Judgmental.

"For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. For all must carry their own loads."³⁶⁹ When we focus on what others are doing, we begin to think better of what we're doing than we ought. Is our motivation restoration? Jesus says that if the person listens to you, "You have regained that one."³⁷⁰ The goal should always be restoration, not alienation.

The Grace of Good Rebuke

Rebuke must be practiced as an act of extraordinary love.³⁷¹ When we see sin in one another, will we lovingly and graciously confront one another? Or will we avoid conflict out of fear? Or, in anger and impatience, will we heap shame and guilt on a brother or sister?³⁷² "Your restoration is what we pray for."³⁷³



³⁶⁹ Gal. 6: 3-5

³⁷⁰ Matt. 18

³⁷¹ 2 Cor. 13

³⁷² From:

<https://www.desiring>

god.org/articles/the-grace-of-good-rebuke

³⁷³ 2 Cor. 13: 9

Dealing with sin in the church

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan.”³⁷⁴

“Rebuke without prayer is rebuke without power.”

Hostility

People with this attitude view the world as being constantly against them. To deal with this, they become hostile so that they are the source of the emotion and



have more control of it. They unconsciously provoke hostility in others—for example, by being late—and this confirms their attitude that the world is hostile. They want to feel attacked and want revenge.

³⁷⁴ Matt. 18: 15-17; 1
Cor. 14: 12, 26

The hostile attitude stems from one or both of the following childhood experiences: The parents were abusive or punishing; The child interpreted becoming independent from their parents as a forced, hostile separation.

Characteristics of Hostile Attitudes: Easily angered; Persecution complex and; Struggling professionally.

Hatred

Anger and bitterness will damn the soul.

Does God Hate?

For someone to hate there must be a defect in the character of the one who hates when that hatred is toward a human person that's created in the image and likeness of God. It might seem a contradiction that a God who is love can also hate.³⁷⁵ God is love³⁷⁶, and God hates³⁷⁷. God's nature is love—He always does what is best for others—and He hates what is contrary to His nature—He hates what is contrary to love.

³⁷⁵From:
<https://www.gotques>

[tions.org/does-God-hate.html](https://www.gotquestions.org/does-God-hate.html)

³⁷⁶ 1 John 4: 8

³⁷⁷ Hosea 9: 15

God created us with the capacity to both love and hate, and we acknowledge that hatred is sometimes justified—we naturally hate things that destroy what we love. This is part of our being created in the image of God.

The fact that we are all tainted with sin means that our love and hatred are sometimes misplaced, but the existence of the sin nature does not negate our God-given ability to love and hate. It is no contradiction for a human being to be able to love and hate, and neither is it a contradiction for God to be able to love and hate

When the Bible does speak of God's hatred, the object of His hatred is sin and wickedness. Among the things God hates are idolatry³⁷⁸, child sacrifice, sexual perversion³⁷⁹, and those who do evil³⁸⁰. There are seven things the Lord hates: pride, lying, murder, evil plots, those who love evil, false witnesses, and troublemakers.³⁸¹ Notice that this passage does not include just *things* that God hates; it includes *people* as well.

Sin cannot be separated from the sinner except by the forgiveness available in Christ alone.

³⁷⁸ Deuteronomy 12: 31; 16: 22


³⁷⁹ Leviticus 20: 1–23

³⁸⁰ Psalm 5: 4–6; 11: 5

³⁸¹ Proverbs 6: 16–19

God hates lying, yes, but lying always involves a *person*—a liar—who chooses to lie. God cannot judge the lie without also judging the liar.

The Bible clearly teaches that God loves the people of the world.³⁸² God spared wicked Nineveh, bringing them to repentance.³⁸³ God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.³⁸⁴ He is patient to an extreme, “not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”³⁸⁵ This is all proof of love—God wants what is best for His creation. At the same time, God hates “all evildoers.”³⁸⁶ “The wicked who love violence, He hates with a passion.”³⁸⁷

Before a person repents and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the enemy of God.³⁸⁸ Yet, even before he is saved, he is loved by God.³⁸⁹ God sacrificed His only begotten Son on His behalf. The question  then becomes, what happens to someone who spurns God’s love, refuses to repent, and stubbornly clings to his sin? Answer: God will judge him, because God must judge sin, and that means judging the sinner. These are the “wicked” whom God hates—those who persist in their sin and rebellion, even in the face of the grace and mercy of God in Christ.

³⁸² John 3: 16

³⁸³ Jonah 3

³⁸⁴ Ezekiel 18: 32

³⁸⁵ 2 Peter 3: 9

³⁸⁶ Psalm 5: 5

³⁸⁷ Psalm 11: 5

³⁸⁸ Colossians 1: 21

³⁸⁹ Romans 5: 8

David writes, “You are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you.”³⁹⁰ By contrast, those who take refuge in God will “be glad” and “ever sing for joy.”³⁹¹ The righteous and the wicked make different choices and have different destinies—one will see the ultimate expression of God’s love, and the other will know the ultimate expression of God’s hatred.

We cannot love with a perfect love, nor can we hate with a perfect hatred. But God can both love and hate perfectly, because He is God. God can hate without sinful intent. He can hate the sinner in a perfectly holy way and still lovingly forgive the sinner at the moment of repentance and faith.³⁹²

In His love for all, God has sent His Son to be the Savior. The wicked, who are still unforgiven, God hates “for their many sins, for they have rebelled.”³⁹³ God desires that the wicked repent of their sin and find refuge in Christ. At the moment of saving faith, the wicked sinner is removed from the kingdom of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of love.³⁹⁴ All enmity is dissolved, all sin is removed, and all things are made new.”³⁹⁵

³⁹⁰ Psalm 5: 4

³⁹¹ Verse 11

³⁹² Malachi 1: 3;

Revelation 2: 6; 2

Peter 3: 9

³⁹³ Psalm 5: 10

³⁹⁴ Colossians 1: 13

³⁹⁵ 2 Corinthians 5: 17

Symptoms of hatred may include: Contempt; Bitterness; Wrath; Rage; Revenge; Strife; Quarreling; Debate; Contention; Seeking Superiority; Brawling; Murder; Abortion; Suicide; Ridicule; Backbiting; Speaking evil of those not present; Fathers Provoking Children to Wrath and; Brother Taking Legal Action Against Brother.

Rebellion

While God will not stop us from taking the reins of our lives, He does want us to know the kind of life we are signing up for when we decide to rebel against His Lordship. Here are three common symptoms of rebellion.

Faint Heart³⁹⁶

Heart beat signifies the presence of life. The fading of a heart beat represents that a person's life is slipping away from them. So it is with us spiritually!! Since it is the Spirit of God that gives life, the fading of our heart beat spiritually means that the Holy Spirit is losing influence over our life.

³⁹⁶ Isaiah 1: 5

Just as a fading heart beat indicates that we are slipping from life to death, the loss of the influence of the Holy Spirit over our lives represents the slippage from light to darkness; from the kingdom of God to the kingdom of the world!

A person with a faint heart is a person who has begun to lose the experience of the treasures of God's kingdom – Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. Instead of the wonders of the Kingdom, rebellion causes us to experience the blunders of the world – this includes jealousies, contentions, wrath, hatred, and all manner of undesirable traits.

Sick Head³⁹⁷

For our head to be sick means that our thinking has become warped. If our thinking becomes warped, our behavior and actions will follow suit. If there is one major symptom of a sick head, it is paranoia. Once in the throes of paranoia, the head makes up fantastic stories, delusions, and conspiracy theories that all make sense in the person whose head is sick. Perhaps no finer example of someone who had a sick head exists than that of King Herod the Great.

³⁹⁷ Isaiah 1: 5

Another major symptom of a sick head is anxiety. I once heard someone say 'everyone worries. Just because everyone worries does not mean that everyone should. Both Jesus and Apostle Paul tell us not be anxious.³⁹⁸ Anxiety comes when our mind is not being led by faith but is being influenced by fear. Hence, we see that fear, insecurities, and anxiety are symptoms of a sick head. While faith makes one heal, fear makes one sick. Are we anxious because we have rebelled against the truth of God's word?

Untreated Wounds, Bruises, and Sores³⁹⁹

Imagine a person who is covered in bruises, wounds, and sores. Such a person is in constant pain and would not like to be touched. So it is spiritually with a rebellious person. Such a person is wounded, carrying around pains from the past, and does not allow others to get close to them lest those people touch their sore spots. And because there is no part of them that is sound, such people are very easily offended and hurt. For the whole body to be covered in untreated bruises, wounds, and sores is a different matter! For the whole body to be covered insinuates that the same mistakes are being made over and over, time and again.

³⁹⁸ Philip. 4: 6

³⁹⁹ Isaiah 1: 6

This person has not bothered to visit to the Great Physician.⁴⁰⁰

"Rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry."⁴⁰¹ Symptoms of rebellious behavior may include: Murmuring; Wickedness; Speaking Against the Holy Spirit; Disobedience to Parents; Disobedience to God; Divorce; Covenant-Breaking; Heresy; Teaching the Traditions of Men as Doctrine; and Blasphemy.

Anger

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court.

⁴⁰⁰ Luke 5: 31

⁴⁰¹ 1 Sam. 15: 23

Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."⁴⁰²

Avoidance

Those with an avoidant negative attitude are usually insecure, often about their intelligence or ability. They want to avoid situations where they might be judged, so they try not to finish things. They're scared of both failure and success—failure because it comes with judgment, and success because they'll have to keep living up to it.

The avoidant attitude often has childhood roots: They were shamed for excelling; Their parents made them feel judged or uncomfortable about bad behavior or attempts to compete with siblings.

Those with negative avoidant mindsets will typically: Bow out of commitments; Get sick at convenient moments, often with something psychosomatic; Set up an excuse for when things go wrong so they can't be blamed;

⁴⁰² MATTHEW 5: 21-

Job-hop and rarely have long-term relationships; Try to hide their avoidant tendencies by acting holier-than-thou because if their ideals are unrealistic, they'll never be held accountable.

Being Accessory to Another's Sin

One may be an accessory to another's sin by: Counsel; Command; Consent; Provocation; Praise or Flattery; Concealment; Partaking; Silence; and Defense of the ill done.



Subjective and Objective Reasoning

Subjective moral reasoning is the philosophy that morality is determined through human opinion. Those who believe in it compare it to objective morality as determined through the analysis of nature. Christians hold that objective morality is defined by God as given in the Bible. Subjective reasoning is a type of thinking and basing observations on personal opinion and judgment, rather than by factual evidence.

Reading the Bible with Objective reasoning: Expressing or dealing with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings;

prejudices, or interpretations, relating to or existing as an object of thought without consideration of independent existence.

ACTION

Free Will

Christ has a redemptive solution for every individual and every situation. "Choose you this day who you will serve."

Sins of Action

The Seven Deadly Sins

Actual sin is any willful thought, desire, word, action or omission forbidden by the law of God.

The 'deadly' sins are:

Pride: Unrestrained appreciation of our own worth;

Greed: Immoderate desire for earthly goods;

Lust: Inordinate desires for impure pleasures;

Anger: Inordinate desire for revenge;

Gluttony: Unrestrained use of food and drink;

Envy: Sorrow over another's good fortune;

Sloth: Laxity in keeping the Faith and the practice of virtue.

Action Toward God

Sins toward God are self-centered and self-righteous. Even religion can be sinful when it is only a "form of Godliness that denies the power of God."⁴⁰³

Self-Centered

I Am My Sunshine

By: Ego Narcissi



I am my sunshine, my only sunshine;
I make me happy, when skies are grey.
You'll never know dear, how much I love me;
Please don't take, my sunshine away.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Symptoms:

Belief that you're special and more important than others;

Fantasies about power, success and attractiveness;

Failure to recognize others' needs and feelings;

Exaggeration of achievements or talents;

Expectation of constant praise and admiration;

Arrogance;

⁴⁰³ 2 Tim. 3: 5

Unreasonable expectations of favors and advantages,
often taking advantage of others;

Envy of others or belief that others envy them.

Narcissistic Methodologies

'Me'ology

How could anyone worship in "the septic tank of self-edification"?⁴⁰⁴ There seems to be a plague of "meitis" in this "selfie" generation.

Egotism

Symptoms: Egotism is defined as the drive to maintain and enhance favorable views of oneself and generally features an inflated opinion of one's personal features and importance distinguished by a person's amplified vision of one's self and self-importance. It often includes intellectual, physical, social, and other overestimations. The egotist has an overwhelming sense of the centrality of the "me" regarding their personal qualities.

Egotism is an excessive focus or occupation with oneself driven by an inflated sense of self-importance. Egoism is a preoccupation with oneself yet may be without the inflated self-importance.

⁴⁰⁴ Provisionheirz

Egoism also refers to the belief that self-interest is the motivation for and/or the valid end of all action. The human tendency toward being an egotist/egoist is no surprise from a biblical perspective. It is also something the Bible speaks against, and God soundly dealt with egotists such as King Nebuchadnezzar.⁴⁰⁵

At the root of egotism is self. Egotism is ultimately driven by pride and thinking oneself worthy of the utmost attention or capable of complete self-sufficiency. At times, an egoist may be motivated by past hurt. Betrayal, abuse, or abandonment may cause a person to believe he must always look out for himself—'because no one else will'. Rather than trust others, someone who has been hurt may isolate I and believe they can only trust their self. Though not pride as we would generally conceive of it, this is still an unbiblical stance that raises self to the status of a god.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."⁴⁰⁶

Humility is not thinking less of one's self,
but thinking of one's self less.

⁴⁰⁵ Daniel 4

⁴⁰⁶ Philippians 2: 1–11


Humility is 'down to earth' thinking,
but not below or above the ground.

We are to look to the interests of others based on the example of Jesus Christ, who, though He is God, humbled Himself to live a human life and die a humiliating death in our stead. "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!"⁴⁰⁷

In both the Old and New Testaments, followers of God are called to humility; we are not to have an over-inflated sense of self-importance. Humility is not self-debasement or a lack of confidence. Being humble does not mean that we neglect our own needs or uphold no boundaries. We are not preoccupied with ourselves; rather, we see and care about the needs of others. We are willing to sacrifice our own preferences for the benefit of others. For this we are designed and created for the glory of God.

⁴⁰⁷ Phillip. 2: 5-8

Christians understand that serving self is not the highest goal. To those who are egotistical due primarily to pride, the Bible reminds us that all have fallen short of God's glory.⁴⁰⁸

We are all sinners, enslaved to sin, dead in guilt, and in need of a Savior.⁴⁰⁹ On our own, we are nothing and only deserving of hell.⁴¹⁰ In truth, there is no justification for pride. But, in Christ, we are made new.⁴¹¹ We become children of God.⁴¹² God is the one who  validates our existence and gives meaning to our lives. Egotism ultimately leaves people empty. As with all sin, egotism promises a reward it is incapable of delivering.⁴¹³ It is only in God that we find true life.⁴¹⁴

The truth of who God is and His gift of salvation resolve the fear-based motivation for egoism. "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."⁴¹⁵ Jesus says not to worry but to instead seek God's kingdom first and trust Him for our needs.⁴¹⁶

⁴⁰⁸ Romans 3: 23

⁴⁰⁹ John 8:34; Romans 6: 15–23; Ephesians 2: 1–5

⁴¹⁰ John 3: 16–18

⁴¹¹ 2 Corinthians 5: 17

⁴¹² John 1: 12; 1 Peter 2: 9–10

⁴¹³ James 1: 14–17; Gal. 6: 8

⁴¹⁴ John 10: 10

⁴¹⁵ 1 Peter 5: 5–7

⁴¹⁶ Matthew 6: 25–34

We can see how God cares for sparrows and the grass of the field, and we trust that we are of much more worth to Him. We don't need to look out for ourselves as number one because God is looking out for us. He alone is fully capable to meet all of our needs, and we can trust that He will.

Self-Centered Rather Than God-Centered

Secular, carnal reasoning is self-centered, rather than God-centered. Nothing separates us from God but our own will. Sin is nothing else but the will of man driving on in a state of self-motion, self-government, following the workings of a nature broken off from dependency upon and union with the divine will. Self-centeredness is the cause of human suffering, be it disease, war, hate, or mental illness.

When a person places faith in Jesus, the individual is given true spiritual healing. True spiritual healing from Jesus entails forgiveness of sins and eternal life. God gives true spiritual healing — spirit healers, (without Christ), do not.⁴¹⁷



True spiritual healing comes from placing faith in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

⁴¹⁷ From article by:
Vivian Bricker

"Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed."⁴¹⁸ By getting to know God through prayer and reading the Bible, one will experience His love, peace, and kindness. God binds up the wounds of the brokenhearted.⁴¹⁹

The self-centeredness of the human heart destroys individuals, homes, and nations. History, it seems, has a short memory. Right after being delivered from slavery, the Hebrews went right back to worshiping other gods.⁴²⁰ The mighty Roman empire was never defeated by an enemy from without, but from moral decay from within. Nations in these last days, before Jesus returns, are falling into the same deadly cycle. "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other.

⁴¹⁸ 1 Peter 2: 24

⁴¹⁹ Psalm 147: 3; Phil.
4: 6

⁴²⁰ Exodus 32: 1-10

Many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."⁴²¹

The spiritual healing for the nations is prescribed to the wisest man Solomon when God appeared to him at night and said: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a temple for sacrifices. When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among My people, if My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place."⁴²²

Just as Solomon dedicated the temple in Jerusalem, so must the believer dedicate their lives, making their bodies holy temples unto the heavenly Father. Then they and their land will be healed.

Moral law, the conscience and the restraint of family discipline must be exercised for order in society.⁴²³

⁴²¹ Matt. 24: 6-14

⁴²² 2 Chron. 7: 12-15

⁴²³ Prov. 13: 24

Without these rebellion, violence and unrest will result and evil will dominate. If God's restraints are disregarded, then the only thing left is chaos.

The behavior pattern of the religious self-centered person will be manifested by: Selfish gain; Control; Manipulation of others; Slander; Judgment based on Tradition and wisdom of men; Seeking self-glory rather than the glory of God. "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."⁴²⁴

"Let this mind be in you." Humility: condescension as opposed to intellectual. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and humility before honor."⁴²⁵ "The humble in spirit will retain honor."⁴²⁶ "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."⁴²⁷ "He who humbles himself will be exalted,"⁴²⁸ but God "will resist the proud."⁴²⁹

What is the Object of Our Focus?

Any spiritual disconnect with God ends in death.

⁴²⁴ 1 John 1: 8

⁴²⁵ Prov. 15: 33

⁴²⁶ Prov. 29

⁴²⁷ Matt. 18: 3, 4

⁴²⁸ Lk. 14: 11

⁴²⁹ James 18: 14

Behaviorism

Behaviorism is a systematic approach to understanding behavior. It assumes that behavior is either a reflex evoked by the pairing of certain antecedent stimuli in the environment, or a consequence of that individual's history, including especially reinforcement and punishment contingencies, together with the individual's current motivational state and controlling stimuli. Although behaviorists generally accept the important role of heredity in determining behavior, they focus primarily on environmental events.

Agnostics typically view behavior as purely physical and environmental responses to stimuli. A Creator God is not normally considered as valid influence in man's behavior or mind-set. A simple encounter with God is undeniable evidence for the individual that behavioral influence and existence itself must be attributed to the Divine heavenly Father.

Everyone goes to heaven.

Some will stay and some will not.

The choice is ours.⁴³⁰

⁴³⁰ John 3: 16, 17



All will stand before God's throne."⁴³¹ Those God knows will stay. Those God has 'never known'⁴³² will not receive eternal life. "At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."⁴³³

God is the ultimate Reality- believe it or not. The fact of Jesus Christ is evident in history and in the daily work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the greatest behavioral influence. We are created in God's "image."⁴³⁴ We are made not to be served, but to serve. No other mind-set will bring satisfaction or peace.⁴³⁵ "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."⁴³⁶

⁴³¹ Rev. 4: 2; 20: 11-

13

⁴³² Matt. 7: 21-23

⁴³³ Phil. 2: 10, 11

⁴³⁴ Gen. 1: 27

⁴³⁵ Jn. 13: 7-9

⁴³⁶ Mark 9: 35

"We're only human man!"

"Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?"⁴³⁷ You are not acting like someone who has been spiritually enlightened. You are spiritually dull and your pride keeps you from recognizing it.

Overcoming the Stronghold of Pride and Self

"A wise man scales the wall of the city of the mighty and brings down the trusted stronghold."⁴³⁸ Strongholds are things that people trust rather than God. Satan said to Eve: "If you eat of this fruit, you will be like God." As much as humanly possible, they already were. This represents our attempt to obtain by labor, that which we already have by grace.

Solomon was very wise but as we often do, we have to learn many things the hard way, by experience. Solomon's motive and actions sought to increase favor

⁴³⁷ 1 Cor. 3: 1-3

⁴³⁸ Prov. 21: 22

for himself. The many wives secured political favor from surrounding nations. Solomon already had favor with God but was trying to create favor that he already had. This self-seeking effort defiles that which God has already supplied. One must not wait till the end of their lives to say: "I didn't do any of the 'don'ts' and tried to do all of the 'dos', but there was no victory in my life."

Spiritually speaking, our relation and fellowship with the Father may be forfeited by disobedience and or, apostasy.⁴³⁹ The cause may be the vain attempt to satisfy the fleshly desires or the pride of life.⁴⁴⁰ The effect is eventually spiritual death. The symptoms are found in the worldly, ungodly lifestyle. The cure is found only in the Redeeming Grace and salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁴¹

The hardships and tragedies of life either make or break the individual. Personalities are formed at an exceedingly early age. Behaviors are shaped and formed to cope and survive. Some are constructive and moral. Other behaviors are both harmful to self and to others.



⁴³⁹ Matt. 24: 12; 2
Thes. 2: 3; 1 Tim. 4:

1-3; 2 Tim. 4: 3, 4;
Rev.3: 14-22

⁴⁴⁰ 1 John 2: 16

⁴⁴¹ John 14: 6

We Can't Clean Ourselves!
Bound by sin; only Christ can free us!

Naaman's 7th Dip

Would it not be the same place spiritually, where Naaman was cleansed in the Jordan river, that Jesus was baptized? Jesus did not need cleansing of course, but it initiated His three-year ministry. It is the same place where we are cleansed, under the blood of Jesus Christ. We cannot cleanse ourselves. We cannot even breathe unless He says: "Live".

Hades and Freedom

'Hades'⁴⁴² refers to the place where the wicked dead reside and are punished. It may be applied to a life lived under bondage, condemnation, and captivity; A 'hell on earth', if you please. The Pharisees were enslaving others to rules and regulations of religion, not bringing them into a free and liberating relationship with God which is characterized by mercy, compassion, and faith.

The bondage and condemnation of hell is placed in direct contrast to the freedom and liberty of the kingdom of heaven.

⁴⁴² Matt. 16: 18; 23:
15, 33

Both refer to two ways of living life on earth. The ways of the unregenerate Pharisees lead to a life of condemnation and burden, not to liberty and freedom.

"The discerning heart seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly."⁴⁴³

The Depravity of the Mind

"Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes. Sending a message by the hands of a fool is like cutting off one's feet or drinking poison; Like the useless legs of one who is lame is a proverb in the mouth of a fool; Like tying a stone in a sling is the giving of honor to a fool; Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand is a proverb in the mouth of a fool; Like an archer who wounds at random is one who hires a fool or any passer-by. As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly. Do you see a person wise in their own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for them."⁴⁴⁴

"Knowledge puffs up while love builds up."

⁴⁴³ Prov. 15: 14

⁴⁴⁴ Prov. 26: 4-12

"Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. But whoever loves God is known by God."⁴⁴⁵ To truly know God, one must focus on the death of Jesus for our sins. The light of God's glory shines through the cross. God's light will expose every thought and action. "For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called.

Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."⁴⁴⁶

"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."⁴⁴⁷ The cross destroys all pride and self-exaltation.

⁴⁴⁵ 1 Cor. 8: 1-3

⁴⁴⁶ 1 Cor. 1: 25-31

⁴⁴⁷ 1 Cor. 1: 18

There is no other object of knowledge in the universe that exposes man's self-exalting thinking as does the cross. There is absolutely no boasting in the presence of God.

The Pulpit Is Not a Personal Platform



What is the difference between a pulpit and a platform. A platform gives one an opportunity to speak their mind, to take a stand against perceived evils, and promote the good, the true, and the beautiful. Is the role of the pastor to lead the congregation in cultural change?

The pulpit is not the preacher's platform to talk about their autobiography. It is most certainly not the culture's platform. The preacher's opinions and ideals have no place in the pulpit. The pulpit is the place for Jesus to be heard.

The aim of the pulpit is Jesus and not changing society. Societal change may or may not come from the preaching of Christ crucified. The congregation must hear the good news; that in the end, God will make all things right.

The Purpose of the Pulpit

What is the purpose of the pulpit in the Church? Is it a place for lecture? Is it a place for philosophical presentations? Is it a place for the exposition of personal opinion? Is it a place for religious monologue?⁴⁴⁸ The pulpit must be used to: “Read the Law of God”; Read separately and with authority”; Give the Sense of the Law; Cause Understanding and; Instruct on personal application. The pulpit is not the place for opinion, philosophy, secular thought, debate, business or any non-biblical event.

The Pulpit is: To be dedicated to the Presentation of the Word of God; The Preaching of the Whole Counsel of God;⁴⁴⁹ The Preaching of the Gospel;⁴⁵⁰ The Preaching of the Truth. The Pulpit must be empowered by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵¹

The Pulpit must focus on the Purpose of God,
without which the message is just opinion.

The proper use of the pulpit will: Evangelize the Lost;
Edify the Believers and Exalt God.

⁴⁴⁸ Nehemiah 8: 8;

See also:

carryduffpc.org

⁴⁴⁹ Acts 20: 21

⁴⁵⁰ 1 Corinthians 1: 17

⁴⁵¹ 1 Thess. 1:5

By the redemptive grace of God, the church can focus on soul-saving rather than trying not to sin. The Pulpit must preach into every aspect of life to: Make an Impact for Christ; Reveal the Truth of God and; Identify the Sin and Errors of the World. To rightly divide the word of God we must do our best to present ourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.⁴⁵² This means that the correct balance must be made between the love of God and the Judgment of God. To focus exclusively on one of these would not be 'rightly divided'. There must be an appropriate balance of Spirit and Truth: Law/Grace; Judgment/Love; Beginning/End; Spirit/Matter.

God's desire is that we will know His Word so that we can live by it. He wants us to have the correct interpretation of His Word to avoid deception and confusion. God expects us to be good stewards of His Word so that others will know Him intimately and have the right view of Him.

The Word of God is truth.⁴⁵³ "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." This is how we know that the Word of truth refers to the Word of God. "Rightly dividing" to means to "cut straight."

⁴⁵² 2 Timothy 2: 15

⁴⁵³ John 17: 17

Rightly dividing the Word of Truth is the ability to understand, correctly interpret and teach the Scriptures by the help of the Holy Spirit. It includes giving the correct context of a Bible verse or passage based on the surrounding verses or chapters. As God sends us out in the world to minister to others and bring people to Christ, He wants us to have the correct foundation of the Scriptures. “Rightly divided” includes a balance of Spirit, Truth, law grace, reproof and edification; all for the glory of GOD.

Is the Pulpit being used as a Soapbox?

How many times is the word “I” used in a sermon? Is there an underlying motive of self-justification and glorification? Should One Use Sermons to Advance a Cause?

What is dogmatism?

Dogmatism: The tendency to lay down principles as incontrovertibly true, without consideration of scriptural evidence or the opinions of others.



Ethnocentric religiosity: An exaggerated tendency to think the characteristics of one's own group or denomination is superior to those of other groups or religions. The body of Christ (the church) has many members which includes many nations, languages and cultures.

Hell on Earth in the 'Tomb of Asceticism'

Asceticism is severe self-discipline and avoidance of all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons.



"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."⁴⁵⁴ "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

⁴⁵⁴ Matthew 6: 5-7

He says, "Take heed that you do not your righteousness before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward with your Father in heaven."⁴⁵⁵

He shows us how to pray and He instructs His disciples to fast when He is taken away. At one point He told His disciples that they were unable to cast out the devil, because "this kind can only be driven out through prayer and fasting."⁴⁵⁶

Paul's epistles to the Romans and the Galatians are often used by those who oppose ascetic practices in the name of modernism. They use portions of these epistles to justify that salvation is a free gift of God and that any type of works, especially ascetic activities such as fasting, prayer, almsgiving and worship contradict the free nature of grace and free gift of salvation. This way of thinking denies tradition, the Gospel teachings and the experience of many saints. It is an "either/or" way of thinking, believing that if one was saved by faith alone then one is not saved by works. To properly understand these two epistles, one has to distinguish between the works in the law as understood in Judaism, and the works in the law as refined by Christ.

Our salvation is not based on either the extreme of faith alone or by our works alone.

⁴⁵⁵ Matt. 6:1

⁴⁵⁶ Matt. 17: 21; Mark
9: 29

Both of these extremes are false yet both faith and works are necessary. God created man with a free will in His image. As a result of this, God provided us with a synergistic path to salvation requiring us to use our free choice. Synergistic in this case refers to the interaction and combined effect which is greater than the sum of their separate effects.

God is the cause and the initiator and one who completes our salvation, but we are required to spiritually respond to the free gift of grace. Ascetic activities are properly placed in this response. We need inner discipline, or purity of heart, to make the right choices. This has nothing to do with the “works of the law” in the Judaic sense.

Jesus died and rose again, and in doing so He created a way for us to be forgiven of our sins, live an abundant life, and spend eternity with Him. Supporting a cause that helps people can be a part of that, but certainly isn’t the whole picture. What greater cause is there than the cause Jesus gave us to serve others, give them hope and let them know the love and grace He has for them? We should be preaching messages that give people the motivation to devote their lives to the cause of Christ.

Our preaching is about reaching the lost with the message of hope that Jesus offers.

It is for the lost to hear and believe, and it is for believers to hear and be challenged to do all they can to help others who are lost find hope in Jesus. The cause of Christ is to seek and to save that which is lost.⁴⁵⁷

At the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, He was "lead by the Spirit" and withdrew into the desert where He fasted. He could have chosen another path, but He was showing us the path we must take to prepare our human bodies for its eventual resurrection. While in the desert, Jesus was engaged in "spiritual warfare." He "fasted forty days and forty nights and faced "wild beasts."

What is meant by 'the desert'? It is a place where one can meditate alone, pray, fast and reflect on ones' most inner essence intensifying their spiritual reality. The desert is a place that separates us from the normal activities of a secular life. It is a place where we can be alone with God. Our Lord showed us this path and calls us to follow His example. We are all called to go to the "desert" periodically.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and may glorify your Father who is in heaven."⁴⁵⁸ The "good works" He is referring to are the Beatitudes: Blessed are the poor, blessed are the meek, blessed are those who hunger.

⁴⁵⁷ Luke 15

⁴⁵⁸ Matt 5:48

Blessed are the pure of heart. He was not talking about social action, but about our spiritual development, maturity and close fellowship with God.

The Lord very directly asks us to perfect ourselves. He says, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." "Perfect" implies maturity, but in this application, it would mean to be obedient.

This 'perfection' will be complete when we receive the glorified body. Then we will be "like Him."⁴⁵⁹

What is meant by "the total depravity of man"?

"Total depravity" means that our rebellion against God is total, everything we do in this rebellion is sin, our inability to submit to God or reform ourselves is total, and we are therefore totally deserving of eternal punishment. It is man's natural condition apart from any grace exerted by God to restrain or transform man. "There is no doubt that man could perform more evil acts toward his fellow man than he does. But if he is restrained from performing more evil acts by motives that are not owing to his glad submission to God, then even his "virtue" is evil in the sight of God. The terrible condition of man's heart will never be recognized by people who assess it only in relation to other men.

⁴⁵⁹ 1 John 3: 2

Romans 14:23 makes "Depravity is our condition in relation to God primarily, and only secondarily in relation to man."⁴⁶⁰ Unless we start here, we will never grasp the totality of our natural depravity. If we think of ourselves as basically good or even less than totally at odds with God, our grasp of the work of God in redemption will be defective."⁴⁶¹

The Final Glorification

"God will redeem me from the realm of the dead; He will surely take me to Himself."⁴⁶² " Everyone whose name is found written in the book will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever."⁴⁶³ " Jesus said to Martha, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I Am the Resurrection and the Life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die.'⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶⁰ Rom. 14: 23

⁴⁶¹ John Piper

⁴⁶² Ps. 49: 15

⁴⁶³ Dan. 12: 1-3

⁴⁶⁴ John 11: 23-26

"Those God predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified."⁴⁶⁵ " Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the First Fruits of those who have fallen asleep."⁴⁶⁶



$$1+1=2+X$$

What is spiritual Synergism and Monergism?

Synergism means 'working together', while monergism means "one work". Synergists believe that two forces are required to bring about the saving of a soul – the Holy Spirit and the will of man. The 'synergistic' effect is the interaction and combined effect which is greater than the sum of their separate effects. If a person resists the Holy Spirit, then there will be no 'working together' to achieve that person's salvation.

⁴⁶⁵ Rom. 8: 30

⁴⁶⁶ 1 Cor. 15: 20

Monergism is the view within Christian theology which holds that God works through the Holy Spirit to bring about the salvation of an individual through spiritual regeneration, regardless of the individual's cooperation.

God is the author and perfecter of our salvation.⁴⁶⁷ He who began a good work in us will perfect it on the day of Christ Jesus.⁴⁶⁸

Jesus modeled serving.⁴⁶⁹

When Jesus left Heaven to come here, He did it to serve us. He started a cause; the cause to rescue people from their sins and redeem us to the Father. And throughout His life, we see Him serving people to advance that cause.

Jesus showed His disciples "the full extent of His love" when He washed their feet.⁴⁷⁰ Foot-washing was reserved for the lowest of servants, the job nobody wanted to do. But Jesus took the towel and basin and showed His love for His disciples by serving them. Serving others is simply the Gospel in action. The cause from the pulpit is the cause of the Gospel.

The Church should be incredibly involved in the local communities.

⁴⁶⁷ Heb. 12: 2

⁴⁶⁹ Phil. 2: 5-7

⁴⁶⁸ Phil. 1: 6

⁴⁷⁰ John 13

We must not just engage the culture, but we need to work hard at thinking forward, to go where our communities go. What concerns the people in our cities must concern us, so that we can work to resolve the ills of those we love. Sometimes this means engaging policy, to be a voice for the voiceless, whether they are abused children, those without healthcare, the homeless, orphans, unwed mothers, or those caught in human trafficking.

Some Christians today, driven by a desire to win God's favor, have built a false, self-righteous standard for living and even judged others by its corrupt expectations. This tangled web frustrates worship, leads to disunity in the church, and offers only a cold shoulder for people struggling with sin and in need of loving, biblical help.⁴⁷¹

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become "conceited, provoking, and envying each other."⁴⁷² If someone is caught in a sin, we who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, we will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves.

⁴⁷¹ From: gty.org

⁴⁷² Galatians 5: 24, 25

Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load. Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.⁴⁷³

“Comparing Themselves with Themselves”

"When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with their selves, they are not wise. Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding."⁴⁷⁴ "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord. For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends."⁴⁷⁵

Idolatry and Pride

Symptoms of idolatry and pride may include: Loving someone or something more than God or Jesus; Lovers of Self; False Humility; Self-Will;

⁴⁷³ Galatians 6: 1-7

⁴⁷⁴ 2 Corinthians 10:

12

⁴⁷⁵ 2 Cor. 10: 12,17,18

Desiring the Praise of Men; Doing things to gain praise; High-mindedness; Arrogance; Boasting; Hypocrisy and; Fault-Finding. Why blame it on Satan? To deny God and attempt to live and make decisions on our own is to use the same method as does Satan.

Hypocrisy: The practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform.

The Indignance of the Hypocrite



Indignation: Anger aroused by something perceived as being unjust, unworthy, or mean. "On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, He called her forward and said to her, 'Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.' Then He put His hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, 'There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.'⁴⁷⁶

The Pharisees were pretending zeal for the Sabbath, while they were really moved by anger at the miracle. They were pretending that their zeal for the Sabbath was the result of their zeal for God, while it was only zeal for their Rabbinical position and status. They wished to make the Sabbath law tight enough to restrain Jesus from miracles, while they made it loose enough to allow them to look after their own interests.

It was GOD's own finger that wrote that law. It was God who dictated to Moses how the Sabbath would forever be "remembered"⁴⁷⁷ and observed. Would not the Son of GOD remember what He had written? These religious readers were spiritually afflicted with the same infirmity as the woman. But they were bent down spiritually, looking only at earthly sin and the law. They failed to look "up" at the Messiah who was standing right in front of them. "Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?"⁴⁷⁸

This miracle was wrought, unasked, on a woman, in a synagogue.

⁴⁷⁶ Luke 13: 10-14

⁴⁷⁷ Exodus 20: 8-11

⁴⁷⁸ Mark 8: 17, 18

What better place than the synagogue could there be for a miracle of mercy? The service of man is best built on the service of God, and the service of God is as truly accomplished in deeds of human kindness done for His sake as in worship. The religious basis of beneficence and the beneficent manifestation of religion are commonplaces of Christian practice and thought from the beginning. Both are set forth in our Lord's life. He did not substitute doing good to men for worshipping God. We have Christ's authority for regarding the woman's infirmity as the result of demoniacal possession.

Apparently, the evil power had not touched her moral nature, for she had somehow managed to drag herself to the synagogue to pray. She 'glorified God' for her cure, and Christ called her 'a daughter of Abraham.' It would seem to have been a case of physical infirmity only, and perhaps rather of evil inflicted eighteen years before, than of continuous demoniacal possession.

She 'could in no wise lift herself up'. This makes the miracle no less, but it makes it a mirror in which the manner of our deliverance from a worse dominion of Satan is shadowed. Christ is come to loosen us all from the yoke of bondage of the law, which bows our faces to the ground, and makes us unfit to look up.

He only can loose us, and His way of doing it is to assure us that we are free, and to give us power to fling off the oppression in the strength of faith in Him.

“These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.”⁴⁷⁹ “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”⁴⁸⁰

Men may be hypocrites unconsciously, and these are the most hopeless. We are all in danger of displaying our zeal for the Lord, when we are only contending for our own additions to, or interpretations of, His will.

Faux: Not real or genuine. Made to look like something else that is usually more valuable: imitation, fake.

Sincere: 'Without wax'. Sincere comes from the Latin and means "without wax," implying that nothing at all contaminates it. Statues and pottery were sometimes flawed with holes or missing pieces. These defects would be filled with wax and sold as being perfect. 'Sincere' describes behavior that is not contaminated.

"Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch, as you really are."⁴⁸¹ "We all, like sheep, have gone astray.

⁴⁷⁹ Matt. 15: 8, 9

⁴⁸⁰ Matt. 6: 24

⁴⁸¹ 1 Cor. 5: 7

Each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."⁴⁸²

Doing that which we think is right in our own eyes.

Take Heed to the Word of God.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."⁴⁸³

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice."⁴⁸⁴

"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."⁴⁸⁵

"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart."⁴⁸⁶

"Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!"⁴⁸⁷

"Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him."⁴⁸⁸

"Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil."⁴⁸⁹

"Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality."⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸² Is. 53: 6

⁴⁸³ Proverbs 14: 12

⁴⁸⁴ Proverbs 12: 15

⁴⁸⁵ Judges 21: 25

⁴⁸⁶ Proverbs 21: 2

⁴⁸⁷ Isaiah 5: 21

⁴⁸⁸ Proverbs 26: 12

⁴⁸⁹ Proverbs 3: 7

⁴⁹⁰ Galatians 5: 19

"The Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."⁴⁹¹

"Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.' This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike."⁴⁹²

"Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone walked in the stubbornness of his evil heart. Therefore, I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did not."⁴⁹³

"Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood."⁴⁹⁴ "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit."⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹¹ 1 Samuel 16: 7

⁴⁹² Deuteronomy 29:
18, 19

⁴⁹³ Jeremiah 11: 8

⁴⁹⁴ Proverbs 6: 17

⁴⁹⁵ Romans 8: 5

Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord. He is like a shrub in the desert and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord."⁴⁹⁶

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."⁴⁹⁷

"For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot."⁴⁹⁸

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."⁴⁹⁹ "Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him."⁵⁰⁰

"For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate."⁵⁰¹ "We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin."⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁶ Jeremiah 17: 5-7

⁴⁹⁷ Isaiah 55: 8, 9

⁴⁹⁸ Romans 8: 7

⁴⁹⁹ Ephesians 6: 11

⁵⁰⁰ Ephesians 1: 4

⁵⁰¹ Romans 7: 15

⁵⁰² Romans 6: 6

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."⁵⁰³

"Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."⁵⁰⁴ "Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left."⁵⁰⁵

"Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him."⁵⁰⁶

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."⁵⁰⁷

"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."⁵⁰⁸

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.

⁵⁰³ John 3: 16, 17

⁵⁰⁴ Proverbs 4: 23

⁵⁰⁵ 2 Kings 22

⁵⁰⁶ Revelation 1: 7

⁵⁰⁷ Hebrews 4: 12

⁵⁰⁸ Philippians 4: 8

God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."⁵⁰⁹

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."⁵¹⁰ "Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."⁵¹¹

Where is our treasure?



"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth."
"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."⁶⁴⁴
"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light."⁵¹²

Are we worshiping the worship, the form,
the manifestation, or God?

⁵⁰⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:

13

⁵¹⁰ 2 Timothy 3: 16,

17

⁵¹¹ 1 Corinthians 13:

12

⁵¹² Matt. 6: 19-22

Self-Righteous



Jesus Gives a Warning Concerning the Attitude of the Pharisees. Do not do what the Pharisees do, "for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others. "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers.

And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and He is in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant, for those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."⁵¹³

What is 'pure religion'?

The religion that God our Father accepts is
(Obedience to the word).⁵¹⁴

Correct Division and Interpretation of Scripture⁵¹⁵

'Cherry picking' scriptures as an attempt to verify our own desires and opinions not only ignores scriptures that show that we are wrong but is an attempt to bend other scriptures to appear to agree with our tradition and mind-set.

God "mocks proud mockers,
but shows favor to the humble and oppressed."⁵¹⁶

Jesus Hates Pride

⁵¹³ Matt. 23: 2-12

⁵¹⁴ James 1: 21-27

⁵¹⁵ 2 Tim. 2: 15

⁵¹⁶ Prov. 3: 34; James
4: 6

"Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."⁵¹⁷ "The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone He wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people."⁵¹⁸ "Whoever is not with Me is against Me, and whoever does not gather with Me scatters. And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven."⁵¹⁹

"On that day you, Jerusalem, will not be put to shame for all the wrongs you have done to Me, because I will remove from you your arrogant boasters. Never again will you be haughty on My holy hill. But I will leave within you the meek and humble. The remnant of Israel will trust in the name of the LORD."⁵²⁰

The Fate of the Proud

The fate of the proud is always a down fall. Pride may be described as any attitude that produces a sense of self-strength, self-glory, or arrogance.

⁵¹⁷ 1 Peter 5: 5

⁵¹⁸ Dan. 4: 17

⁵¹⁹ Matt. 12: 30, 31

⁵²⁰ Zeph. 3: 11, 12

The biblical definition of pride would be: "an inordinate love of one's own excellence."

"Put a curse on these people. Whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed. Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed. Go with them but do only what I tell you."⁵²¹

How to Endure Success: ~Deliverance from Self~

Self-righteous people repel others and parade their good works. We must exceed the righteousness of these people if ever we want to enter the Kingdom of God.⁵²² Self-righteousness is more of the outward manifestation than an inward conversion.⁵²³ Instead of being compassionate, self-righteous people are overly critical of others, hating and condemning sinners instead of just hating their sins.

Jesus Loves Sinners

The self-righteous love the approval and praises of men. Among the motivations of a self-righteous person is to gain approval from people.

⁵²¹ From: Numbers 22

⁵²² Matt. 5: 20

⁵²³ Matt. 3: 8; 6: 2

Good deeds are done that others will "glorify our Father in heaven,"⁵²⁴ not that we will be recognized or receive glory that belongs to God.

Self-righteous people list their good works. "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags (discarded rags that lepers used to wipe their rotting skin). We all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."⁵²⁵ "God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them."⁵²⁶

The self-righteous tend to reject correction. We often become too vain in our thinking to allow anyone to point out where we might be wrong. True righteous people possess a child-like attitude. The self-righteous may even talk back to God. " You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."⁵²⁷ Like Job, we may talk back to God and rationalize our thoughts and actions. We may tell God how good we are by following His commandments and that He owes us a pat on the back and praises!

The self-righteous think of themselves as important.

⁵²⁴ Matthew 5: 16

⁵²⁶ Heb. 6: 10

⁵²⁵ Isaiah 64: 6

⁵²⁷ Rev. 3: 17

News flash!
It is not all about us!

Those with the self-righteous attitude will wallow in self-pity, forever bringing up their past autobiography. Eventually the Christian will realize that it is Christ that lives in us, and it is He who helps us produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Instead of building our own righteousness, one must accept the righteousness of God.

May we become less like us and more like God.

Dying to self for our good and His glory.⁵²⁸

The Pharisees preferred adherence to the Law in the strength of self. They failed to understand that death to self is required of all who would follow Jesus, the living Word.

The Three Charges Against Jesus

"He loves sinners";⁵²⁹ The accusation is true. "God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁵²⁸ Matt. 22: 27-30

⁵²⁹ Rom. 5: 8

"He healed on the Sabbath day."⁵³⁰ The accusation is true. "The leper stretched out his hand was completely healed." (Jesus obeyed the law of God, not the thirty-nine man-made laws concerning the Sabbath.)

"He claimed to be the Son of GOD".⁵³¹ The accusation is true. "Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."⁵³²

The Pharisees were trying to find fault with Jesus because He was upsetting their status-quo. Not all rejected Jesus. Not all resisted and ridiculed Him. A few recognized His character as being 'God-like'.

This honest recognition led to conviction, repentance, renewal, and acceptance that He indeed was the Messiah and their Savior. We must accept Jesus as our Savior, Deliverer and Lord of our life. There is no other way to find life, and life eternal.⁴⁷²

Fasting

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting.

⁵³⁰ Mark 3: 4, 5

⁵³¹ John 30: 31

⁵³² John 14: 6

Fast only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."⁵³³

Prayer

"This, then, is how you should pray: "'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."⁵³⁴

Giving

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

⁵³³ Matt. 6: 16-18

⁵³⁴ Matt. 6: 5-15

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."⁵³⁵

Do we have religion or relationship?
Is our worship from the head or the heart?
Does Jesus mean everything to us?

God's love is unconditional. Should ours be also?

Jesus said: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'⁵³⁶ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."⁵³⁷

Obedience is better than sacrifice.
Pride: The great destroyer.

Have we excluded Christ from our church by the strict formalities of worship and dogma? Traditions and laws of men often exclude the eternal needs of mankind. One must determine which are good works and which are not.

⁵³⁵ Matt. 6: 1-4

⁵³⁶ Hosea 5: 4-6

⁵³⁷ Matt. 9: 12, 13

Issues to be considered:

Dead Sacrifice vs. Living Sacrifice;

Dead Works vs. Finished Work of Christ;

Vain Repetition vs. Response to the Goodness of God;

Grace and Worship.

Do we speak mostly of what we do or what He does?

I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place;

I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face;

Content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,

My sinful self my only shame, My glory all the cross.⁵³⁸

Do we try to convince others that we are spiritual or that we are fitting the mold of an expected traditional norm or denominational dogma? Are we truly following the leadership of the Holy Spirit, or are we simply selecting subjects and ideas which agree with our agenda and opinion?



⁵³⁸ Clephane, 1872

The Five Crowns⁵³⁹

The Five Crowns, also known as the Five Heavenly Crowns, pertains to crowns received after the last judgment.⁵⁴⁰ These are these being the Crown of Life; the Incorruptible Crown; the Crown of Righteousness; the Crown of Glory; and the Crown of Exultation. These crowns are rewards for good works and faithfulness which we present to Christ.

The Crown of Life⁵⁴¹ is bestowed upon "those who persevere under trials."

The Incorruptible Crown⁵⁴² is given to those individuals who demonstrate "self-denial and perseverance."

The Crown of Righteousness⁵⁴³ is promised to "those who love and anticipate" the Second Coming of Christ. These Christians desire intimacy with God.

The Crown of Glory⁵⁴⁴ is given to those who "shepherd the flock in unselfish love; being a good example to others."

The Crown of Rejoicing is also known as the Crown of Exultation,⁵⁴⁵ or Crown of Auxiliary, is given to those who engage in evangelism of those outside the church.

⁵³⁹ From: Wikipedia

⁵⁴⁰ Matt. 25

⁵⁴¹ James 1: 12; Rev.

2: 10

⁵⁴² 1 Cor. 9: 25

⁵⁴³ 2 Tim. 4: 8

⁵⁴⁴ 1 Peter 5: 4

⁵⁴⁵ 1 Thess. 2: 19;

Philip. 4: 1

Spiritual Blindness

Jesus heard that they had thrown the blind man out, and when He found him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is He, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in Him." Jesus said, "You have now seen Him; in fact, He is the one speaking with you."⁵⁴⁶ Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him. Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Some Pharisees, who were with Him, heard Him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."⁵⁴⁷

Traditional Works

There are things we do that are destructive to ourselves and those around us. These things are certainly not life giving by any means. And there are things we do that are obviously good because they lift others and edify people as well.

⁵⁴⁶ John 4: 26

⁵⁴⁷ John 9

Dead Works

In the Bible the phrase “dead works” is only found in the book of Hebrews. "Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits."⁵⁴⁸ Repentance from dead works is foundational. Repentance means to change the way we think. Praying, attending church, reading the Bible, telling others about Jesus can all be dead or good works. "Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’"⁵⁴⁹

Prophesying, casting out demons, performing miracles in the name of Jesus are all outwardly good things. But Jesus will reject “many” who do those things. Why? Because their hearts are wrong. These have the wrong motivations for the things they do.

Doing vs. Being

⁵⁴⁸ Hebrews 6: 1-3

⁵⁴⁹ Matthew 7: 22, 23

Dead works may be described as any attempt to find favor, earn acceptance, or be made righteous before God by one's own effort, ability, or willpower.

Attempting to use one's own self-made righteousness or holiness to find favor with God can be equated to the proverbial 'floating feces in the punch bowl'.⁵⁵⁰ This misguided and illusional attitude is the same as that of Cain's sacrifice. Sadly, we have still not progressed much farther than that.

Religion puts the emphasis on doing right. In contrast, Jesus and the apostles put the emphasis on believing right, because when we believe right, we do right as a consequence. If we cannot tell outwardly, then how do we know what a good work is?

A good work is when we do the will of God as a response to His love, mercy and our new identity of righteousness in Jesus Christ. In our covenant with God, grace is the ruling factor. Grace and truth have come to us through Jesus.⁵⁵¹ Truth is the law. The problem with the law is our flesh, our fallen nature.

Grace – Godly ability, the divine influence which works in the heart of man making us able. It is God's perfect provision for man's every need.

It takes both truth and grace for good works. We need truth to know what the action of good works are.

⁵⁵⁰ Provisionheirz

⁵⁵¹ John 1: 17

And we also need grace to have the proper motivation for good works. The term “fallen from grace” does not primarily mean that someone has fallen from sin. Rather it means they no longer have access to God’s ability in them. They have left grace and are fixated on truth alone and are trying to do good works in their own strength and ability. What one gets in that case is nothing but dead works.

Is Our Focus on Sin or Love; Law or Grace;
Earth or Heaven?

Jesus was in the boat with the disciples when a storm threatened to sink the boat. The disciples asked Jesus: "don't you care if we drown?" Jesus rebuked the wind and it became completely calm. He said to His disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'" The disciples were focused on the 'storm' rather than on Jesus.

What is the positional vantage point of worship?
Are we looking up toward heaven
or down toward hell?

Seeing the Potential in Every Man

Pharisee: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

What is a Pharisee?

The Greek word for Pharisee is "Pharisaaios" and is defined as "exclusively religious." The Pharisees of Jesus' day were entrenched in the Law and used it to accuse Jesus of wrongdoing. But He often had strong words of rebuke for them. They not only followed the Law very religiously but expected everyone else to adhere to it as well. An example of Jesus' "revelation" of the law is seen in His statement: "'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 children of your Father in heaven.'"⁵⁵²

Jesus brought redemption and justification into the world through His sacrifice. This was much more than "reformation" but was absolute fulfillment of the law. Not all of the Pharisees were of the 'ungodly type'. Still there were those who were described as being: Indignant⁵⁵³; Mocking⁵⁵⁴; Scheming⁵⁵⁵; Self-interested⁵⁵⁶; Fearful of the people⁵⁵⁷; Accusers⁵⁵⁸; Revengeful⁵⁵⁹; And willing to dispose of anyone who stood in the way of the accomplishment of their purposes.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵² Matt. 5: 43-45

⁵⁵³ Matt. 21: 15

⁵⁵⁴ Matt 27: 41

⁵⁵⁵ Mark 14: 1

⁵⁵⁶ Mark 15: 10

⁵⁵⁷ Luke 20: 19

⁵⁵⁸ Luke 23: 10

⁵⁵⁹ John 18: 19

⁵⁶⁰ John 12: 10

Jesus called these "vipers, hypocrites, blind guides and white washed tombs."⁵⁶¹ They had tried to cause trouble by accusing Jesus of doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.⁵⁶² Luke adds that they were: Suspicious; Pretentious; Arrogant and Self-righteous.⁵⁶³ These Pharisees were quick to accuse Jesus of getting His power from "the prince of demons".⁵⁶⁴ This, by the way, is the apostasy which is "unforgiveable."⁵⁶⁵

Good Works vs. Dead Works

'Religious' People that Jesus Condemned

The only people Jesus ever criticized were those of His own religious group who were condemning and criticizing the prostitutes, murderers, tax collectors, gluttons, drunkards, and other "sinners". Jesus criticized the religious leaders of His day who were making it hard for the "sinners" to experience the love, grace, and forgiveness of God. He wanted to make it easy for the kingdom of heaven to reign in people's lives, not more difficult, and those who set up roadblocks received His harshest words.

The kingdom of heaven advances with love, patience, kindness, forgiveness, grace, and mercy.

⁵⁶¹ Matt. 23

⁵⁶² Mark 2: 24

⁵⁶³ Luke 7; 18

⁵⁶⁴ Matt. 9: 34

⁵⁶⁵ Mark 3: 28, 29;

Matt. 12: 31, 32; Luke

12: 10; Heb. 6: 4–6,

10: 26–31; 1 John 5:

16

When we set up restrictions, rules, walls, fences, regulations, boundaries, and creeds which are designed to force some people out and keep the others in line, we are not advancing the kingdom of God, but rather, the condemnation of hell.

Who is the 'accuser of the brethren'?¹²

"And I heard a loud Voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."⁵⁶⁶ This flesh will fail every time but Jesus never fails. "His way is perfect: The LORD 's word is flawless; He shields all who take refuge in Him."⁵⁶⁷

Traditional Works

"Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms,

⁵⁶⁶ Revelation 12: 10,

⁵⁶⁷ 2 Samuel 22: 31

of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits."⁵⁶⁸

Dead Works Do Not Glorify God

Do we find ourselves trying to be what we already are, or working to get what we already have? Dead works are the works of our hands.⁵⁶⁹ These are works of self-righteousness, and they are appropriately called “dead” works because they lead to death. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”⁵⁷⁰

The 'Total Depravity' of Man

The 'filthy rags' of our own self-made righteousness is exemplified as being like discarded menstrual cloths or the rags lepers used to wipe their sores and decayed flesh.

Six sins against the Holy Spirit: Presumption of God's mercy; Despair; Disputing the known truth; Envy at another's spiritual good; Stubbornness in sin; Final impenitence (no shame or regret).

⁵⁶⁸ Hebrews 6: 1-3

⁵⁶⁹ Heb. 11: 4;
Proverbs 15: 8; Gen.
4: 5

⁵⁷⁰ Proverbs 14: 12;
16: 25

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."⁵⁷¹ "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me."⁵⁷² "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries."⁵⁷³ "For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light."⁵⁷⁴ "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"⁵⁷⁵ "Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins."⁵⁷⁶ "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."⁵⁷⁷ "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."⁵⁷⁸

"What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin as it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one. There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God.'⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷¹ Romans 3: 23

⁵⁷² Psalm 51: 5

⁵⁷³ Mark 7: 21

⁵⁷⁴ Ephesians 5: 8

⁵⁷⁵ Jer. 17: 9

⁵⁷⁶ Ecclesiastes 7: 20

⁵⁷⁷ Galatians 5: 17

⁵⁷⁸ Genesis 6: 5

⁵⁷⁹ Romans 3: 9-19

"Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised!."⁵⁸⁰ "Yet they did not listen or incline their ears, but stiffened their necks in order not to listen or take correction."⁵⁸¹ "Having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children."⁵⁸²

"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."⁵⁸³ "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed."⁵⁸⁴

What part of "fall short" do we not understand?

All have sinned; all fall short of the glory of GOD!

We 'fall short' of everything.

"The best person in the world still has enough sin in them to condemn them, no matter how good they are."⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁰ Romans 9: 5

⁵⁸¹ Jeremiah 17: 23

⁵⁸² 2 Peter 2: 14

⁵⁸³ John 3: 19

⁵⁸⁴ Titus 1: 15, 16

⁵⁸⁵ Eric Carpenter

In Paul's confession⁵⁸⁶ he states: "I am carnal." "Pressing forward toward perfection, I haven't obtained it."⁵⁸⁷ We are not perfect, 'yet'. "In this flesh there is no good."⁵⁸⁸ "O wretched man that I am."

One does not escape the presence of sin until the final transformation and glorification of this flesh in death and resurrection to eternal life.⁵⁸⁹

What is the Motive of Antichrist?



Seeking to Receive Honor That Belongs Exclusively to Christ. These can be defined as ministers of antichrist, who would attempt to cast Christ out of His throne. Historically they took the scripture out of its place to exalt above Him, applying to it that authority which alone belongs unto Him, for their own by secret self-ends. They applied such authority to the scripture, attempting to rob Christ of authority, and undervalue Him. They would not come to Christ that they would have life.

There is power for the Christian life only through the indwelling Christ; it is His life that must be lived through us if we are to be righteous in His sight.

⁵⁸⁶ Rom. 7: 14

⁵⁸⁸ Rom. 7: 25

⁵⁸⁷ Rom. 7: 19-21

⁵⁸⁹ John 11: 25; 1 Cor.

15: 22

"But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord."⁵⁹⁰ We can never be pleasing in God's sight through the efforts of self.

Nothing Can Be Added to the Work of Christ

We can never add anything to what Christ has done and still does in us by His Spirit. "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God."⁵⁹¹ In Christians that have grown up in the apostasy, this seed is not known, this leaven is not so much as discerned; but their holiness consists in a conformity to rules of scripture, received into the old heart and understanding.⁵⁹²

"The end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith from which things some having swerved have turned aside unto vain babble. These desire to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm."⁵⁹³



⁵⁹⁰ 1 Corinthians 1:
30-31

⁵⁹¹ Hebrews 11: 6

⁵⁹² See:
christiantoday.com

⁵⁹³ 1 Timothy 1: 5-7

One could memorize the entire Bible, word for word, and still not be a born-again, saved child of God.

Can 'the book' be an idol?

"To put our trust in 'the book' and our interpretation of it, is to turn our back on the Living Word who gives Life. We become guilty of placing an idol before Almighty God and Jesus Christ His Son, thereby rejecting the Spirit of Grace."⁵⁷⁹

Most people who call themselves Christians do not mind when the Holy Spirit is slandered, but will fight ferociously when their idol, the bible, is threatened. One may 'know' God better by reading the Bible. More importantly, one must know God personally and fellowship with Him One on one through the Holy Spirit that lives within the heart and soul of the believer.

Modern-day Pharisees – Antichrist Beliefs

Modern-day Pharisees do not recognize themselves for who they really are. In their eyes their beliefs are "Bible based" and their faith pleasing to God.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"⁵⁹⁴

Jesus warns the Pharisees about their desire to be honored by men but not God⁵⁹⁵ and of God's coming judgment if they did not repent. He purposely healed the sick and picked grain on the Sabbath day to counter their extreme views about the Sabbath.⁵⁹⁶ Jesus firmly rebuked them for elevating their man-made traditions above God's Word.⁵⁹⁷



Christ Shall Be the Judge⁵⁹⁸

The Jews thought themselves a holy people, entitled to their privileges by right, while they were unthankful, rebellious, and unrighteous. But all who act thus, of every nation, age, and description, must be reminded that the judgment of God will be according to one's authentic character.

In every willful sin,
there is contempt of the goodness of God.

⁵⁹⁴ Isaiah 5: 20

⁵⁹⁵ Matthew 23: 5-7

⁵⁹⁶ Matthew 12: 1-8

⁵⁹⁷ Matthew 15: 1-3

⁵⁹⁸ Excerpts from:
Matthew Henry
commentary

In true repentance, there must be hatred of former sinfulness, from a change wrought in the state of the mind, which disposes it to choose the good and to refuse the evil. Nothing speaks more terror to sinners, and more comfort to saints, than that Christ shall be the Judge. Secret services shall be rewarded, secret sins shall be then punished, and brought to light.

"People are without excuse for although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being, birds, animals, and reptiles. Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossipers, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them."⁵⁹⁹

We must be careful that no one takes us "captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ."⁶⁰⁰

We "must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts."⁶⁰¹ The minds of the unregenerate "were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read.

⁵⁹⁹ Rom. 1: 20-32

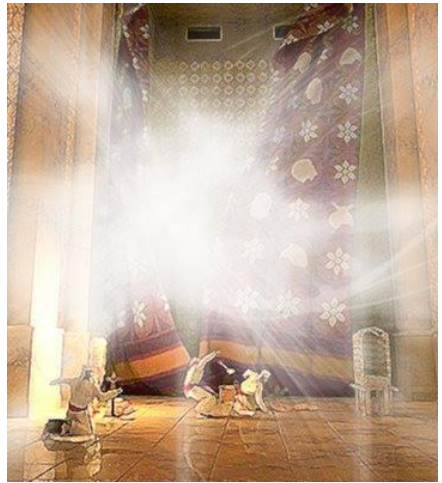
⁶⁰⁰ Col. 2: 8

⁶⁰¹ Eph. 4: 18

It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away."⁶⁰² There is still a veil between the hearers of the Law and its true meaning; but the veil is no longer on the face of the law-giver, but on their hearts; and the reason of this is that, the veil not being withdrawn, they do not see that the glory of the older covenant is done away by the brightness of the new.⁶⁰³

The veil which prevented them from seeing the fading of the light which shone on the face of Moses, was symbolically identical with that which prevented them also from seeing the transitory character of the Law.

It had been as it were taken from his face and laid on their hearts.⁶⁰⁴



Continual sin identifies us with that sin.

No sin shall enter heaven. " Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰² 2 Cor. 3: 14

⁶⁰³ Ellicott

⁶⁰⁴ Acts 13: 27-29;

Rom. 11 (See also
Pulpit Commentary)

⁶⁰⁵ Rev. 21: 27

If we have sin attached to us, we will not enter heaven.
"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?"⁶⁰⁶

The Authority of Christ

"Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while He was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him.

"By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave You this authority?" Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer Me, I will tell you by what authority I Am doing these things."⁶⁰⁷ "Where did John's baptism come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?" They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin' — we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Then He said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I Am doing these things."⁶⁰⁸

The critical, hard-hearted Pharisees were seeing the 'Kingdom Personified', but could not recognize it, even though they were looking at Him. They, as Judas, had stood at the gate of heaven but had failed to enter.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ Jer. 17: 9

⁶⁰⁷ Matt. 21: 23-27

⁶⁰⁸ Matt. 26: 49

Die to Sin / Live for Righteousness⁵³⁸

The unsaved person is separated from God. They are disobedient to God, living in hopeless despair, living under the burden of sin. They need the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ. So that is the diagnosis. So, what is the prognosis? The prognosis was that the heart is permanently diseased. Christ is the cure. Jesus presented Himself as the only cure for the morally sick and dying world, to remedy eternal death. And where does eternal life come from? It comes from Christ. "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."⁶⁰⁹ "I Am the way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."⁶¹⁰

The gift of life eternal cost us nothing. It is a free gift from God to us, freely dispersed by His Grace. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast."⁶¹¹ The payment Jesus paid for the sins of humanity is a perfect and a selfless act of love.

⁶⁰⁹ John 5: 13

⁶¹⁰ John 14: 6

⁶¹¹ Eph. 2: 8, 9

“He Himself bore our sins” in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. By His wounds we have been healed.”⁶¹²

Substitutionary Atonement

Christ made an atonement on behalf of evil sinners that cannot save themselves. Substitutionary atonement means that we are provided forgiveness. We are provided cleansing.

The wrath of God on us is averted from us, and God ransoms us from the slave market of sin. Jesus provided Himself as the only permanent cure for His patients, which must be received by an act of faith on their part. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel.

Cardiovascular Screening (Heart Exam)

"When the teachers of the law, who were Pharisees, saw Him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked His disciples: "Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

⁶¹² 1 Peter 2: 24

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”⁶¹³

The Pharisees and scribes considered themselves to be righteous men. They did not see themselves as sinners. They did not see any spiritually healing effects of Jesus’ teaching that they needed in their own lives. Their blindness closed themselves off to the righteousness of God that saves because they attempted to establish their own righteousness. They did not see that their heart was dirty, blind, full of hypocrisy and full of lawlessness.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ You testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started! “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore, I Am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.

⁶¹³ Mark 2: 16, 17

And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar."⁶¹⁴

Moral Defilement

"It is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come."⁶¹⁵

Defilement is moral and spiritual and it always involves the heart. The heart is the center of personality, where the will and thoughts dwell. When the contents of the heart spill out into any situation, it spills out in words, actions, and motive. That which defiles a person is a product of their own heart.

Twelve of the spiritual sicknesses listed in Mark seven are: Fornications; Thefts; Murders; Adulteries; Coveting; Wickedness; Deceit; Sensuality; Envy; Slander; Pride and; Foolishness. If left unchecked, the heart will always resort to evil. "The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time."⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁴ Matt. 23: 26-35

⁶¹⁵ Mark 7: 21

⁶¹⁶ Gen. 6: 5

“We preach not ourselves
but Christ and Him crucified.”⁶¹⁷

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.



But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”⁶¹⁸

The words, like those about "commending ourselves," imply a reference to something that had been said. Paul was charged with being egotistic in his preaching.⁶¹⁹ He indignantly repudiates that charge. "Christ Jesus" had been all along the subject of His preaching. So far as He had spoken of Himself at all, it had been as a Minister and Servant for their sake.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 2: 2

⁶¹⁸ 2 Corinthians 4

⁶¹⁹ 1Corinthians 2: 1-

4; 3: 1-10; 4: 11-13

⁶²⁰ 1 Corinthians 3:

22-23; 9: 19

Pride

There is a difference between the kind of pride that God hates⁶²¹ and the kind of pride we can feel about a job well done.⁶²² The kind of pride that stems from self-righteousness or conceit is sin, and God hates it because it is a hindrance to seeking Him.

The proud are so consumed with themselves that their thoughts are far from God: "In his pride the wicked does not seek Him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God."⁶²³ This kind of haughty pride is the opposite of the spirit of humility that God seeks: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven".⁶²⁴ The "poor in spirit" are those who recognize their utter spiritual bankruptcy and their inability to come to God aside from His divine grace. The proud, on the other hand, are so blinded by their pride that they think they have no need of God or, worse, that God should accept them as they are because they deserve His acceptance.

Throughout Scripture we are told about the consequences of pride. Tells us that "pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud."⁶²⁵ Satan was cast out of heaven because of pride.⁶²⁶

⁶²¹ Prov. 8: 13

⁶²² Gal. 6: 4

⁶²³ Psalm 10: 4

⁶²⁴ Matthew 5: 3

⁶²⁵ Proverbs 16: 18,

19

⁶²⁶ Isaiah 14: 12-15

He had the selfish audacity to attempt to replace God Himself as the rightful ruler of the universe. But Satan will be cast down to hell in the final judgment of God. For those who rise in defiance against God, there is nothing ahead but disaster.⁶²⁷

LGBTJ

Let God Be the Judge

Pride has kept many people from accepting Jesus Christ as Savior.

Admitting sin and acknowledging that in our own strength we can do nothing to inherit eternal life is a constant stumbling block for prideful people. We are not to boast about ourselves. If we want to boast, then we are to proclaim the glories of God. What we say about ourselves means nothing in God's work. It is what God says about us that makes the difference.⁶²⁸

Why is pride so sinful? Pride is giving ourselves the credit for something that God has accomplished. Pride is taking the glory that belongs to God alone and keeping it for ourselves. Pride is essentially self-worship.

⁶²⁷ Isaiah 14: 22

⁶²⁸ 2 Corinthians 10:

Anything we accomplish in this world would not have been possible were it not for God enabling and sustaining us. “What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?”⁶²⁹ That is why we give God the glory—He alone deserves it.

God alone is to be worshiped. We worship GOD for who He is! We can never take His place, either by thinking of ourselves so highly that we believe we deserve to be the center of all attention, or by remaining in a wounded condition that causes us to distrust everyone. Egotism is a natural human tendency. But it is one born of sin that only results in disappointment. Rejecting egotism, Christians are called to entrust themselves to God. Out of the love He lavishes on us, we are to love others.⁶³⁰ We are called to put others above ourselves, care for other people, and attend to their needs. Ultimately, we are to surrender our lives completely to God, worshiping Him alone, loving Him with all our being, and loving others with His love.⁶³¹

⁶²⁹ 1 Corinthians 4: 7

⁶³⁰ John 13: 34, 35

⁶³¹ Matthew 22: 37–

40; Galatians 6: 2–10

It is in giving of ourselves, not in putting ourselves first, that we actually find life.⁶³²

"I came into your house. You did not give Me any water for My feet, but she (*the sinful woman*) wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give Me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing My feet.

You did not put oil on My head, but she has poured perfume on My feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins



have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”⁶³³

⁶³² Matthew 16: 24,
25

⁶³³ Luke 7: 44-47

"My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise."⁶³⁴ Do not try to put God in a box. Open your heart and let Him in.



George Washington said: "The propitious smiles of heaven cannot smile upon a nation that disregards the eternal order and right that heaven itself has ordained." For a nation that departs from the ways of God, His blessings will be removed from that land. We now call good evil, and evil good.⁶³⁵ Innocent, unborn children are being sacrificed to the gods of self-interest. Their blood is on our hands! Marriage and gender are being re-defined according to pagan, carnal, ungodly standards. The house divided against itself cannot stand. Destruction and judgment are close at hand. The darkness of evil will never overcome the Light of God.⁶³⁶

⁶³⁴ Ps. 51: 17

⁶³⁵ Is. 5: 20, 21

⁶³⁶ From: Jon Cahn/

Message to Joe

White-washed tombs

If we want Jesus on the throne,
we must get off of it!



Confirming One's Calling and Election

"God's divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election."⁶³⁷

Actions Toward Fellow Man

"When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw Jesus eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked His disciples: "Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'"⁶³⁸



Pure or Bitter Water?

"With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?"⁶³⁹ "A salt spring cannot produce fresh water."⁶⁴⁰

The 'fountain' is an image of the heart and mouth. That which is in the heart will flow out in words of evil or goodness. If the heart is mean and hateful then meanness and hatred will flow out.

⁶³⁷ 2 Peter 1: 2-11

⁶³⁸ Mark 2: 16, 17

⁶³⁹ James 3: 9-11

⁶⁴⁰ James 3: 12

If grace, mercy and compassion is in the heart, then grace, mercy and compassion will flow out, but both cannot flow out at the same time.

Rebuke and condemnation are not the same. To rebuke someone is to "express sharp disapproval or criticism because of one's behavior or actions." Condemnation is "the action of condemning someone to a punishment; sentencing." Condemnation judges and damns the soul and is usually void of grace or mercy, whereas, Godly rebuke is administered with love, compassion, with hope for repentance and renewal.



Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because their hearts were merciless and unforgiving. "You brood of vipers! How can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words, you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."⁶⁴¹

⁶⁴¹ Matt. 12: 34-37

Grace can make the same mouth that "sent forth the bitter" once, send forth the sweet for the time to come: as the wood (type of Christ's cross) changed Marah's bitter water into sweet.⁶⁴²

Hope and Redemption Ministers of Reconciliation

We must be: Ministers of reconciliation, rather than ministers of condemnation and self-interest.



Jesus describes the Pharisees as serpents which: Kill by poison (false doctrine); Destroy by unforgiveness and false accusation and; Strangulation (Complacent disregard and condemnation).

⁶⁴² Ex. 15: 23, 24;
Num. 33: 8

How does the Bible describe foolishness?

Symptoms of foolishness may include: Foolish Talking; Impure language and; Clamor (Loud, continued noises).

How To Deal with Those Who Put Others Down⁶⁴³

We must realize that their comments reflect on them, much more so than us. It's not easy to hear mean words said about us and not be impacted by them in our heart and mind. The best we can do is to not take their comments personally but consider the source. Whatever they say is a reflection of their own insecurities, their own troubles, their own past, and their own warped mindset. They have expressed a view – perhaps one they don't even truly believe – for one reason or another, but it is just their view. Remember our power: the power to consciously choose how to react emotionally. We don't have to let it affect us. In time we can reach a point where the hurtful words of others just bounce off. We must love others as does Jesus.

643

Remember, Jesus loved us even when we in no way deserved it! "Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing."⁶⁴⁴



Consider the Counter-evidence

Take what they have said and think of all of the reasons that it is untrue. One must focus on one's positivity, and not their negativity. To be kind and considerate we may think: "I hear you; I just don't agree with you." Any difficult emotions that have arisen due to the comments can be challenged when realizing that the real truth is known.

Put Things into the Proper Perspective

The question we have to ask ourself is whether we are going to allow someone else's unkind words to overwhelm all of these things we have to be grateful for. As difficult as it might be to put our emotions to one side in the heat of the moment, we must reflect on how insignificant the put down really is. It is unlikely to have any effect on our life outside of what we allow.

⁶⁴⁴ Luke 23: 34

Look for the Constructive

An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind.

Consider Jesus' statement: " "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."⁶⁴⁵ "Do not take revenge but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is Mine to avenge; I will repay' says the Lord. If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."⁶⁴⁶

The Scarcity Mindset

Putting others down to build yourself up.

Behaviors like this often stem from low self-esteem and disconnection from ones' true path and purpose. We don't do it because we have all the answers – we do it because we're lost. When we have an abundant mindset there's enough love, friendship, clients, money, and resources for everyone. No one is left out.

⁶⁴⁵ Luke 23: 34

⁶⁴⁶ Rom. 12: 19-21

The abundant mindset of the regenerate knows that "God will meet all their needs (*spiritual and temporal*) according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus."⁶⁴⁷ "The 'supplying of every need out of the riches' of God's love can only have its consummation in the 'glory' of the future."⁶⁴⁸ It is according to the riches of His grace He supplies the spiritual wants of His people according to the riches He has; He gives all things richly to enjoy, plenteously and abundantly.⁶⁴⁹

Do people put others down
to make themselves feel better?⁶⁵⁰

As backwards as it may sound, these people feel better about themselves by making others feel worse. They will typically have low self-esteem, and their misguided way of boosting it is to take aim at another person. Even though they, themselves, are insecure, a common technique they'll use is to pinpoint the insecurities of others. Their ego will get temporary relief from its own pain by inflicting hurt upon someone else. Of course, this relief does not last long, and so the perpetrator is always on the lookout for ways to put people down.

⁶⁴⁷ Phillip. 4: 19;
Psalm 41: 1-3; 2 Cor.
9: 8-10; Joshua 14: 8,
9

⁶⁴⁸ Ellicott
⁶⁴⁹ Ephesians 2: 4;
Phil. 1: 3

⁶⁵⁰ From:
aconsciousrethink
.com

They are jealous.

Given their low self-esteem, it aggrieves them to see someone else doing well, in any sense of the word. Their jealousy causes them to lash out. Their aim is to bring the other person down to their level by belittling their successes or happiness. Yes, it's spiteful, but it's the only way they know how to approach those people who have what they want. The underlying message is: "If I can't feel good about myself, neither can you."

To make themselves feel important.

Nobody likes to feel small or insignificant. But some people use put downs to give themselves greater importance. This is often as part of a group or in a hierarchy where they believe that attacking someone else gives their own standing a boost.

To make other people like them.

Making someone the butt of a well-considered joke amongst a group of friends can make everyone laugh. However, some people take this approach in other situations, thinking that it will help others feel more positively toward them.

To get attention.

Some people feel a little lost when people aren't paying attention to them. And so, they make fun of others in order to get the attention they desire. Despite the previous point, it's not unusual for attention-seekers to be almost as happy with negative attention as they are with positive attention. Any attention makes them feel noticed and gives people a reason to interact with them.

To feel in control.

Putting someone else down provides a level of control. Some people have grown up feeling very little control over their lives, often due to childhood difficulties or trauma.

Using displacement as a defense mechanism.

Displacement involves taking a hostile emotion from one situation and transferring it to another. A person may, for example, take their stress, anxiety, or anger from one part of their life and find an outlet for it by knocking others down.

To weaken the resolve of another person by manipulating them.

This could be the malignant narcissist who simply wants to destroy his victim's self-esteem in order to control them. It could also be a person seeking to guilt trip someone into doing what they want them to do. Putting others down and belittling them can weaken their self-belief and assertiveness, making them easier to influence.

They have a negative outlook on life.

Some people seem to live with crippling negativity that affects the way they view everything they come in contact with. They are, pessimistic, cynical, and utterly disparaging of anyone else's positivity. Putting others down is almost second nature to them. It's an automatic response to anything remotely cheerful. If you share good news with such a person or seek some words of encouragement, you are likely to receive the polar opposite.

Low social and emotional characteristics.

Some people struggle to grasp many social norms. They do things that most others simply know not to do.

Neither do they have the emotional experience to understand that their actions directly affect how other people feel.

Mocking, making fun, and putting others down is something they do because they don't receive the usual alarms in their mind that tell them what they are doing is not okay.

They are unwilling to listen to an opposing point of view.

When a person holds a particularly strong stance on a topic, they are unlikely to be open to different points of view. Some people can handle such disagreements in a mature manner, but others will seek to tear down the views and opinions that go against their own. This can lead to attacks on the views themselves and put downs of the person who holds them.

They don't know how to communicate properly.

Some people may resort to making fun of others because they don't know how to effectively communicate their true thoughts and feelings. They either feel unable to express themselves, or they simply cannot find the right words to say what they want to say.⁵⁷⁶ "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."⁶⁵¹

⁶⁵¹ Ephesians 4: 29

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."⁶⁵² "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism."⁶⁵³ "As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions."⁶⁵⁴ "Jesus said to him, 'I Am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"⁶⁵⁵ "Judge not, that you be not judged."⁶⁵⁶ "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

⁶⁵² Romans 12: 2

⁶⁵³ Ephesians 4: 1-32

⁶⁵⁴ Romans 14: 1

⁶⁵⁵ John 14: 6

⁶⁵⁶ Matthew 7: 1

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing?



Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."⁶⁵⁷

Wisdom Without Precedence

Precedence is something done or said that may serve as an example or rule to authorize or justify a subsequent act of the same or similar kind. Godly wisdom is without precedence. The believer asks for Godly wisdom in faith, without reserve or bias.

⁶⁵⁷ Matthew 6: 25-34

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."⁶⁵⁸

"Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."⁶⁵⁹

"Let all who are under a yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these things. If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction."⁶⁶⁰



⁶⁵⁸ James 1: 5-8

⁶⁵⁹ Hebrews 10: 25

⁶⁶⁰ 1 Timothy 6: 1-21

In this 'knowledge', the false teachers and their hearers sought salvation and a rule of life, and miserably failed in their efforts. The result with them was, that they lost all hold on the great doctrine of Faith in a crucified Saviour.⁶⁶¹

"Some professing have erred concerning the faith; which kind of science, some pretending and boasting of, studying to show themselves learned and subtle men, they have been led into errors in Christianity, apostatizing from the doctrine of faith."⁶⁶²

Jesus is the Only True Example Where is our focus?

Our comparison and example must always be with Jesus. Anything or anyone else will be far removed from a 'good' example or the perfection of Christ.

What is a cult?

Members of cults believe in a higher power, but the higher power is usually the leader of that cult. The leader usually controls the decision making and governing to avoid accountability and any opposition to their own agenda. Within political realms, this is known as socialism.

⁶⁶¹ Ellicott

⁶⁶² Poole

They offer the simple path to happiness, to success, to salvation by following their rules, and each member contributes to the power of the leader by trading his or her freedom for the illusion of security and reflected glory that group membership holds. This contrast is where the idea of manipulation comes into play.

The major difference between a religion and a cult is what happens when a member tries to leave. That member is now looked at as a traitor and can be held hostage, be punished, or even killed for their unsupportive feelings toward the group and its leader.

Doubt, skepticism, and debate are discouraged and sometimes even punished. There is a mentality that there are two kinds of people in the world: those in the group, and everyone else.

Unhealthy leadership in the pulpit usually stems from a: Misunderstood and broken God-identity; Deep-rooted insecurity and; Absence of accountability.⁶⁶³

"Good leaders produce followers and great leaders produce other leaders, but the greatest of leaders are the ones who are secure enough in their relationship with God that they can become followers once again."⁴⁵⁵ Everyone has a common goal, which is to find the path to their God, but everyone's paths do not always align.

⁶⁶³ Eric Scalise

To determine the difference between a church and a cult, one must decide who is in control; God or man. " I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I Am about to spit you out of My mouth."⁶⁶⁴

Who is Really in Control?

Pastors, deacons, leaders of churches, will set themselves up as controlling powers. Their desire be in control often avoids accountability and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As members of a congregation of believers, should we, as did the contemporaries of James, refuse to enter a so-called church, which has leaders which seek to receive the glory and acclaim which belong only to God?

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them.

⁶⁶⁴ Rev. 3: 15,16

For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."⁶⁶⁵

Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder

Symptoms:

Preoccupation with details, orderliness and rules; Extreme perfectionism, resulting in dysfunction and distress when perfection is not achieved, such as feeling unable to finish a project because they don't meet their own strict standards; Desire to be in control of people, tasks and situations, and inability to delegate tasks; Neglect of friends and enjoyable activities because of excessive commitment to work or a project; Inability to discard broken or worthless objects; Rigid and stubborn; Inflexible about morality, ethics or values; Tight, miserly control over budgeting and spending.

Arrested Development

"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!

⁶⁶⁵ Romans 1: 18-20

Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness, but solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."⁶⁶⁶
"When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me."⁶⁶⁷



What does the term 'arrested development' mean?

A person may be stuck in some earlier stage of emotional, mental or physical growth or development. One's lack of emotional maturity is often caused by trauma or neglect as a child.

⁶⁶⁶ Heb. 5: 12-14

⁶⁶⁷ 1 Cor. 13: 11

When emotional trauma and loveless environment occur, physical growth slows down or stops. The body enters into a survival mode where vital, basic physiological functions are preserved at the cost of physical, mental, and social development. The longer the individual is in survival mode, the more permanent and negative the effects will be.



Homosexuality and pedophilia are good examples of how one may not advance or mature in social or sexual relationships. Their physical body may be mature but their social and sexual desires are still those of the child they were who had experienced trauma, abuse or pain, and never got past it.⁶⁶⁸

What are the causes of pedophilia?

Many factors could play a role in the development of pedophilic disorder, such as: Genetics; Brain structure; Hormones; Developmental differences and; Childhood experiences such as abuse.

⁶⁶⁸ Go to:

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/dsm-5>

The early sexual experiences in a child or young adult's life will "wire" the mind for those experienced expectations. This propensity will persist into adulthood and is often difficult to correct or change.

Symptoms, Causes and Complications:

Depression; Post-traumatic stress disorder; Behavioral problems; Poor self-esteem and; Suicide.

Sinful actions toward others are usually committed intentionally. Social disfunction or abnormality is a 'norm' or abnormality as described by the society. The word of God shows clearly what is Godly and that which is not Godly. Most societies consider pedophilia as one of the worse crimes or sins of man. (See: Article #9, God's Indictment for Child Abuse, page 355).

Pedophilic Disorder

(The clinical diagnosis and treatment)

Pedophilic disorder is characterized by recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, urges, or behaviors involving prepubescent or young adolescents.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁹ George R. Brown
M.D.

Pedophilia is a form of paraphilia that causes harm to others and is thus considered a paraphilic disorder. Sexual offenses against children constitute a significant proportion of reported criminal sexual acts. For older adolescents, ongoing sexual interest or involvement with a 12- or 13-year-old may not meet the clinical criteria for a disorder. However, legal criteria may be different from psychiatric criteria. For example, sexual activity between a 19-year-old and a 16-year-old may be a crime and not a pedophilic disorder, depending on the jurisdiction. Diagnostic age guidelines apply to Western cultures and not to the many cultures that accept sexual activity, marriage, and childbearing at much younger ages and accept much greater age differences between sex partners than Western cultures do.

Most pedophiles are male. Attraction may be to young boys, girls, or both. But pedophiles prefer opposite-sex to same-sex children 2:1. In most cases, the adult is known to the child and may be a family member, stepparent, or a person with authority (e.g., a teacher, a coach). Looking or touching seems more prevalent than genital contact. Pedophiles may be attracted only to children (exclusive form) or also adults (nonexclusive form); some are attracted only to children who are related to them (incest).

Predatory pedophiles, many of whom have antisocial personality disorder, may use force and threaten to physically harm the child or the child's pets if the abuse is disclosed. The course of pedophilia is chronic, and perpetrators often have or develop substance use disorders or dependence and depression. Pervasive family dysfunction, a personal history of sexual abuse, and marital conflict are common. Other comorbid disorders include attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder.

Breaking the Sacred Trust

Quotes from Corrected and Recovered Pedophiles

(It is the intention of the following confessions and testimonies that healing and deliverance may occur, either for the reader or in counseling others.)



Mr. N: "I just wanted to be loved! The cure for sexual attraction toward young girls came after establishing a mature, trusting relationship with a grown woman. Had previously believed that there were none to be found."

Mr. G: "I had been hurt and abandoned by my mother. This painful relationship caused distrust of all mature women.

As a teen-ager, I wanted revenge and acted out in anger and violence. I didn't really care if I lived or died. Then I had a spiritual experience with God. I felt overwhelmingly loved for the first time in my life. My faith in the word of God and the guidance of His Spirit led me to a beautiful, loving, caring wife. I no longer am bound by this childhood obsession. It was God's intervention that saved me."

Mr. K: "My mother was a bi-polar, paranoid, schizophrenic hypochondriac. I never knew if she was going to hug me or hit me with something. The abuse was physical and verbal. At this early age I determined to never be hurt like this again. Later as an adult I realized that she had had a mental illness. I forgave her and it was then that my bitterness and anger finally left. It was at that time that my sexual desires were no longer toward children but toward grown women."

A Godly Marriage is the Best Solution⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁷⁰ Provisionheirz

Mr. E: "I understood what sex was at five years old. When playing 'doctor' with a girlfriend, we were punished and banned from seeing each other. Later on, the church taught that pre-marital sex was wrong and that fornication would send you to hell. What was a boy to do? I wanted to live right before God but could not ignore the strong sexual desires. Feelings of guilt and shame were unbearable. As an adult I learned that a Godly marriage was the answer and fulfilment both spiritually and sexually."

Mr. P: "As a child I was taught that anything sexual was dirty and sinful. Low self-esteem hindered normal social interactions with others.

As an adult I realized that much of what I had been taught about sex was Puritanical and religiously motivated. While studying the Bible I read that when God made man and woman, He said that it was 'very good'. 'Be fruitful and multiply'. 'Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled.' The Song of Solomon is a beautiful example of a man and woman's sexual desire for each other. It primarily is a type of Christ's love for His bride the church. These scriptures helped me to develop a mature, wholesome and 'normal' sex life with my wife. Now there is no longer perverted desires for pornography or child molestation."

Mr. S: "I was abused by a Pastor of the church. There was masturbation and oral sex.

As a pre-teen, I knew this wasn't normal or right but kept it secret. He was a friend and I didn't want him to be hurt. I realized later that he was 'grooming' me by showing attention, taking me places and giving me things. He was very liberal in his ideas of godliness. He made me believe that drinking alcohol moderately was ok. I later became an alcoholic. He told me that bestiality was normal and accepted in rural communities. He sanctioned my use of pornography. My addiction of pornography led to pedophilia, child molestation and other perversions. The guilt and shame were unbearable.

As a child I enjoyed what he did to me sexually but don't think that I am homosexual. I cannot blame him for anything I've done as an adult. I take full responsibility for every stupid, perverted decision I've made. Only God could forgive me, the worst of all sinners. Yes, there are consequences for what we have done. We will live with them for the rest of our lives. The hardest one to forgive is one's self. I could have never forgiven myself if God had not forgiven and delivered me. Thank you, Jesus!"

Mr. O: "At 12 years old, pornography seemed to be a justifiable substitute for a real relationship with a woman. I reasoned within myself that this would not be hurting anyone else. The guilt and shame were overwhelming, but what else was there to do? This substitute perversion lasted until marriage with a woman who didn't hurt me and through her I learned to trust women, Thank God! Now there is no desire for pornography."

Mr. L: "Pornography deceived me into thinking sex with minors was acceptable. Now I understand how destructive and terrible any kind of sexual contact like this is. My life was destroyed and more tragically, so were the lives of these precious children and their families. My execution would not be enough punishment for what I did. (See Article # 10: God's indictment for one who has 'offended' a child.) Only God can bring someone out of this addiction and life style. I know pornography isn't real now but it had been a fantasy and ungodly substitute for a normal and healthy sex life."

Mr. Y: "My mother and father were very strict. They never would show affection or say that they loved me. I believe they did but never physically showed it. I lived

on a farm so was well acquainted with the mating procedure. Somewhere along the way I was confusing the sexual act with love. I had been taught that sex before marriage was 'sinful' and wrong. Sex with animals was a momentary relief but was not worth the tremendous guilt and shame. After reading in the bible that this act was punishable by death, I never did this again.

My shyness and low self-esteem stayed with me during most of my adult life. I felt 'safe' and non-threatened by young girls. I could be in control. This mindset led to child molestation and rape.

I became 'born-again' in later years. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and a new man was born. The old man is gone. I have been redeemed and set free from the bondage of the past. Yes, there are consequences for the things we did. There are 'messengers of Satan' that will remind us of who we were and the things we did. But true repentance means admitting what we have done, confessing it and asking God for forgiveness. It is then that God will renew our mind, redeeming us from the shame of the past, and giving us a brand-new start in life."

Mr. Q: "From an early age I was taught that sex was 'dirty'. My parents never even spoke the "S" word. I never had the "birds and bees" conversation.


They were so puritanically strict and demanding that I felt absolutely inferior and worth nothing at all. I didn't even talk; was afraid to use the phone; felt I had no opinion about anything. Self-esteem was minus 10. I wanted to stay by myself all of the time. Was so withdrawn and depressed that I became catatonic. Could 'turn my ears off' and not hear a word someone said. I never developed social skills and always felt like an outcast.

I was 'saved' at ten years old. Through the word of God, I learned that it was 'better to give than to receive'. Christ teaches that we are to be servants rather than seeking to be served. The teachings of Christ show that fulfilment and joy in life comes from 'losing our life' for His sake. This attitude enables the believer to transcend the hardships and persecutions of this life. I began to interact socially without fear. I began dating and feeling confident, all because God had made me someone with worth and meaning and purpose."

Mr. V: "There was a neighborhood girl my age (12) who I knew would 'go to the hay house' with me.

I decided to go to her house but when I got there no one was at home. As I walked back home, the guilt was overwhelming. I made an oath to God that I would not have sex until marriage. That oath I kept until marriage. However, the perversion and disfunction of those early years was not only destructive but destroyed the lives of others as well.

The healing and recovery from pedophilia came when God delivered me from depression, low self-concept and pornography. I had also been an alcoholic and drug abuser. Going to church had only been a formality and hypocritical. My idea of a happy life had nothing to do with reality. All my goals were selfish ones. It was only when I fully gave my life to Christ that things really changed.

With the spiritual healing came: a joyful and fulfilling Christ-centered marriage, purpose in life, forgiveness and redemption, and the power of God in my life. My testimony is that God will heal all diseases, deliver from every addiction, and give a new beginning with a life full of hope and love." 

Mr. R: "I was a pedophile." I say 'was' because I know that I will never commit this heinous, horrible crime again. There is a remedy and cure for this sickness.

First of all, I had to learn that this act was not only a violation of the 'sacred trust' but damaged persons lives, and my own, beyond description. One may not murder someone but can still commit 'character assassination'. We must live with the memories of those we have hurt and injured. These are the consequences of our evil and selfish choices.

I still hear the mother who said: 'She was my precious, innocent little girl. How could you do this?? I will never forgive you.' I hear the girl who said: "I will never (expletive) forgive you". Later, she had such fear of her children getting hurt like this that she obsessively over protected and sheltered them. I still see the tears of the father who was broken hearted. I hear the brother who said: 'I wish I would have fought you.'

God brought me back to Him. I thought that all was lost, never to be recovered. Suicide was on my mind every day. There was no hope or way out. Then Jesus! This encounter was absolutely life changing. I repented and asked God and everyone I had molested or hurt to forgive me. Yes, I was guilty of committing those crimes and sins. Not everyone forgave me, but God did. And the most difficult of all was forgiveness of self. I was no longer paralyzed by shame. I became involved in helping others to recover from pedophilia and drug addictions.

I must say at this point that we rarely can deliver ourselves from these addictions, but God can. We must be confident and trust that He can. He helps us realize that the clean, sin free lifestyle is the only life-style that brings joy, peace and fulfilment. Any other way only results in death; death of body and soul."

Mr. C: "I was a pedophile. The worst crime any one could commit would be to abuse their own children. My daughter was having nightmares. I knew why and it was because of me. When she was 4, I had her perform orally on me. There is no excuse or justification for this and I know it. How sick can anyone be to do this? I really love my children and would lay down my life for them. So how could I have been so selfish, abusive and perverted?

These is no good excuse but there are reasons why this occurred. I was abused as a child. A neighbor would masturbate me and perform oral sex. My marriage was affectionless and cold. I had felt that God had abandoned me, so I reasoned that if God wasn't going to help me, then I would help myself. This was a major mistake. He hadn't left me but I had turned my back to Him. Eventually I confessed to my daughter. I didn't want her to have nightmares anymore. She forgave me and now our love is complete and restored.

Another woman that I had molested as a girl, came to me saying that she has forgiven me. Only God could bring an individual out of this bottomless pit. Only God can bring forgiveness for such a sin. Yes, there are consequences that we will live with for the rest of our life. Everyone will not be so willing to forgive. Many will bring up the past to accuse, condemn and cut down."⁶⁷¹

The old man died and a new one re-born. We must understand the redemption, mercy and forgiveness of God. We must allow God to deliver and cleanse us totally from these sinful acts, to never continue in them again."⁶⁷²



Treatment of Pedophilic Disorders

Treatment may include: Psychotherapy; Treatment of comorbid disorders and; Drug treatment. Long-term individual or group psychotherapy is usually necessary and may be especially helpful when it is part of multimodal treatment. This therapy may include social skills training, treatment of comorbid physical and mental disorders, and drug treatment. "The most effective and lasting recovery programs are faith based and will include discipleship."⁶⁷³

⁶⁷¹ 2 Cor. 12: 7

⁶⁷² John 8: 1-11

⁶⁷³ Provisionheirz

Lack of love is always at the root
of any dysfunctional coding.

The Great Physician recodes to the Master's design.

The previous article is a clinical approach to understanding and treatment of pedophilia. The spiritual approach will include faith and healing that comes from the Great Physician. Credit must be given to God for complete healing of body and soul. Medical terms include: Disorder; Crime; Treatment and; Habitual. The spiritual equivalents for these are: Sin; Repentance; Sanctification and New-birth.



'The Perpetrator'

Perpetrator: A person who carries out a harmful, illegal, or immoral act.

Saul met the risen Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus.



Saul had overseen the execution and apprehension of many Christians. He thought he was doing 'good', but upon encountering the risen Christ, Saul experienced complete repentance and a deep appreciation for the grace of God. Paul testifies saying: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever."⁶⁷⁴

"If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

⁶⁷⁴ 1 Tim. 1: 12-17

How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' and again, "The Lord will judge His people."⁶⁷⁵

Paul had reviled the name of Christ, and opposed Him and His cause – not believing that Jesus was the Messiah; and in thus opposing he had really been guilty of blasphemy. The true Messiah He had in fact treated with contempt and reproaches, and he now looked back upon that fact with the deepest mortification, and with wonder that One who had been so treated by him should have been willing to put him into the ministry.⁶⁷⁶

The healing process begins with facing and admitting the truth about who we are and what we've done. An understanding of what traumatic events occurred in the past is the beginning point for recovery and correction.

"Re-coding" is the clinical term for changing one's basic desires, motives and perceptions. 'New birth' is the biblical term which means the old desires, motives and perceptions are replaced with those of Christ.

⁶⁷⁵ Heb. 10: 16-20

⁶⁷⁶ From Barnes
commentary

The 'old man' dies; The 'new man' is born.

Jesus said: "You must be born-again"⁶⁷⁷



Spiritual 'Self-healing' is Impossible.

Only God can truly Heal Body and Soul.

"Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits—*He* who forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases, *He* who redeems our life from the pit and crowns us with love and compassion, *He* who satisfies our desires with good things so that our youth is renewed like the eagle's."⁶⁷⁸

The eyes of love reflect
Jesus within.



"Lord, break me"⁶⁷⁹
and take away all my
selfishness and greed."

The perceived value of human life...

To be Christ-like is thoroughly implemented in our theology and practice as the church seeks to be God's saving Light in this world of spiritual darkness.

⁶⁷⁷ John 3: 5-7

⁶⁷⁸ Psalm 103: 2-5

⁶⁷⁹ Mark 14: 3

“The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”⁶⁸⁰ At the last supper, Jesus reminded His disciples, “the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves... I Am among you as one who serves.”⁶⁸¹ Effective church leadership is identified by service, not by authority. In times of stress and disagreement, compelling church leaders strive to reduce tension instead of callously provoking or intensifying friction. “The important thing,” Paul insisted, “is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice.”^{682; 683}

Tolerance

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

⁶⁸⁰ Matt. 23: 11, 12

⁶⁸¹ Luke 22: 26, 27

⁶⁸² Philippians 1: 18

⁶⁸³ Stuart Tyner

You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. 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 turn and tear you to pieces."⁶⁸⁴

Love

"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 children 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. 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 own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."⁶⁸⁵

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

⁶⁸⁴ Matt. 7: 1-6

⁶⁸⁵ Matt. 5: 43-48

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."⁶⁸⁶

The Dangers of Gnosticism⁶⁸⁷

The heresy of Gnosticism was spreading into the Christian church at Colossae. Gnosticism is a combination of Eastern philosophy and Jewish legalism, mixed with elements unique to Gnosticism. The Gnostics were the people who “knew things,” or so they claimed, that other people did not know.

Gnosticism 'promised' a closer relationship with God than the Christian church had provided. People who were a part of Gnosticism asserted that their members could achieve “spiritual perfection.” Gnosticism claimed that any person who would embrace the principles of Gnosticism could gain a full knowledge and a spiritual depth that could not be achieved by any other way. It was simply a mixture of man-made philosophy based in traditions of men, lacking sound Biblical truth.⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁶ 2 Cor. 10: 3-5

⁶⁸⁷ From article by:
Clifton Robinson

⁶⁸⁸ Col. 2: 8

One of the primary reasons that the Christian church began to endorse Gnosticism in the first century was due to the question of evil in the world if a Sovereign God of love and absolute power exists. The Gnostic philosophers considered all matter as evil. A Holy God could have nothing to do with evil, therefore a series of “emanations” from God came forth from Him to His creation. The Gnostics believed there was a powerful spirit world that made use of material things on earth to attack mankind.

The truth is, the world is filled with evil, sickness, suffering and death because of sin, not because the material world is evil or that God created it this way. We can take something perfect and make it imperfect by the actions of our own will. This does not mean the person who created the object made it defective, only that our incorrect use caused it to be imperfect.

There was a departure from the basic principles of salvation through Jesus alone, to the added requirements that the Gnostics and the Judaizers imposed upon new believers.⁶⁸⁹ Believing that all material things are inherently evil, the Gnostics insisted that these religious laws helped believers control their fallen nature and pursue spiritual perfection.

⁶⁸⁹ Galatians 1: 6, 7

Much like the modern laws that have crept into the church that specify certain rules, procedures and practices that are necessary for spiritual growth, such as speaking in tongues, baptism for salvation, observing certain days, and obeying the traditions of men. These added parts of the Gospel began early in the Christian church through the false premise of Gnosticism. (See: Article #5, page 336).

Paul said that not all believers speak in tongues,⁶⁹⁰ and that Jesus did not send him to baptize.⁶⁹¹ Jesus asks the question: "Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?"⁶⁹²

The Talmud comprises the body of Jewish civil and ceremonial law and legend comprising the Mishnah and the Gemara. These are man-made laws which go into detail about how the Torah is to be interpreted and followed. For example, the Melakhoh describes thirty-nine Jewish rules concerning the keeping of the Sabbath. Historically, these were elevated to be equal to the ten commandments. Jesus was ridiculed for not observing these man-made laws and traditions. Jesus explains that they had attempted to keep the letter of the law but had failed to love their neighbor.⁶⁹³

⁶⁹⁰ 1 Cor. 14

⁶⁹² Matt 15: 3

⁶⁹¹ 1 Cor. 1: 17

⁶⁹³ 2 Cor. 3: 6; Mark

12: 31; Matt. 5: 43-48

Speaking in tongues is a later experience that Christians can have that is subsequent to their salvation. Baptism is an outward sign to the world of the internal commitment of the heart that a person is determined to live for Jesus. First a person believes and is saved, then they can participate in baptism. The act of baptism does not save; faith in Christ saves. The thief on the cross next to Jesus was not baptized, yet Jesus said on that day he would be with Him in paradise.

Endure to the End!

Many people today want to add things to the simple Gospel that Jesus will save anyone who turns from their sins and trust Him for their salvation. The New Testament teaches salvation by Christ alone, with nothing else required. "Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved."⁶⁹⁴

In the minds of the early purveyors of Gnosticism in the Christian church, these practices were essential to control sin in the life of the believer and bring them into perfection and be like Christ. This practice has been described as strict discipline, or "asceticism."⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹⁴ Matt. 24: 12, 13

⁶⁹⁵ Col. 2: 23

Faith in the Finished Work of Christ⁶⁹⁶

An opposing view of Gnosticism, is the Bible's declaration that we are saved by God's Grace through faith. Gnosticism defines rules for behavior to make one acceptable to God. The Bible defines our acceptability to God as only possible by faith in what Jesus has done for us, not in what we can do ourselves.

Nothing can be added to the finished work of Christ.

Some Christians have taken this Grace of God as approval to do anything. Some will say that "since our sins bring God's Grace, a Christian can do whatever they want. The more we sin, the more God pours out His grace on us." But, Paul says: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"⁶⁹⁷



Hardening of the Heart⁶⁹⁸

The heart that is hardened,
will not be open to the Truth.

⁶⁹⁶ Heb. 12: 2

⁶⁹⁷ Rom. 6: 1, 2

⁶⁹⁸ Heb. 3: 8; Mark 8:

17; 6: 52; 7: 21; Matt.

13: 14, 15

Christians must not live in a lifestyle of sin. We do make mistakes after we begin to follow Jesus and no person is sinless. To consider oneself as being sinless is to deny that we "all fall short of the glory of God."⁶⁹⁹ We have "deceived ourselves and the truth is not in us."⁷⁰⁰

Gnosticism holds that God can be known only by self-denial. These ideas and philosophies of men have no foundation in the word of God. Jesus came to end the legal demands of the law.⁷⁰¹ Jesus lived a perfect and sinless life and fulfilled all the demands of the law. Those who place themselves in Christ, also fulfill all that the law demands. God sees everyone as righteous, who trust in Christ, because of what He accomplished for us.⁷⁰²

To what extent are we covered
by the redeeming blood of Jesus?⁶²⁷

"The forgiveness of sins through His blood" is propitiation, that is, the offering to God "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice" for sin, by One who is the Head and Representative of the human race.⁷⁰³

⁶⁹⁹ Rom. 3: 23

⁷⁰⁰ 1 John 1: 8

⁷⁰¹ Col. 2: 14-17

⁷⁰² 1 John 1: 7; Ex. 12:

12, 13; Rom. 3: 25;

Ps. 85: 2; Eph. 4: 1

⁷⁰³ Rom. 3: 25; 1 John

2: 2; 4: 10

We are not made right with God or know Him more fully by the strict religious practices of Gnosticism. We know God by His word and through Christ who came to earth as God and revealed God to us. Matter is not evil. The human body is not evil. We are born with a sin nature that began with Adam's disobedience to God. We use our bodies for sin by choice and because our fallen nature demands it. Our bodies are not evil,⁷⁰⁴ it is our sin nature that is evil and cause us to use our bodies for sin.

It is only by knowing God through Jesus Christ that we can be made spiritually perfect. No amount of striving for "spiritual perfection" or "spiritual fullness" by formulas, disciplines, or rituals, can ever make anyone perfect. These are representations of man's religions, but not the manner in which God makes a person perfect. "Perfect" in this context means a mature and sincere obedience to God's will. Here again, Jesus is the example.

People still like the idea of doing something themselves in order to please God, rather than understanding that Jesus has done everything for us already.

⁷⁰⁴ Heb. 13: 4-6

Those who fully trust in Jesus for all of their lives, are perfect in the sight of God right now and nothing that they ever do while on earth will cause God to love them more than He does right now.

We often pray for God to "move, heal or save." He has already done these and more. The ball is now in our court. We must believe and receive that which God has already provided.⁷⁰⁵ He has delivered our souls from the pit⁷⁰⁶; He heals all of our diseases.⁶²⁹



Neglect of:

Sins of neglect consist of failure to do things we know God has commanded us to do.⁷⁰⁷ Letting a needy person go hungry whom you ought to have fed is the sort of thing that would be a "sin of neglect". One must not confuse such sins with the ordinary oversights, inadequacies, and choices that are part of our everyday life.

Sabbath Observance

Responsibilities of Church Leadership

Church leaders must advocate and advance the theological insight of knowing "the truth as it is in Jesus."

⁷⁰⁵ Matt. 13: 58

⁷⁰⁶ Psalm 103: 4

⁷⁰⁷ James 4: 17

The Sabbath emphasis is crucial and uplifts Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath observance assists in building and celebrating an undying, seven-days-a-week relationship with God.

Family and Others

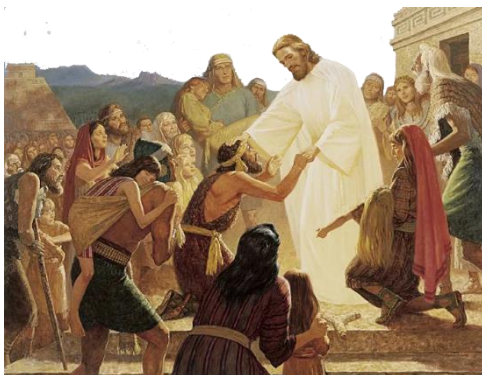
Lust and Gluttony

Symptoms of lust and gluttony may include: Immorality; Drunkenness; Defilement of the Body / Abuse of Self; Adultery; Fornication or; Effeminate.

A family member had early signs of breast cancer but did not tell anyone about it. She just ignored it like nothing was wrong. When the family noticed that she was acting ill, she confessed that she had known about it for quite a while. Now it was stage four and too late to treat. She died not long after that.

Sin is like this cancer. The longer we hold on to it, the more deadly it becomes and more difficult to treat successfully. Others

around us may not be aware of our hidden sin, but God knows and so do we. Jesus is the cure for all of our diseases.



He is the "Balm of Gilead"⁷⁰⁸ that heals the sin-sick soul.

Intent



Seven Deadly Sins

The seven deadly sins are: Pride; Greed; Wrath; Lust; Envy; Gluttony and; Sloth. "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁷⁰⁹

A sin of intent is simply a sin committed in wish but not in reality. For example, the adultery committed in a man's heart, which Jesus described in Matthew 5: 28. The man is guilty of the intention to commit adultery.

Murder

Character Assassination

Man's inhumanity to man; all in the name of religion.

Relationships

"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

⁷⁰⁸ Genesis 37: 25;
Jeremiah 8: 22; 46: 11

⁷⁰⁹ Romans 6: 23

And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."⁷¹⁰

Ish-Bosheth Murdered

"Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to kill you. When wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed—should I not now demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you?"⁷¹¹

Jesus didn't have to carry a sword;
He was, and is the Sword!

Truth must not be manipulated,
twisted or misrepresented.
Truth will always stand for itself.

Dishonesty

Religious Hypocrisy

Are we looking for the manifestation or for the Master?

⁷¹⁰ Matt. 5: 38-42

⁷¹¹ 2 Sam. 4: 8, 11

Lying, Deception and Stealing

Symptoms of lying and stealing may include: Whispering / Slander / Giving False Witness; Dishonesty and; Gossip. "Stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults."⁷¹²

Oaths

"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one."⁷¹³

"I will not look with approval on anything that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it. The perverse of heart shall be far from Me; I will have nothing to do with what is evil. Whoever slanders their neighbor in secret, I will put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, I will not tolerate. My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with Me.

⁷¹² 1 Cor. 14: 20

⁷¹³ Matt. 5: 33-37

The one whose walk is blameless will minister to Me. No one who practices deceit will dwell in My house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in My presence. Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land; I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the LORD."⁷¹⁴

"Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."⁷¹⁵

Adultery

Integrity

"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."⁷¹⁶

Fidelity

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'

⁷¹⁴ Psalm 101: 3-7

⁷¹⁵ 1 Cor. 1: 21-24

⁷¹⁶ Matt. 5: 31, 32

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."⁷¹⁷

Spiritual Adultery

Adultery is an affair outside marriage, committed either by a married man or a married woman. Spiritual adultery is described as a state of unfaithfulness to God.⁷¹⁸ Under the Lord's guidance, Hosea married Gomer, a woman He knew would commit adultery. The marriage would serve as a symbol for the relationship between God and His people. If a child of God diverts their acts of worship and devotion to some other thing or some other object of worship, they have committed spiritual adultery. Worship of self or anything other than God is spiritual adultery. Reception of glory or esteem that belongs to God is spiritual adultery.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁷ Matt. 5: 27-30

⁷¹⁸ Hosea 1

⁷¹⁹ Romans 13: 9

"For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."⁷²⁰

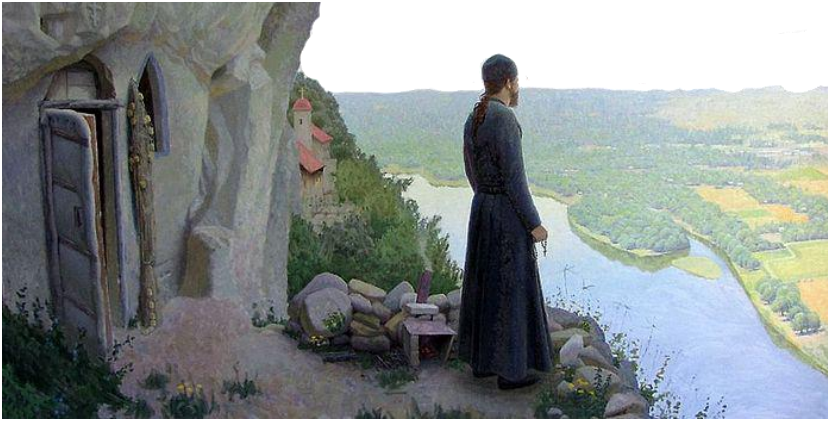
Spiritual adultery in today's Christianity

Christians will be guilty of spiritual adultery if they embrace or endorse other beliefs, doctrines, and religious practices that are contrary to biblical teachings. Today, spiritual adultery comprises habits that suggest disregard and unfaithfulness to God. One may be involved in seeking after divination, shamans, witches, wizards, enchanters, fortune tellers, astrologers, etc. for whatever reason, be it out of sheer curiosity for the future, or to seek for answers. It can be involvement in secret societies or cults.

Spiritual adultery would include embracing other opinions such as human philosophies and doctrines of non-biblical religions. Entertainment and other pleasures of the flesh are easily used to replace God. "Iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."⁷²¹

⁷²⁰ James 2: 11

⁷²¹ Matt. 24: 12; 6: 24



The fallacy of asceticism:
The vain attempt to heal ones' self.

Christian asceticism in the pursuit of holiness often includes many of the same practices as early Jewish sects such as the Essenes and Ebionites.⁷²² Pious self-deprivation was a part of the dualism and mysticism in these ascetic groups. This voluntary separation from the world was called Perishuth. Scriptural examples of asceticism could be found in the lives of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the twelve apostles, and Paul the Apostle. These were "in the world but not of the world."⁷²³ Worldly, carnal indulgences were not practiced but evangelism and gospel outreach were still effective. Jesus' great commission is to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

⁷²² Wikipedia

⁷²³ Jn. 17: 14-16

Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I Am with you always, to the very end of the age.”⁷²⁴

Monasticism is similar to asceticism, but with a slightly different focus.⁷²⁵ Whereas ascetics practice extreme self-denial, monks seclude themselves from all earthly influences in an attempt to live a godly life and to keep their personal religious vows. Christian monasticism is based on an extreme interpretation of Jesus’ teachings on perfection, celibacy, and poverty.⁷²⁶

Covetousness

Greed and Envy

Symptoms of greed and envy may include: Receiving personal gain through unrighteousness; Trusting in Riches; Greediness / Covetousness / Jealousy and; Extortion.

Wealth

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

⁷²⁴ Matt. 28: 19, 20

⁷²⁵

gotquestions.org/Christian-asceticism

⁷²⁶ Matt. 5: 48; 19: 10-12; 16-22

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."⁷²⁷

The New Nature Given Them Through Faith

The gratitude from the woman's lips broke in upon the formal, proper, and heartless worship of the synagogue! Thanksgiving generally comes thus swiftly after mercies; we glorify God for them.⁷²⁸



Living to Glorify God, Not Ourselves

⁷²⁷ Matt 6: 19-24

⁷²⁸ Luke 7: 36-49

Even Jesus Christ did not choose to glorify Himself, despite His great personal sacrifices, but to glorify Father God. Jesus' heart's desire is for the Father's glory, so much so that He promises to answer any of our prayers if we seek to glorify God. Whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.⁷²⁹

Judas Iscariot was a person who served God for his own benefit. It is truly tragic that Judas spent so much time in the presence of God and yet was blinded by temporal earthly gains. Interestingly, Jesus did not banish Judas from His ministry, even though God knew all along that he was a thief. Moreover, God would have certainly forgiven Judas if he had repented for betraying Jesus.

Caiaphas



⁷²⁹ John 14: 13

Joseph ben Caiaphas was the Jewish high priest who was organizer of the plot to kill Jesus.⁷³⁰ Caiaphas oversaw the temple treasury, controlled the temple police and lower-ranking priests and attendants, and ruled over the Sanhedrin. His 19-year tenure implies that the Romans, who appointed the priests, were pleased with his service. Caiaphas was not interested in the truth. His trial of Jesus violated Jewish law and was rigged to produce a guilty verdict. Perhaps he saw Jesus as a menace to Roman order, but he also may have seen this new message as a threat to his family's rich way of life.

In 1990 Caiaphas' family tomb was discovered. Among the ossuaries and artifacts, there were millions of dollars, (in today's currency) and valuables that Caiaphas had obviously amassed. He did not take it with him.

Church leadership may be lured by sexual temptations, fame, fraud, or wealth. Most importantly, church leaders must be biblical & set a firm foundation.⁷³¹ Scripture will be a part of daily life and motive. A godly leader will be authentic and live with a transparent life-style.

⁷³⁰ John 11: 49-53;
Mark 14: 60-63

⁷³¹ Vanderbloemen

They will be gracious and compassionate, understanding the times and people within the church.

Church members, especially leaders will present their "bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is their spiritual worship." They will "not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewal of their mind, that by testing they may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."⁷³²

The seduction of this world works through desires of the flesh, desires of the eyes and, the pride of life. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."⁷³³

When we glorify God in everything we do, our lives will point people to God. We testify of His goodness and draw more of the lost to Him. When we glorify ourselves first, people don't get to see God through us.



⁷³² Romans 12: 1, 2

⁷³³ 1 John 2: 15-17

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.⁷³⁴

Control

Socialism

Wickedness in High Places

How is classical socialism anti-Christ?

When society as a whole disregard the principles and holy mores of God's kingdom, then spiritual auto-immunity and self-destruction will result.⁷³⁵ Historically, a few of the major nations that collapsed from within were: the Roman Empire, China's Ming Dynasty, India's Mughal Empire, the Venetian Republic and Venezuela.

How is the United States following the same pattern of destruction?



⁷³⁴ Matthew 5: 16

⁷³⁵ Gen. 6: 5

Gradually, the economy is coming under governmental control. The socialist, totalitarian agenda creates chaos and division to weaken and conquer. Cancel culture, racism, moral decay; does this system seem familiar?⁷³⁶ Satan uses accusation, deception, family disfunction, pride and idolatry to kill, steal and destroy.⁷³⁷ Our nation is gradually giving up freedom of speech, wealth, religious liberty, political freedom and economic opportunity.

These conditions were described and prophesied by Jesus.⁷³⁸ The church should not be surprised but should understand and accept the commission to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I Am with you always, to the very end of the age."⁷³⁹

We have been born for such a time as this; to "be about our Father's business."⁷⁴⁰ We must be living examples of the Word of God by work,⁷⁴¹ integrity,⁷⁴² resistance,⁷⁴³ and faith.⁷⁴⁴

What is the cure for the "healing of the nation?"⁷⁴⁵

⁷³⁶ Matt. 12: 26

⁷³⁷ John 10: 10

⁷³⁸ Matt. 24; Rev. 13:
7, 8

⁷³⁹ Matt. 28: 18-20

⁷⁴⁰ Luke 2: 49

⁷⁴¹ Eph. 4: 28; Luke
10: 7

⁷⁴² Is. 5: 20

⁷⁴³ Acts 5: 29

⁷⁴⁴ Gal. 2: 20

⁷⁴⁵ Rev. 22: 2

Ezekiel 47: 7 describes the 'trees' on the sides of the river of life as an image of the abundance of grace and life in store for the redeemed. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations⁷⁴⁶ "The fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine". The Lord provides perpetual health, life and general wellbeing of the inhabitants.



⁷⁴⁶ Ez. 47: 12

CHAPTER 5

THE KINGDOM MENTALITY

The First Coming of Christ:

"For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given."⁶⁵³

The Second Coming of Christ:

"The government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."⁷⁴⁷



The Voice Crying in the Wilderness

"I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"⁷⁴⁸ "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁷ Is. 9: 6, 7

⁷⁴⁸ John 1: 23; Is 40: 3

⁷⁴⁹ Mark 1: 15

Christ is constantly reminding us that our aim is life in the Kingdom of heaven which is not of this world, but one for which we must prepare.



Paul compares the spiritual life with that of running a race and warfare. He writes, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore, I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus, I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”⁷⁵⁰ Paul places the emphasis on self-control.

For Spiritual Healing,
Should Focus Be on the Sin or the Cure?

⁷⁵⁰ | Cor. 9: 24-27

THE KINGDOM DESCRIBED



"The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."⁷⁵¹

Free Will

The will of God is best explained in the Lord's Prayer: "on earth as it is in heaven."⁷⁵²

Nature of the Kingdom

What is the kingdom of God?⁷⁵³

The kingdom of God is the rule of the eternal, sovereign God over all the universe.

⁷⁵¹ 1 John 3: 8; [10: 15](#);
[15: 43](#); Acts 28: 31;
Luke 17: 20; Romans

14: 17; 1 Corinthians
15: 50
⁷⁵² Matt. 6: 10

⁷⁵³ Mark 1: 15

Scriptures show that God is the undeniable Monarch of all creation: “The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.”⁷⁵⁴ And, as King Nebuchadnezzar declared, “His kingdom is an eternal kingdom”.⁷⁵⁵ Every authority that exists has been established by God.⁷⁵⁶

The kingdom of God is a spiritual rule over the hearts and lives of those who willingly submit to God’s authority. Those who defy God’s authority and refuse to submit to Him are not part of the kingdom of God; in contrast, those who acknowledge the lordship of Christ and gladly surrender to God’s rule in their hearts are part of the kingdom of God. In this sense, the kingdom of God is spiritual—Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world,⁷⁵⁷ and He preached that repentance is necessary to be a part of the kingdom of God.⁷⁵⁸ That the kingdom of God can be equated with the sphere of salvation is evident⁷⁵⁹ where Jesus says the kingdom of God must be entered into by being "born again."⁷⁶⁰

The kingdom of God is the literal rule of Christ on the earth during the millennium. Daniel said that “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed,”⁷⁶¹ as many of the prophets predicted.⁷⁶²

⁷⁵⁴ Psalm 103: 19

⁷⁵⁵ Daniel 4: 3

⁷⁵⁶ Romans 13: 1

⁷⁵⁷ John 18: 36

⁷⁵⁸ Matthew 4: 17

⁷⁵⁹ John 3: 5–7

⁷⁶⁰ 1 Corinthians 6: 9

⁷⁶¹ Daniel 2: 44; 7: 13,

14

⁷⁶² Obadiah 1: 21;

Habakkuk 2: 14;

Micah 4: 2; Zechariah

14: 9

Some theologians refer to the future, open manifestation of the kingdom of God as the “kingdom of glory” and the present, hidden manifestation of the kingdom of God as the “kingdom of grace.” But both manifestations are connected; Christ has set up His spiritual reign in the church on earth, and He will one day set up His physical reign in Jerusalem.

God's Goodness is Abused When Not Used.⁷⁶³

God's goodness is not unconditional.

It is "the goodness of God that leadeth thee to repentance"⁷⁶⁴ That is one great end of God's forbearance. It is God's kindness that is intended to lead us to repentance and to Himself. "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son. But the more they were called, the more they went away from Me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them.

⁷⁶³ From Matthew
Poole's Commentary

⁷⁶⁴ Rom. 2: 4

Will they not return to Egypt and will not Assyria rule over them because they refuse to repent? A sword will flash in their cities; it will devour their false prophets and put an end to their plans. My people are determined to turn from Me. Even though they call Me God Most High, I will by no means exalt them."⁷⁶⁵ "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."⁷⁶⁶ God's goodness is abused when it is not used and improved to this end.

The Lord is the Sovereign of the universe, so His kingdom is universal.⁷⁶⁷ The kingdom of God involves repentance and the new birth, as God rules in the hearts of His children in this world in preparation for the next. The work begun on earth will find its consummation in heaven.⁷⁶⁸

The Kingdom is About Freedom and Mercy

The Pharisees were making it too difficult for people to enter the kingdom, or live according to its ways.⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁵ Hosea 11: 1-7

⁷⁶⁶ 2 Peter. 3: 9

⁷⁶⁷ 1 Timothy 6: 1

⁷⁶⁸ Philippians 1: 6

⁷⁶⁹ Matt. 23: 13

The kingdom is about justice, and mercy, and faith, not about following the minutest of laws and the tiniest principles. This mind-set only confuses the clear meaning of scripture, but also does not provide aid to anyone in their life with God.

The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand⁷⁷⁰

"The people living in darkness have seen a great Light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a Light has dawned. From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'"⁶⁸¹ "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil."⁷⁷¹

Keys to the Kingdom

The Heavenly Kingdom

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I Am going there to prepare a place for you?



⁷⁷⁰ Matt. 4: 16, 17

⁷⁷¹ 1 Thess. 5: 19-22

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I Am. You know the Way to the place where I Am going."⁷⁷²

Understanding the True Gospel

"Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing."⁷⁷³ "Stand up and lift up your heads, because your Redemption is drawing near."⁷⁷⁴

The Church, the Bride of Christ must ready Herself for the Marriage that is soon to come. Is she prepared for the King and kingdom to come? Is her love for her Husband pure? The diligent and faithful children of God will enter the kingdom. "For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."⁷⁷⁵

The End Time Church

⁷⁷² John 14: 1-4

⁷⁷³ 2 Tim. 4: 8

⁷⁷⁴ Lk. 21: 28

⁷⁷⁵ 2 Peter 1: 11

The end-time church will: Allow God's will to be done, "on earth as it is in heaven"; Worship the Creator and Redeemer; Endure the persecution; Have the urgency to live Godly; Know that the Lamb wins and; Love all with an attitude of hope and redemption.

Paul said: "The Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever."⁷⁷⁶ "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment."⁷⁷⁷

The Beauty of Holiness

Just like a glowing bride dressed in a white gown on her wedding day, the Church is portrayed in the Bible as washed and pure because of the work of Christ. Though the Church is made up of sinful people, redemption is a powerful restorative force that also looks forward to glory when everything wrong will be made right.

⁷⁷⁶ 2 Tim. 4: 17-20

⁷⁷⁷ 2 Pet. 2: 6-8

When God sees His Church, He sees her made whole and holy, gloriously and graciously freed from the stains of sin and shining in the Light of His Love.⁷⁷⁸ God's people are often as an unfaithful wife with an ever-faithful husband. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"⁷⁷⁹

Saved From the Wrath of God

"But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."⁷⁸⁰

Kingdom Membership

The transformed mind proves the will of God. The cry from the broken world is for the authentic rule of King Jesus to be seen. Jesus is the 'Desire of nations; the Righteous Judge; the Prince of Peace'.

New Birth


Don't Resist Temptation; Replace it!

⁷⁷⁸ Jessica Udall

⁷⁷⁹ 1 John 1: 9

⁷⁸⁰ Romans 5: 8,9

"Whoever is not with Me is against Me."⁷⁸¹

"Christ paid the price for our freedom. He has redeemed us from the curse of the law.  Therefore, I forbid any sickness or disease to come upon this body."⁷⁸² "Christ has redeemed us from poverty, Christ has redeemed us from sickness, Christ has redeemed us from spiritual death."⁷⁸³

A 'Woman at the Well' Moment

"In those days they will not say again, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge. 'Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a Husband to them," declares the LORD. 'But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' declares the LORD.

⁷⁸¹ Matt. 12: 30

⁷⁸² Galatians 3: 13

⁷⁸³ Deuteronomy 28:

15-68

I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."⁷⁸⁴

What in the world are we holding on to? Give it up for God's sake. No sin will enter heaven so it's time to detach it; Get it off; Throw it away as far as you can. Turn around and walk away. Do not go back and pick it up again.

"If We're Dirty, We're Distant"⁷⁸⁵

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

⁷⁸⁴ Jer. 31

⁷⁸⁵ Dr. J. B. Sims

For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me."⁷⁸⁶

"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."⁷⁸⁷

Traditionally, the church is the last institution to address sensitive social issues.

Salvation Testimonies

A testimony of salvation is given as a witness to the power of the gospel and the reality of Jesus Christ.

⁷⁸⁶ Matthew 25: 31-

⁷⁸⁷ 2 Cor. 5: 17-21

The following are stories and experiences of redemption that serve as encouraging, factual evidence of God's goodness and interaction with man.

Ms. M's Testimony:

"I was born and raised in church. Though I attended church every Sunday, I wasn't a true Christian. During church, my mind always wandered, and I rarely paid attention to what the preacher said. And I certainly didn't apply it. My prayer life consisted of a quick 'Our Father,' 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' and my list of requests. I rarely opened the Bible, let alone read it, and I didn't even have a Bible. I saw religion as something I had to do, like going to school. I didn't have any relationship with God and barely knew Him. But glory be to God I am not that person anymore! I want to share with you how Jesus changed me. It is a tale of love and grace, and how it came into my life.

My life before Christ had an abundance of fear, anxiety, and hopelessness. They say your view of God determines everything else in your life. I believed God was a mighty being whose sole job was to punish me for wrongdoing. I felt like I owed a debt to God and decided to take my faith more seriously. To me that meant: going to church every Sunday.

I genuinely thought I was a good Christian doing all the right things.

I heard a message of how God loves everyone, no matter who they are and His willingness to accept anyone who sincerely seeks Him. It was the first time I heard of God's message of love, the first time I learned of God loving me. I didn't even know we could love God; I only knew the wrath of God, not His love.

For the first time I sincerely realized that Jesus loved me and died to save me (and the world) from my sins. He loves me not because of anything I have done or will ever do, but because it is His nature and there is nothing that could ever make Him stop loving me. I learned that I am a depraved sinner in need of His grace. No matter the depth of my sin, Jesus will forgive and redeem me if I confess my sins and repent. He gives His grace freely, and I can never earn it.

I gave my life to Jesus. He made me into a new creature and nailed my old self to the cross. Where I was once a slave to fear, He broke my chains and set me free. Life with Jesus is way better than life without Him. I no longer live under the shadow of fear but I live in the light of His love and presence. He has given me peace; I don't have to worry or be anxious about anything anymore. He works all things for my good and making me like Him.

I know now He is for me, not against me and I have hope for my future. Now I understand that it doesn't matter what you have done. Jesus will forgive you if you repent and confess your sins."

CJ's testimony:

"I became a born-again Christian about four months ago. Jesus has saved me, given me eternal life, and is living inside me as the Holy Spirit. Praise the Lord. My name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life and heaven is my home. I have been saved from addiction. Glory be to God.

I am 27 years old now. But back when I was 16 in high school, I was introduced to drugs, weed, cigarettes, alcohol, and really whatever could get me high. But the worst of all these addictions was my addiction to porn and masturbation. The devil had planted a seed in me and it had to be watered.

I became addicted to not only drugs but I became heavily addicted to porn. I would watch porn every day for hours without eating or talking to anyone. I would just sit there glued to the computer. The devil had me blinded thinking that this was okay, that it was just hormones. He fooled me into thinking that it wasn't a sin. I thought, it's just natural and I'll eventually stop someday. But in reality, this sin separated me from God.

For ten years I was like this, all throughout high school and college, even after graduating from college and working. For more than ten years, I would wake up every morning and the first thing I would do is get high, watch porn. I had several girlfriends, thinking this would help stop my addiction, but it didn't. Really it just fueled it more. I was so ashamed and embarrassed that this addiction had such a strong hold on me. I tried many times over several years to quit but I couldn't.

I would get these lustful urges from seeing stuff on TV and just immediately go watch porn. I could not control myself. I was depressed and lonely with no real friends. The friends I did have would get high with me every day and go to bars, strip clubs and night clubs. I was living in sin. I needed to be saved from my addiction.

My parents are orthodox Christians and they had no idea about my addiction, but they would take me with them to church sometimes. I used to think that going to church was all I had to do, but I was wrong. I knew of Jesus, but I did not know Jesus personally. I felt so ashamed; I knew I was a sinner. I knew God hated sin. I wanted to be right with God but didn't know where to start or how. I thought that I had to quit my addiction first then I could get right with God, not knowing that I couldn't stop on my own.

I needed God to help me stop, but I was foolish and I never asked or prayed to God for help. I just thought I could stop on my own.

Over the next four years I failed miserably trying to stop watching porn and still I did not call out to God. I thought that God didn't want anything to do with me. I thought that I had to stop doing this first then go to God. How wrong I was. I was so ashamed and embarrassed I couldn't talk to anyone about my problem. I felt left out everywhere I went. I couldn't even look people in the eye while talking to them because I felt so ashamed. I felt they knew what I was doing.

One day I was listening to a song which said: "Thank you Father for making me righteous and accepted through the blood of Jesus, and "Thank you Father; you sacrificed your Son to give me a chance." Those words really touched me. When I got home, I went to my room. While on my bed I said to myself, 'How can I be close to God?' And right at that moment something inside me, not so much a voice but a thought (yet it was clear and audible) that felt like it was coming from my soul said, 'Relationship with God.' I know for sure this was God answering my question; this was God speaking to me, telling me to have a personal relationship with Him. So right there in my bed I repeated those words, "relationship with God," over and over.

I thought about them and kept thinking about what they meant then slowly I fell asleep.

Every morning for the past 10 years the first thing I would do before I even got out of bed was get high, smoke, watch porn. But this particular morning I had absolutely no desire to get high, no desire to smoke, no desire to drink, no desire to watch porn, no lust. It was gone; it was all gone! My 10-year addiction that had been with me since high school was all of a sudden just gone! I didn't even want to smoke cigarettes and I had smoked a pack every day! Jesus took it all away and saved me. It was all gone and these were things I had been desperately addicted to for 10 whole years. I had been unable to quit no matter how many times I tried. Jesus truly saved me.

That morning I did have one new urge, one new desire that God gave me—reading The Word of God. I hungered to read the Bible. I had never had such an urge to read God's Word; it was amazing. I reached for my Bible and started reading the New Testament and read it all day. I've been reading God's Word ever since.

It's been almost four months now and I'm happy to say Jesus is not only my Savior but my best Friend. I have never looked back nor have I ever watched porn or gotten high or done any of the stuff I used to do; I simply don't have the desires anymore.

Jesus has shown me that He is the only way. Jesus has given me new desires to read His word and to pray to Him and to really have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I know that there is nothing I did to save myself. The only thing I did was call out to God and ask Him how I could be close to Him and He told me. God answered me. I realize now that if we just yield and surrender all to Jesus, He will save us. I was saved by God's grace alone and not by any of my own works. I am a dirty, filthy, rotten sinner deserving to be condemned to Hell but God not only forgave me but forgot all my sins and saved me because Jesus died for me. Wow! Think about that. God Himself died for you! Jesus paid it all on the cross. It's amazing.

Salvation is so easy; it's so simple. Just believe on Jesus Christ and you will be saved. I didn't make it easy, God did. I realize now that you can't depend on a church or a preacher or a religion to save you. Instead, depend only on Jesus Christ and you will inherit eternal life."

Who We Are in Christ

In Christ we are: Victorious; Overcomers; Triumphant; More than conquerors; A child of God; Heirs of God; Holy; His workmanship; A new creation; Priests; The temple of the Holy Spirit; The light of the world; Ambassadors for Christ; Beloved of God; Blessed;

Healed; Saved; Redeemed; Living stones; Protected and; Filled with God's love and faith.

We have: The wisdom of God; The mind of Christ; Been called to walk in glory; Virtue and His perfect will; Completeness in Christ and; Prosperity. Our steps are ordered by the Lord, and we hear His voice.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"⁷⁸⁸

I hope this message of hope will be an encouragement to keep a watch over our mind and manners, to only think and say things in line with God's Word, which is His will for our life. As we meditate and assimilate God's promises of who we are in Christ and what our inheritance is in Christ, then we will be building the image within us that is destined to win, prosper and advance God's Kingdom on earth as we daily submit to His will.

"We shall be like Him", then, in the glorification. When Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.⁷⁸⁹ As much as possible, the Church must be 'like Him' now! "Every sin, has to go; 'Neath the Crimson flow." Every ounce of flesh must be dedicated; laid upon the altar; upon the Potter's wheel; to be molded into His Image.

⁷⁸⁸ Romans 8: 3

⁷⁸⁹ 1 Jn. 3: 2

Godly wisdom is the mind of Christ.

God looks upon the heart,
the genuine inner motive of man.

What Is Christian Psychology?

Man is created in the image and likeness of God Himself.⁷⁹⁰ The root of all human ills is sin, the inherited depravity. Christ must be at the center of all therapies. Prayer is the first of these. It is in prayer that the mind, body, and soul of a person are aligned in a healthy and proper way before the Creator. In prayer, we can gain the strength to resist the disordered affections and behaviors of the wounded self, which tends toward self-destructive acts.

Before spiritual healing can occur, one must repent, which means acknowledging that one has a sin sickness. Jesus Christ alone has provided atonement for sins. An individual either comes to Christ or rejects Him. By God's grace and the gift of salvation, there will be a positive change in the believer's behavior. That spiritual light will illumine the soul; Spiritual truth will transform the mind;



⁷⁹⁰ Gen. 1: 27

Spiritual righteousness and justice and equity that comes from the wisdom of God will flood our being. All of this is empowered by the Holy Spirit of God to follow God's laws, which are the ethical prescriptions necessary for spiritual healing.⁷⁹¹



Spiritual healing restores
fellowship and relationship with the Father.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for
righteousness' sake:for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



How to be a Righteous Disciple:
The "Be-Attitudes"⁷⁹²

⁷⁹¹ Excerpts from:
Grace Advance
Fellowship

⁷⁹² Matthew 5: 1-12

To be "blessed" is to have the kind of happiness that comes from receiving favor from God. To be blessed is to have spiritual prosperity; The inner quality of a faithful servant of God.

Jesus said:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."⁷⁹³

To be poor in spirit is to be humble and teachable, humbly acknowledging our need for Him.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

We are promised that we will be blessed as we endure.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

To be meek is to be gentle, kind, patient, and tolerant—not proud, mighty, or conceited. Meek is not weak.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

We can come closer to God as we follow His teachings and learn more about Him.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."⁷⁹⁴

⁷⁹³ Matt. 5: 3-12

⁷⁹⁴ Luke 23: 34

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

If we earnestly strive to be like Christ, our motives and actions will be honorable, and our hearts will be pure.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."⁷⁰⁹

The 'New Birth'

The 'born-again' experience begins the process of 'sanctification'.



Sanctification

The pruning operation removes dead and diseased parts.

The harms and benefits of the sanctification treatment: Self must die; Eternal life.

The Personal Covenant

Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God. We have been unfaithful to our God but there is still hope. Now let us make a covenant before our God. Honor the LORD and do His will.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹⁵ From: Ezra 10

To develop a kingdom mindset, we must:

Accept God as King over everything – including our life;

Realize that we are to be subject to the rule of the king, who is God;

We must know His laws and ordinances and then obey them completely;

Submit our heart, mind and will as the territory over which God has complete authority.

The Kingdom Mentality Kingdom Minded

"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."⁷⁹⁶ "Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience."⁷⁹⁷ "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus."⁷⁹⁸ "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."⁷⁹⁹ "And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him."⁸⁰⁰



⁷⁹⁶ Matthew 6: 33

⁷⁹⁷ Hebrews 4: 11

⁷⁹⁸ Philippians 2: 5

⁷⁹⁹ Matthew 6: 10

⁸⁰⁰ Romans 8: 17

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."⁸⁰¹

"And He went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people."⁸⁰² "As we look not to the



things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." ⁸⁰³ "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."⁸⁰⁴

Jehoshaphat "charged them: 'Thus you shall do in the fear of the Lord, in faithfulness, and with your whole heart.'"⁸⁰⁵ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."⁸⁰⁶ "Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, 'Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.' Gideon said to them, 'I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you.'"⁸⁰⁷

Developing a Kingdom Mindset

⁸⁰¹ 2 Timothy 2:15

⁸⁰² Matthew 4: 23

⁸⁰³ 2 Corinthians 4: 18

⁸⁰⁴ Colossians 3: 2

⁸⁰⁵ 2 Chronicles 19: 9

⁸⁰⁶ John 3: 16

⁸⁰⁷ Judges 8: 22, 23

"From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to You!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person according to what they have done. "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁸ Matt. 16: 21-28



From Demonstration to Decision Jesus Describes the Kingdom Mindset

Jesus demonstrated what life will be like in the Kingdom of God by healing the paralyzed man by first forgiving His sins. Jesus called disciples to follow Him, to learn from Him, and to embrace life in this Kingdom. He used parables like the sower and the soils, the wheat and the weeds, and the treasure in the field.

We have seen Jesus demonstrate the abundance of the Kingdom of Heaven by feeding 5,000, and then on another occasion by feeding 4,000 people. We have seen the King of the Kingdom, Jesus, exercise His dominion over the created elements by walking on water.

Peter describes who Jesus is in his confession: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” His teaching and demonstration of the Kingdom brings us to a point of decision. Are we members of the Kingdom of Heaven? See: Article#1 (Death bed experience of: D.L. Moody, page 324).

Eternal Life Within

Characteristics of the Bride of Christ

Experiencing the union of bride and bridegroom is reminding our hearts of something for which we were made, toward which we are headed. The Old Testament prophets often portray God’s people as a beloved bride who is also often an adulterous wife.



God is seen as a faithful husband who pursues and wins back His bride time and time again, whose steadfast love is strong and lasting.

"Let my mouth be filled with Your praise,
and with Your glory all the day."⁸⁰⁹

John and Solomon are convincing, but all who experience the love of God through the Holy Spirit know the reality of Christ personally. This encounter leaves no doubt nor question of the reality of God and His love. The faith and knowledge that result from the Spirit of God living within, brings spiritual life and healing that comes from no other source.



John, the disciple, knew Jesus as the Man who walked the face of this earth and he knew Him as the resurrected Christ.⁸¹⁰ John was the most qualified and experienced to describe the Son of God in His person and gospel message.⁷²⁷ So, by experience John asserts: "To live is Christ."⁸¹¹ To be without Christ is death.

Discovering the essence of worship



⁸⁰⁹ Ps. 71: 8

⁸¹⁰ Rev. 1: 10-20

⁸¹¹ Phil. 1: 21

Worship: To ascribe worth; Reverence; Respect; Demonstrating obedience and loyalty and commitment to God. We worship God in continual praise and allegiance to God.⁸¹² Are we worshiping God from the head or from the heart? We must continue in our faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. "This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant."⁸¹³ Our hope is beyond the veil. "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."⁸¹⁴



The soul hungers for the continual fellowship with Christ and for the power and work of God to continually flow through us. All of this is for His glory and our fulfilment.

I will praise You on the mountain top;
I will praise You in the prison of this
flesh;
I will praise You till the last breath.

⁸¹² Heb. 13: 14-16

⁸¹³ Col. 1: 23

⁸¹⁴ Heb. 6: 19, 20

Jesus' sacrifice was the greatest form of worship. Making sacrifices before the Lord is a way that we worship Him. Not sacrifices of animals but personal sacrifices of self for the glory of God and the kingdom. When we make sacrifices, we are saying that what or whom we are sacrificing for is worth more than what we are sacrificing.¹⁷⁸

Life Through the Spirit

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by Him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs; heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory."³⁵⁴

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness...For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."⁸¹⁵

The Christian's Spirit is Alive by the Spirit of God
That Lives Within.



Jesus the Bread of Life;
The Food that Endures
to Eternal Life.

"This is My body
which is broken for
you."⁸¹⁶

"The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent. My Father gives you the true Bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is the Bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. I Am the Bread of life. I shall raise them up at the last day. The one who believes has eternal life,⁸¹⁷ and is blessed.

Jesus prays to be glorified and describes eternal life:

⁸¹⁵ Romans 8: 9,10,14

⁸¹⁶ Luke 22: 19

⁸¹⁷ From: John 6

Jesus looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You, For You granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those You have given Him. Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.”⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁸ John 17: 1-3

CONCLUSION

After spiritual healing, we are equipped for service in the kingdom. God works through the faithful servant to bring healing and redemption to the lost and needy. The healed can now testify of the goodness of God and the gospel of salvation.



Will We Accept Jesus Christ as Our Savior Today?

When our last breath is taken, there is no more opportunity for salvation. As born-again believers, we must never take His sacrifice for granted, but in joy and thankfulness, worship He who is most worthy.

If you died tonight, would you make it into heaven?

ARTICLES

Article #1

A Death Bed Experience



Death of D. L. Moody

"William R. Moody, His Son, reports on the death of his father. Dr. Moody who had a very bad heart and had called the elders of the church to anoint him with oil and to pray for him."

"After a rather restless night he fell into a quiet sleep for over an hour, from which he awoke in a sinking condition. Suddenly he was heard speaking in slow and measured words. He was saying: *'Earth recedes; Heaven opens before me.'* The first impulse was to try to arouse him from what appeared to be a dream. 'No, this is no dream, Will,' he replied. 'It is beautiful. It is like a trance. If this is death, it is sweet. There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go.'

Then it seemed as though he saw beyond the veil, for he exclaimed: 'This is my triumph; this is my coronation day! I have been looking forward to it for years.' Then his face lit up, and he said, in a voice of joyful rapture: 'Dwight! Irene!

I see the children's faces, 'referring to the two little grandchildren God had taken from his life in the past year. 'Give my love to them all.' Turning to his wife, he exclaimed, 'Mamma, you have been a good wife to me!' and with that he became unconscious."

Article #2

Is Man Naturally Immortal?

The belief that man has 'natural immortality' is derived from early gnostic teachings.⁸¹⁹ In the Garden of Eden, the serpent told Eve that she could disobey God, and she would not die.⁸²⁰ Even as that initial deception concerned death, modern conceptions about death and the afterlife commonly contradict the truth of the Bible.

Most professing Christians believe in an immortal soul that lives on beyond death. They believe that if one professed Christ then his soul goes to heaven, but if the dearly-departed did not "get saved" before dying, then his soul goes to an ever-burning hell to be tortured for eternity; (See: Article #4, page 334). This belief, rooted in Gnosticism and even further back in Egyptian and Babylonian mystic religions, proclaims that death really is not death but just part of a mystical journey.

⁸¹⁹ David C. Grabbe

⁸²⁰ Genesis 3: 1-4

The Bible shows that man does not have a soul, but that man is a soul.⁸⁰⁵ Man has a spirit, and has a body, but only when God breathed life into Adam did he become a living soul.⁸²¹

God asks Job: " "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand."⁸²²

The Bible states clearly that the soul who sins will die.⁸²³ God alone has immortality,⁸²⁴ unlike man who must seek it because he does not have it.⁸²⁵ Scripture asserts that "the wages of sin is death".⁸²⁶ Death is not a shedding of the body and a freeing of the soul, as is commonly held, but a complete cessation of existence.⁸²⁷

If we are in heaven and are believing our lost sons, daughters and loved ones are burning in hell, how miserable that would be. If they have ceased to exist, they are not being tortured forever. In either case, the urgency of accepting the gospel and Christ's salvation is priority one!⁸²⁸

The Second Death

(Both views of immortality and death are presented below. Regardless of one's view, if one is born-again, there is nothing to worry about.)

⁸²¹ Genesis 2: 7

⁸²² Job 38: 4

⁸²³ Ezekiel 18: 4, 20

⁸²⁴ I Timothy 6: 16

⁸²⁵ Romans 2: 7

⁸²⁶ Romans 6: 23

⁸²⁷ Obadiah 1: 15, 16;

Jn. 3: 16

⁸²⁸ Provisionheirz

The following represents several schools of thought concerning eternal life. "Come, let us reason together."⁸²⁹ Consider the scriptures, lay aside tradition, pray for understanding, and above all, we must open our heart and mind and let Jesus live within.⁷²² Only Jesus can fill that empty place in our heart. When His Holy Spirit lives within, we will have understanding, joy, and peace. God's love will dispel all fear. This is the day to make the choice. For He says, "in the time of My favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."⁸³⁰

Satan's heresy that "You shall not surely die,"⁸³¹ when expanded, claims that we are already immortal, so death has no real hold over us. This idea, proposed at the very beginning, has thrived throughout history. Mainstream Christianity calls it the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, while various Eastern religions contain it in beliefs such as reincarnation. The belief that human beings possess a spiritual, eternally conscious, imperishable component is a major tenet of nearly every religion throughout man's history.

⁸²⁹ Is. 1: 18

⁸³⁰ 2 Cor. 6: 2; Is. 49: 8-13

⁸³¹ Genesis 3: 4

In our modern culture, books and movies abound with examples of the spirits of the dead hovering around the living characters, giving them comfort, aid, and encouragement. It is taken as given that death is not the end; somehow, one's conscious spirit will live on when the physical body perishes.

Is burning in hell for all eternity an appropriate and justifiable punishment for the rejection of God's salvation of the soul?

Is the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth”⁸³² a description of suffering torment in hell or a Middle Eastern idiom describing the expression of sorrow and lament for missing out on a great blessing or opportunity?

Article #3

The Eternity of Hell

Does hell last forever
or are only the consequences eternal?⁸³³

Does ‘Eternal’ Mean Forever?

⁸³² Luke 13: 28

⁸³³ From article by
Greg Morse;
desiringGod.org
328

Christian conditionalism:⁸³⁴ In Christian theology, conditionalism or conditional immortality is a concept in which the gift of immortality is attached to (conditional upon) belief in Jesus Christ. This doctrine is based in part upon another biblical argument, that the human soul is naturally mortal, immortality ("eternal life") is therefore granted by God as a gift. This viewpoint stands in contrast to the more popular doctrine of the "natural immortality" of the soul. Conditionalism is practically synonymous with annihilationism, the belief that the unsaved will be ultimately destroyed, rather than suffer unending physical torment in hell. The view is also sometimes connected with the idea of soul sleep, in which the dead sleep unconscious until the Resurrection of the Dead to stand for a Last Judgment before the World to Come.

In proving this, they both point out that "eternal" does not always mean everlasting. They argue that both in the Hebrew and Greek, the corresponding words we often translate "eternal" have elasticity to mean "forever" as well as other things, such as "age to come," which they argue could last forever or not.

⁸³⁴ Wikipedia

One of the strongest reasons this is unpersuasive is that some of the biblical passages in question speak in the same breath of both the eternality of the righteous and the eternality of the unrighteous. The life that the righteous enjoy is *parallel* to the punishment the wicked suffer. Hell lasts as long as heaven.

Daniel speaks of those who will awake from death: "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."⁸³⁵ Jesus teaches the parallel fates of the righteous and the unrighteous: "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."⁸³⁶

The book of Revelation displays the same thing meaning: "for ever and ever." "And the smoke of their torment goes up *forever and ever*, and they have no rest, day or night."⁸³⁷

Will the Wicked Cease to Exist?

Scripture often employs terms such as "destruction"⁸³⁸, "perishing",⁸³⁹ and "death"⁸⁴⁰ to describe the judgment of God on those in hell. These terms, some argue, entail complete annihilation, not continuing anguish.

⁸³⁵ Daniel 12: 2

⁸³⁶ Matthew 25: 46

⁸³⁷ Revelation 14: 9–

11; 20: 10; 22:5

⁸³⁸ Matt. 10: 28

⁸³⁹ John 3: 16

⁸⁴⁰ Revelation 20: 14

As Stott memorably put it, “It would seem strange if people who are said to suffer destruction are in fact not destroyed; and as you put it, it is difficult to imagine a perpetually inconclusive process of perishing.”

In response, D.A. Carson replies, “Stott’s conclusion (‘It would seem strange if people who are said to suffer destruction are in fact not destroyed’) is memorable, but useless as an argument, because it is merely saying the same thing twice: *of course*, those who suffer *destruction* are *destroyed*. But it does not follow that those who suffer destruction cease to exist. Stott has assumed his definition of “destruction” in his epigraph.”

So, what does it mean then? I have a family member whose car recently started on fire and was completely destroyed. It was totaled and rendered useless. They sent me a picture of it — its frame, and doors, still were intact though completely black. The mirror hung limp. The front mirror was incinerated. The hood melted and the wires and engine exposed. It was *ruined*, but did not cease to be.

But aren’t the wicked described as being thrown into fire — something that utterly consumes? No, for “they will have no rest day or night”.⁸⁴¹

⁸⁴¹ Revelation 14: 11

The devil, his demons, and the “children of wrath” who followed him, will, like the burning bush and hell’s worm that does not die, burn yet not be consumed. They will beg any who will listen to give but a drop of water on their tongue to relieve their anguish from the flames,⁸⁴² their “place of torment.”⁸⁴³ “In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”,⁸⁴⁴ not silence or the mere roaring of a fire.

Does the Punishment Fit the Crime?

Another critique, more philosophically argued, is that it is unjust to earn an infinite duration of punishment for finite sins. The punishment doesn’t match such a crime, it is alleged.

Crimes Against the Infinite God

A man can commit such gross crimes against his fellow humans that he could earn ten life sentences for ten minutes of mayhem. And these are but sins against men. Can the idea of sinning *against God* — and not only in a moment but for one’s whole lifetime — not merit eternal damnation when one sin justly plunged the world into death and darkness?

⁸⁴² Luke 16: 24

⁸⁴³ Luke 16: 28

⁸⁴⁴ Matthew 13: 50

Edwards is often cited as arguing this. John Piper summarizes, "The essential thing is that degrees of blameworthiness come not from how long you offend dignity, but from how high the dignity is that you offend. We sin against a God infinitely worthy of obedience, infinite in glory, infinite in purity. No dignity is higher and no transgression viler. It reveals much that we see more problems with the punishment than the crime."

Eternal Sins?

Jesus spoke of an eternal (not finite) sin,⁸⁴⁵ a sin that "will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."⁸⁴⁶ Sins not explicitly named as this eternal sin, result in eternal destruction,⁸⁴⁷ eternal judgment,⁸⁴⁸ eternal punishment,⁸⁴⁹ and eternal fire⁸⁵⁰ which undermines our finite categories.

Sins of the damned can be eternal in that sinners continue to sin throughout eternity. Stott admitted that eternal conscious punishment would be much more sensible to him if "perhaps the impenitence of the lost also continues throughout eternity." "Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile;

⁸⁴⁵ Mark 3: 29

⁸⁴⁶ Matthew 12: 32

⁸⁴⁷ 2 Thessalonians 1:

9

⁸⁴⁸ Hebrews 6: 2

⁸⁴⁹ Matthew 25: 46

⁸⁵⁰ Matthew 25: 41

let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.”⁸⁵¹ If the holy practice holiness in anticipation of continuing in perfect holiness, will not the ungodly continue to spiral in evil throughout eternity? Will they suddenly love God with all their souls in hell?

People under God’s judgment “gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.”⁸⁵²

Should They Not Go Free?

Carson asks the necessary question, “One might reasonably wonder why, if people pay for their sins in hell before they are annihilated, they cannot be released into heaven, turning hell into purgatory. Alternatively, if the sins have not yet been paid for, why should they be annihilated?

Article #4

Perfect Redemption

The King Who Emptied the Desert

⁸⁵¹ Revelation 22: 11

⁸⁵² Revelation 16: 8–

A bird could not, by the painstaking removal of a world full of sand, move us one step closer to eternity with God. Time will not amend all wounds, nor stop God's righteous punishment. Nor will death hide the wicked, though they seek annihilation, calling on the mountains to crush them to hide them from Christ's wrath.⁸⁵³ What a little bird could not accomplish, a Lamb has.

At the pinnacle of His anguish, He cried, "My God, My God why have You forsaken Me"⁸⁵⁴ so that those who repent and believe in Him might not "suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might."⁸⁵⁵ Here alone can the cup of eternal judgment be drained on behalf of sinners. There is an escape from *eternal punishment*.

Although we rightfully feel unceasing anguish and great sorrow for those who never hide beneath the cross on this side of eternity,⁸⁵⁶ even this anguish will not last. We shall celebrate God's eternal triumph over evil forever: "Once more they cried out, 'Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever'".⁸⁵⁷

⁸⁵³ Revelation 6: 15–

17

⁸⁵⁴ Matt. 27: 46

⁸⁵⁵ 2 Thessalonians 1:

9

⁸⁵⁶ Romans 9: 1–3

⁸⁵⁷ Revelation 19: 3

Christ Jesus our Savior is worthy of eternal praise because He endured, for us, the righteous judgment that would have been ours for eternity.

Article #5

What the Bible says about Gnosticism⁸⁵⁸

When the apostle John wrote his first epistle near the end of the first century, the Gnostic philosophy had swept through the Roman world and had already made serious inroads into the church.

Paul fights against it in some of his letters, particularly I Corinthians, Galatians, and Colossians. John attempts to counter it in his writings.

Gnostic Dualism

The central idea around which the entirety of Gnosticism revolved was a form of dualism called anticosmicism: The belief that the everyday world is inherently evil and opposed to the divine.⁸⁵⁹ The Gnostics held that the only way to attain true spirituality is to deny their flesh or anything that might tempt them to sin. Those who thought this way became ascetics.

⁸⁵⁸ From Forerunner
Commentary

⁸⁵⁹ Gen. 1: 31

The Colossian Christians were affected by an ascetic form of Gnosticism that included "ordinances" or "regulations" that are not found in God's Word but were the commandments and doctrines of men, as well as the 'basic principles of the world'.

Modern Gnostics who believe in 'progressive revelation' have also succumbed to this first of Satan's ploys. While God does reveal things to us, the critical point is that which is revealed—if it truly comes from Him—will never contradict what He has already revealed in His Word. "God is not a man, that He should lie".⁸⁶⁰ Progressive revelation advocates believe that their revelations are more authoritative than the Bible, rather than complementing and harmonizing with it, making them ripe for satanic influence under the guise of God revealing something new to them. They may sincerely believe that God speaks to them, yet they simultaneously mistrust what He has already said in inspired Scripture. They tend to shy away from Bible study, concluding that they do not need it since God speaks directly to them, and if there is anything important, God will let them know.

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing
by the word of God."⁸⁶¹

⁸⁶⁰ Numbers 23: 19

⁸⁶¹ Romans 10: 17

Gnostics, in general, believed that the purpose of human existence was to return to the spiritual realm from whence all originated. Death, then, was seen as liberation of the spirit.

How does this belief affect a person's attitude and way of life? When Satan attempted to undermine the death penalty for disobedience, in addition to sowing further distrust in what God says, he also blunted one of the keenest elements of human motivation: Continued self-preservation. If life beyond the grave is assured, how this life is lived makes little difference. It is like guaranteeing a college freshman that he will receive a doctorate degree, regardless of whether anything is learned, any work is done, any classes are attended, or any tuition paid. While the student may indeed expend some effort, the motivation to apply himself wholeheartedly to his education will be substantially weakened. If one already has immortality, and is eternally saved, there is no reason to resist the temptation of carnality. Why should one study to come to know God and His truth? Believing that one already possesses eternal life removes the urgency to live according to the desires and requirements of the Creator.

There can be life after death through the resurrection from the dead. Eternal life is ours only if God supplies it, and not because we possess an immortal soul: God tells us, "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; the soul who sins shall die."⁸⁶² It is possible for a "soul" to die. Does 'soul' simply mean "life"?⁸⁶³

"The wages of sin is death,"⁸⁶⁴ not eternal life—not even eternal life in an ever-burning hell. Sin incurs the death penalty.⁸⁶⁵ It is only because of God's grace that we are not struck down immediately—not because of any inherent immortality within us. "The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁸⁶⁶ Eternal life is a gift, not an inborn quality.

God "alone has immortality",⁸⁶⁷ not any member of the human race, Christians included! Eternal life is promised to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality." Eternal life is a gift, not a right. Immortality must be sought rather than assumed to have it already.⁸⁶⁸

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

⁸⁶² Ezekiel 18: 4, 20

⁸⁶³ Gen. 2: 7

⁸⁶⁴ Romans 6: 23

⁸⁶⁵ Ez. 18

⁸⁶⁶ Rom. 6: 23

⁸⁶⁷ I Timothy 6: 16

⁸⁶⁸ Rom. 2: 7

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." So, when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."⁸⁶⁹

It is not until "the last trumpet,"⁸⁷⁰ when Jesus Christ returns, that the dead will be resurrected and given immortality. At this time, the saints will be changed and given new spiritual bodies.⁸⁷¹ Yes, we "sit in heavenly places through Jesus Christ"⁸⁷², but must "endure to the end to be saved."⁸⁷³ Immortality is not given until the resurrection from the dead, which does not take place until Jesus Christ returns for the Bride. That God must resurrect a person for him to continue living means that He retains sovereign.

⁸⁶⁹ | Corinthians 15:
50-54

⁸⁷⁰ | Thessalonians 4:
16

⁸⁷¹ | Corinthians 15:
49; | John 3: 2

⁸⁷² Eph. 2: 6-9

⁸⁷³ Matt. 24: 13

By belittling the truth about the resurrection from the dead, and telling people that they already have immortality, Satan can distract them from a basic reason why they need to listen to God so that they may be resurrected and continue living!⁵⁵²

The Devil asserted that by taking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, human eyes would be opened, implying wisdom and enlightenment to allow a person to know good and evil as God does and be able to always make the "right" choice.⁸⁷⁴ With this knowledge comes the 'gift' of free will which requires saving redemption and atonement.

Satan places the emphasis on knowing, but it is contrasted with living eternally. Satan proposes that mankind should be like God in taking to himself the knowledge, the definition of what is right and wrong, asserting that this is a good thing! In contrast, the Tree of Life represents a way of living in which the meaning of good and evil already exists, and eternal life involves submitting through the Holy Spirit to that definition and the Sovereign who is its source. Likewise, the Gnostics are those who know, who pursue mystical knowledge that they believe holds the key to eternal life through advancing beyond the physical and into the spiritual realm.

⁸⁷⁴ Genesis 3: 5

Gnostics believed the key to eternal life was contained in right interpretation and knowledge of those esoteric sayings which are intended for or likely to be understood by only a small number of people with a specialized knowledge or interest.

The book of Revelation expounds on the Tree of Life in two places: "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."⁸⁷⁵ "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into New Jerusalem."⁸⁷⁶

The Tree of Life, then, is associated with a way of life, one that requires overcoming growth, (sanctification) and keeping (doing) God's commandments. The only ones who are allowed to partake of the Tree of Life are those who have changed themselves (with God's help, by His Spirit) to begin living in the same manner as He does. To those who submit to His standard of righteousness, then, He grants life that is both endless and of the same quality that He enjoys. Satan, though, in addition to casting doubt on what God plainly says, and implying that God is unfair by withholding good things, offers a shortcut.

⁸⁷⁵ Revelation 2: 7

⁸⁷⁶ Revelation 22: 14

The evil one says, "You do not need to follow God's way, for it is obviously unfair and far too stringent. You can follow your own way. You can take knowledge to yourself of what is good and what is evil. You can be just like God in determining what is right and wrong." Adam and Eve took the bait, and ever since, man has rejected God's standard of righteousness in favor of his own. This heresy is easily seen in the antinomianism (literally, "against law") of the Gnostics, who may not have been against every law, but were certainly against any law that impinged upon their standard of conduct. Thus, the ascetic Gnostics who grieved the Christians in Colossae held to manmade regulations of "do not touch, do not taste, do not handle",⁸⁷⁷ while rejecting the command to "rejoice" with food and drink during the God-ordained festivals.

Similarly, mainstream Christianity will (rightly) use portions of Leviticus and Deuteronomy to point out God's abhorrence of abortion and homosexuality, but will claim that the same law is "done away" when it comes to the Sabbath and holy days. They have taken to themselves the knowledge of what is good and what is evil, establishing their own standard of righteousness.⁵⁶⁴

⁸⁷⁷ Colossians 2: 20,

A core issue of the Bible is whether we submit to God's governance or try to form a government based on our own perception of what is good or what works. God's way results in eternal life, but it comes with the obligation to submit ourselves to God. It requires keeping all of His commandments and overcoming our human weaknesses that do not rise to that standard. Satan, conversely, seeks to persuade us to do our own thing and to usurp God's prerogative in defining right living. He encourages us to be enlightened, to have our eyes opened, by doubting God and rejecting His way.

Article #6

Neurosis and Psychosis

Neurosis: A term used to describe mental health conditions. Typically involves expressions of obsessive behaviors, hypochondria, an intense need for control, dissociative states, depression, or anxiety.

Psychosis: A term used to describe an abnormal mental state. This mental state can involve experiencing delusions, paranoia, hallucinations, and difficulty comprehending reality. This can lead to distressed emotional states and disorganized speech.

Article #7

The Origin of Hell-Fire in Christian Teaching

The Doctrine of Eternal Conscience

Interview with Edward Fudge

By: Chris Date

Edward Fudge, author of the "The Fire that Consumes" sums up the history of how the doctrine of eternal conscience torment in hell was established in the Church. The concept of a soul within us that cannot die first became a 'Christian' doctrine at the end of the second century AD. Hell had been taught in Greek philosophy long before the time of Jesus, with Plato (427-347 BC) as the important leader in this thinking.

The teaching of an everlasting place of punishment for the wicked is the natural consequence of a belief in an immortal soul. By the year AD 187, it was understood that life, once we have it, is compulsory; there is no end to it, either now or in a world to come. We have no choice as to its continuance, even if we were to commit suicide to end it.

At the end of the 2nd century Christianity had begun to blend Greek philosophy, human speculative reasoning, with the teachings of God's Word.

Such words and phrases as 'continuance of being', 'perpetual existence', 'incapable of dissolution' and 'incorruptible' began to appear in so-called Christian writings. These had come straight from Plato, the Greek philosopher, all those years before Jesus. Other phrases used were 'the soul to remain by itself immortal', and 'an immortal nature'. It was taught that this is how God made us. But this idea derives from philosophy, not divine inspiration. It was Athenagorus, a Christian, but whose teachings, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, were strongly tinged with Platonism, who had introduced the teaching of an immortal soul into Christianity. In this way, he paved the way for the logical introduction of eternal torment for immortal, but sinful, souls. This was a hundred years and more after the time of the apostles, and came straight from popular philosophy. The apostles had consistently taught that death is a sleep, to be followed by resurrection. The early church leaders – Clement, Ignatius, Hermas, Polycarp, and others who also believed that death is a sleep, taught that the wicked are destroyed forever by fire, their punishment was to be annihilation. These leaders did not teach of an immortal soul to be tortured by fire in hell for eternity.

About AD 240 Tertullian of Carthage took up the teaching of an immortal soul.

It was he who added the further, but logical dimension. He taught the endless torment of the immortal soul of the wicked was parallel to the eternal blessedness of the saved, with no sleep of death after this life. This came at a time when many Christians were being burned for their faith and it was natural for them to accept that their persecutors would at death be consigned to an ever-burning hell for the persecution they had inflicted on others while they went straight to eternal bliss.

From the third century the darkness of the infiltration of man-made beliefs into Christianity deepened until the Dark Ages had smothered almost all the light of God's Word. At the beginning of this time, the first attempts were made to create a systematic set of beliefs. It is not surprising that an ever-burning hell and the immortality of the soul were prominently included.

It is at this time that such beliefs, held by most Christians today, had their origin. An ever-burning hell has remained a commonly taught doctrine of the Christian religion to this day. It was not based on the Bible but on philosophy. Bible verses were later sought to uphold the ancient philosophies of the Greeks, and added to the teaching. Eventually under the influence of Augustine, AD 430, the concept of endless conscious torment was brought into general acceptance by the Catholic Church in the Western world.

He taught that all souls were deathless and consequently the lost would experience endless fires of punishment, immediately upon the end of this life.

Purgatory and places of purification

Other pagan philosophers, along with some of the poets of the day, were repulsed by the immorality of this teaching, and developed the idea of a place where the fleshly body was purified by fire but, at the completion of purification, would find release. It was a middle way between heaven and hell. This concept had its origin in Persian teaching. From there it passed to certain Jewish groups, and later was taken into Christian thought and teaching.

It arose out of the Gnostic idea that the body, flesh and matter, is inherently evil and must be purified and purged by fire elsewhere. But we know bodies can be exhumed for examination, so it cannot be true that the flesh goes elsewhere. A similar view was held in Egypt, with prayers and services for the dead and payments made to priests for them to intercede for the dead. The idea of a place like purgatory did not have its beginnings in the Christian church, but in ancient pagan religions. The foundations had been established by Augustine's teaching of eternal hell.

Purgatory was added, and later fully confirmed by Pope Gregory the Great, about 582. Purgatory could not be supported by the standard canon of the Bible and it was the books of the Apocrypha that were used to justify this new idea.

A similar teaching appeared in Moslem and Jewish belief. The inhabitants of the world were seen as good, bad and 'middling'. It was believed that, if one died with curable offences, these would be purified by pain and torment as a preparation for heavenly bliss. By 1439 the teaching of purgatory, with services and prayers for the dead, to spare them years of this pain, was fully accepted in the Western Catholic world – Italy, Spain, England, France, and was ratified by Pope Eugenius IV. It was not known or taught in Eastern Christianity, which was not influenced by Rome.

It is sometimes taught that even the righteous go to such a place for a lesser time so that the stains of sin can be burned from them, and this can be greatly hastened if certain exercises are undertaken. At the end of this time any that are incorrigible are sent to hell forever and the righteous go to a place of eternal blessedness.

Heaven and hell are seen to be existing together side by side forever and ever. This means that Jesus the Saviour can never see an end of the sin and misery He came to die for.

Any teaching of the eternal co-existence of evil and good is not in the Bible, but is a teaching from Greek philosophy.

The Waldenses, who had fled to the mountains to remain free from the heresies that were developing in the Catholic Church and also to escape persecution, taught the sleep of death and instant destruction by fire at the resurrection of the wicked. Their persecuting inquisitors reported that they entirely rejected the teaching of purgatory. The Cathari and the Hussites also rejected hell, thus leading the way for the teachings of the later Reformers.

The Reformers

The Reformers strongly rejected hell and purgatory, because by this time the teaching had become heavily corrupted by the sale of indulgences. These were the payments made to the priests to reduce the years of purification spent in purgatory.

Wycliffe taught that death was an unconscious sleep, as did Tyndale and Luther, (although it has to be said that Luther was not always consistent in his beliefs.) They taught neither hell or purgatory. They taught that 'men are breath in bodies' and not 'souls in bodies.'

Calvin, however, taught that those who were sinners went to the eternal pains of hell at the time of their death and even denied a middle place or purgatory. The Reformed churches, like Calvin, have generally maintained a belief in an immortal soul and hell-fire, but do not teach purgatory.

The Resurrection and Hell

How do the concept of an ever-burning hell and the Bible teaching of resurrection fit together? Over the centuries there has been a blending of Bible teachings with the teachings of men. It was known that the Bible speaks of resurrection, and also of death by fire. The compromise view sees the body being resurrected and rejoining its soul again and then both being tormented together by fire.

Athenagorus taught that a person can never die or come to an end; life is ours for always. He taught that we have been made intelligent just for the purpose of continuing life – even if it be in Hell. He also taught that a body is given to the soul, and we are born into this world to pass through this life as two entities. These two are separated at death but, at the resurrection, the body rejoins the soul. He taught that punishment must be given for sins committed in this body and so the body needs to suffer punishment also.

During the period of separation from its soul it is said, the body is in the grave. He argued consistently that God made us to live, and therefore we live eternally even though it is a living death in torment.

What is the fate of the wicked?

The theologian Origen of Alexandria developed another, different view of the fate of the wicked. He postulated that the wicked would be forgiven and restored by God and so in the end all would be saved. There would be universal salvation. Some of his followers believe that even Satan will be saved. But there was yet another view, that of Irenaeus, who taught that the wicked would be destroyed. All trace of wickedness would be removed from the earth by a devouring fire.

No second chance.

The Bible is clear that our choice, for Him or against Him, is made in this world, here and now. There is no mention of a second chance in the Bible, or a time when all people will be changed and restored to the Lord. This view of universal salvation is also mythology that has crept into the Christian world.

It gives a more comfortable picture than judgement and death, but a second chance is false hope. Its origin is in the thinking of Greek philosophy.

In Summary:

There is no ever-burning hell with an eternity of torture;

There is no such place as purgatory;

There is no universal restoration of all sinners.

Article #8

Can a lack of love be deadly?

Article by: Inês Varela-Silva⁸⁷⁸

"I taught myself about orphanages 12 years ago, not actually because of my work as a human biologist but because of my daughter. She was born in 2004 and her first 14 months of life were spent in an orphanage in China. I am well acquainted with the vast body of research that shows the physical and psychological harms of deprived environments.

Most of the deaths were not due to starvation or disease, but to severe emotional and sensorial deprivation: In other words, a lack of love.

⁸⁷⁸

<https://theconversation.com>

These babies were fed and medically treated, but they were absolutely deprived of important stimulation, especially touch and affection.

The importance of touch

Human touch is fundamental for human development and survival. Infants in orphanages can be deprived of touch, individual attention, and love. This happens because there are usually too many babies for the staff to manage. When emotional deprivation and lack of love occur, physical growth slows down or stops. The body enters into a survival mode where vital, basic physiological functions are preserved at the cost of physical, mental, and social development. The longer the child is in survival mode, the more permanent and negative the effects will be. Once a child is adopted and the amount of love, care, and stimulation increases, the body ceases to be in survival mode and will start recuperating.

Frederick's Experiment⁸⁷⁹

Back in the thirteenth century, the German king, Frederick II, conducted a diabolical experiment intended to discover what language children would naturally grow up to speak if never spoken to.

⁸⁷⁹

<https://www.digma.com>

He thought it would be German. Some things are just obvious, right? So, King Frederick took babies from their mothers at birth and placed them in the care of nurses who were forbidden to speak in their hearing. But a second rule was imposed, as well: the nurses were not allowed to touch the infants. To his great dismay, Frederick's experiment was cut short, but not before something tragically significant regarding human nature was revealed. As you may have guessed, the babies grew up to speak no language at all because they died. The babies literally died for want of touch.

(During W.W.2, many babies in the Kibbutz died because they were simply not held while being fed.) Modern medicine calls this phenomenon, "failure to thrive." For some reason, we humans flourish under the influence of love and we gradually die without it. "You must love and be loved in order to survive."

In two simple declarations, the Bible offers the answer: "God is love"⁸⁸⁰ and "God made mankind in His own image."⁸⁸¹ Mystery solved!

Article #9

God's Indictment for the Offense of a Child

⁸⁸⁰ 1 John 4: 16

⁸⁸¹ Gen. 1: 27

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."⁸⁸² "We gaze on the innocent beauty of childhood with love and admiration. What if that beauty should be marred by the taint of evil? What if those who do the Tempter's work should cause the "little one" to stumble and to fall? This form of execution deprives the dead of all rites of burial."⁸⁸³

"Shall offend; cause to stumble - give occasion for a fall, i.e., either in faith or morals. The punishment seems to have been reserved for the greatest criminals; and the size of the stone would prevent any chance of the body rising again to the surface and being buried by friends - a consideration which, in the minds of heathens, greatly increased the horror of this kind of death."⁸⁸⁴

The 'offense' to a child is primarily any stumbling block which draws the child away from God. It would include false doctrine, and more importantly that the offender would negatively influence the child by an ungodly life-style. Any sexual abuse would obviously mar the child's view of God and would create fear and mistrust for the rest of their lives.

⁸⁸² Matt. 18: 6

⁸⁸³ Ellicott

⁸⁸⁴ Pulpit

Commentary

Sexual abuse leaves deep scars on all that are involved, including family and friends.

Article #10

Faith Based Ministry

An eye-witness's Account of the Crucifixion⁸⁸⁵

Christ's Finished and Unfinished Work⁸⁸⁶

One of these sayings was spoken from the Cross, the other from the Throne. The Speaker of both is the same. In the one, His voice 'then shook the earth,' as the rending rocks testified; in the other, His voice 'will shake not the earth only but also heaven'; for 'new heavens and a new earth' accompanied the proclamation. In the one, like some traveler ready to depart, who casts a final glance over his preparations, and, satisfied that nothing is omitted, gives his charioteer the signal and rolls away, Jesus Christ looked back over His life's work, and, knowing that it was accomplished, summoned His servant Death, and departed. In the other, He sets His seal to the closed book of the world's history, and ushers in a renovated universe.

⁸⁸⁵ MacLaren's
Expositions

⁸⁸⁶ John 19: 30; Rev.
21: 6

The one masks the completion of the work on which the world's redemption rests, the other marks the completion of the age-long process by which the world's redemption is actually realized. The one proclaims that the foundation is laid, the other that the headstone is set on the finished building. The one bids us trust in a past perfected work; the other bids us hope in the perfect accomplishment of the results of that work. Taken singly, these sayings are grand; united, they suggest thoughts needed always, never more needful than to-day.

I. We see here the work which was finished on the Cross.

The Evangelist gives great significance to the words of my first text, as is shown by His statement in a previous verse: 'Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, said, I thirst,' and then-'It is finished.'

That is to say, there is something in that dying voice a great deal deeper and more wonderful than the ordinary human utterance with which a dying man might say, 'It is all over now. I have done,' for this utterance came from the consciousness that all things had been accomplished by Him, and that He had done His life's work.

Now, there, taking the words even in their most superficial sense, we come upon the strange peculiarity which marks off the life of Jesus Christ from every other life that was ever lived. There are no loose ends left, no unfinished tasks drop from His nerveless hands, to be taken up and carried on by others. His life is a rounded whole, with everything accomplished that had been endeavored, and everything done that had been commanded. 'His hands have laid the foundation; His hands shall also finish.' He alone of the sons of men, in the deepest sense, completed His task, and left nothing for successors. The rest of us are taken away when we have reared a course or two of the structure, the dream of building which brightened our youth. The pen drops from paralyzed hands in the middle of a sentence, and a fragment of a book is left. The painter's brush falls with his palette at the foot of his easel, and but the outline of what he conceived is on the canvas. All of us leave tasks half done, and have to go away before the work is completed. The half-polished columns that lie at Baalbec are but a symbol of the imperfection of every human life. But this Man said, 'It is finished,' and 'gave up the ghost.' Now, if we ponder on what lies in that consciousness of completion, I think we find, mainly, three things: Obedience; Revelation and; Atonement.

A. Christ rendered a complete obedience. All through His life we see Him, hearing with the inward ear the solemn voice of the Father, and responding to it with that 'I must' which runs through all His days, from the earliest dawning of consciousness, when He startled His mother with 'I must be about My Father's business,' until the very last moments. In that obedience to the all-present necessity which He cheerfully embraced and perfectly discharged, there was no flaw. He alone of men looks back upon a life in which His clear consciousness detected neither transgression nor imperfection.

In the midst of His career, He could front His enemies with 'Which of you convinced Me of sin?' and no man then, and no man in all the generations that have elapsed since-though some have been blind enough to try it, and malicious enough to utter their attempts, has been able to answer the challenge. In the midst of His career He said, 'I do always the things that please Him'; and nobody then or since has been able to lay his finger upon an act of His in which, either by excess or defect, or contrariety, the will of God has not been fully represented. At the beginning of His career He said, in answer to the Baptist's remonstrance, 'It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.'

At the end of His career He looked back, and knowing that He had thus done what became Him-namely, fulfilled it all-He said, 'It is finished!'

B. The utterance further expresses Christ's consciousness of having completed the revelation of God. Jesus Christ has made known the Father, and the generations since have added nothing to His revelation. The very people, to-day, that turn away from Christianity, in the name of higher conceptions of the divine nature, owe their conceptions of it to the Christ from whom they turn. Not in broken syllables; not 'at sundry times and in divers manners,' but with the one perfect, full-toned name of God on His lips, and vocal in His life, He has declared the Father unto us. In the course of His career He said, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father'; and, looking back on His life of manifestation of God, He proclaimed, 'It is finished!' And the world has since, with all its thinking, added nothing to the name which Christ has declared.

C. The utterance farther expresses His consciousness of having made a completed, atoning Sacrifice. Remember that the words of my first text followed that awful cry that came from the darkness, show us the waves and billows rolling over His head.

‘My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ In that infinitely pathetic and profound utterance, to the interpretation of which our powers go but a little way, Jesus Christ blends together, in the most marvelous fashion, desolation and trust, the consciousness that God is His God, and the consciousness that He is bereft of the light of His presence. Brethren! I know of no explanation of these words which does justice to both the elements that are intertwined so intimately in them, except the old one, which listens to Him as they come from His quivering lip, and says, ‘The Lord hath made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all.’

Having drained the cup, He held it up inverted when He said ‘It is finished!’ and not a drop trickled down the edge. He drank it that we might never need to drink it; and so, His dying voice proclaimed that ‘by one offering for sin forever,’ He ‘obtained eternal redemption’ for us.

II. Now, secondly, note the work which began from the Cross.

Between my two texts lie untold centuries, and the whole development of the consequences of Christ’s death, like some great valley stretching between twin mountain-peaks on either side, which from some points of view will be foreshortened and invisible.

When gazed down upon, it seems to stretch widely leagues broad, from mountain ridge to mountain ridge. So my two texts, by the fact that millenniums have to interpose between the time when 'It is finished!' is spoken, and the time when 'It is done!' can be proclaimed from the Throne, imply that the interval is filled by a continuous work of our Lord's, which began at the moment when the work on the Cross ended.

Now it has very often been the case, as I take leave to think, that the interpretation of the former of these two texts has been of such a kind as to distort the perspective of Christian truth, and to obscure the fact of that continuous work of our Lord's. Therefore, it may not be out of place if, in a sentence or two, I recall to you the plain teaching of the New Testament upon this matter. 'It is finished!' Yes; and as the lower course of some great building is but the foundation for the higher, when 'finished' it is but begun.

The work which, in one aspect, is the close, in another aspect is the commencement of Christ's further activity. What did He say Himself, when He was here with His disciples? 'I will not leave you comfortless.' What was the last word that came fluttering down, like an olive leaf, into the bosoms of the men as they stood with uplifted faces gazing upon Him as He disappeared? 'Lo! I Am with you always, even to the end of the ages.'

What is the keynote of the book which carries on the story of the Gospels in the history of the militant Church? 'The former treatise have I made. . . of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was taken up'-and, being taken up, continued, in a new form, both the doing and the teaching.

Who is it that 'adds to the Church daily such as were being saved?' The Lord.

Who is it that opened the hearts of the hearers to the message? The Lord.

Who is it that flings wide the prison-gates when His persecuted servants are in chains? The Lord.

Who is it that bids one man attach himself to the chariot of the eunuch of Ethiopia, and another man go and bear witness in Rome? The Lord.

Through the whole of the Book of Acts there runs the keynote, as its dominant thought, that men are but the instruments, and the Hand that wields them is Christ's, and that He who wrought the finished work that culminated on Calvary is operating a continuous work through the ages from His Throne.

Revelation opens with a view of the ascended Christ 'walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks, and holding the stars in His right hand;' which further draws aside the curtains of the heavenly sanctuary.

Now we see 'the Lamb in the midst of the Throne,' opening the seven seals-that is to say, setting loose for their progress through the world the forces that make the history of humanity, and which culminates in the vision of the final battle in which the Incarnate Word of God goes forth to victory, with all the armies of heaven following Him.

Are not its whole spirit and message that Jesus Christ, the Lamb who is the Antagonist of the Beast, is working through all the history of the world, and will work till its kingdoms are 'become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ?'

Now, that continuous operation of Jesus Christ in the midst of men is not to be weakened down to the mere continued influence of the truths which He proclaimed, or the Gospel which He brought. There is something a great deal more than the diminishing vibrations of a force long since set in operation, and slowly ceasing to act. Dead teachers do still 'rule our spirits from their urns'; but it is no dead Christ who, by the influence of what He did when He was living, sways the world and comforts His Church; it is a living Christ who to-day is working in His people, by His Spirit. Further, He works on the world through His people by the Word; they plant and water, He 'gives the increase.'

And He is working in the world, for His Church and for the world, by His wielding of all power that is given to Him, in heaven and on earth. So that the work that is done upon earth He doeth it all Himself; and Christian people unduly limit the sphere of Christ's operations when they look back only to the Cross, and talk about a 'finished work' there, and forget that that finished work there is but the vestibule of the continuous work that is being done to-day.

Christian people! The present work of Christ needs working servants. We are here in order to carry on His work. The Apostle ventured to say that he was appointed 'to fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ'; we may well venture to say that we are here mainly to apply to the world the benefits resulting from the finished work upon the Cross. The accomplishment of redemption, and the realization of the accomplished redemption, are two wholly different things. Christ has done the one. He says to us, 'You are honored to help Me to do the other.' According to the accurate rendering of a great saying of the Old Testament, 'Take no rest, and give Him no rest, till He establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, Christ's work is finished; there is nothing for us to do with it but trust it.

Christ's work is going on; come to His help. Ye are fellow-labourers with and to the Incarnate Truth.

III. I need not say more than a word about the third thought, suggested by these texts-viz., the completion of the work which began on the Cross. 'It is done!' That lies, no man knows how far, ahead of us. As surely as astronomers tell us that all this universe is hastening towards a central point, so surely 'that far-off divine event' is that 'to which the whole creation moves.' It is the blaze of light which fills the distant end of the dim vista of human history. Its elements are in part summed up in the context-the tabernacle of God with men, the perfected fellowship of the human with the divine, the housing of men in the very home and heart of God; 'a new heaven and a new earth,' a renovated universe; the removal of all evil, suffering, sorrow, sin, and tears. These things are to be, and shall be, when He says 'It is done!'

Brethren! nothing else than such an issue can be the end of Creation, for nothing else than such is the purpose of God for man, and God is not going to be beaten by the world and the devil. Nothing else than such can be the issue of the Cross; for 'He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.'

Christ is not going to labour in vain, and spend His life, and give His breath and His blood for nought.

Nothing but the work finished on the Cross guarantees the coming of that perfected issue. I know not where else there is hope for mankind, looking on the history of humanity, except in that great message, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come, has died, lives forever, and is the world's King and Lord.

So for ourselves, in regard to the one part of the work, let us listen to Him saying 'It is finished!' abandon all attempts to eke it out by additions of our own, and cast ourselves on the finished Revelation, the finished Obedience, the finished Atonement, made once for all on the Cross. But as for the continuous work going on through the ages, let us cast ourselves into it with earnestness, self-sacrifice, consecration, and continuity, for we are fellow-workers with Christ, and Christ will work in, with, and for us if we will work for Him.⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸⁷ MacLaren's
Expositions



In Summation:

A Righteous Assessment

"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! God is with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. Have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. Strive always to keep our conscience clear before God and man.

Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you. Be filled with the Spirit. Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if we have a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Make petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving for all people that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."⁸⁸⁸

PUBLICATIONS

Website: <https://pvhz.angelfire.com/>

The Master's Work Series

Epochs 5, 6 & 7 available at Amazon.com (Kindle and Paperback).

https://www.amazon.com/Crucible-Time-Scenario-Masters-Work-ebook/dp/B09ZSNHZPR/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2P7YFSMSF2KC&keywords=the+crucible+john+abbott&qid=1688473139&s=books&sprefix=the+crucible+john+abbott%2Cs-tripbooks%2C77&sr=1-1

⁸⁸⁸ 2 Cor. 5: 17; Ps.
119: 97, 140; Is. 57:
15; 1 John 1: 9;

Acts 24: 16; Matt. 6:
33; Eph. 5: 3, 4; Col.
3: 12, 13; 1 Tim. 2: 1

The Crucible Series (YouTube)

The Crucible 001: <https://youtu.be/nCsHnc2f3iA>

The Crucible 002: <https://youtu.be/XtszbJykvSM>

The Crucible 003: <https://youtu.be/hW2dboeBm50>

The Crucible 004: <https://youtu.be/gTn-M4oXaDw>

Provisionheirz

7/4/23

PVHZ

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, thanks be to God for blessing, mercy, and inspiration. Thanks be to God for world-wide experiences which provided experience and knowledge of the church of many cultures.

This writer is grateful for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in life and spiritual growth.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my wife Rita who sacrificed family time that this book could be completed.

I am grateful for experiences, good and bad as well as the example of others, both good and bad.

It is this writers' sincere desire that this 'Journal' will be inspirational and beneficial for all who read it. Personally, I have grown and changed for the good in many areas because of the challenge of these pages! I hope it will encourage, challenge and draw others closer to God.

It is my prayer that all scriptures referenced and applied are 'rightly divided' and contextual. May God bless and keep till the day of His appearing.

See you on the other side. Until then, may you have the best 'spiritual health', according to His riches in glory.