



Twenty Sixth Annual
Truth In Love
Lectureship

Jonathan Burns, Editor

Hosted by the
East Hill Church of Christ

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Introduction

For twenty six years the Truth In Love Lectureship has stood with the Word of God and presented the truth on five hundred and two different topics. This volume represents the first lectureship I have been able to oversee and sixteen more topics will be presented. Completing a project of this size takes many hours, several phone calls for advice, wonderful leadership from my elders, and so much help from many dedicated Christians.

This theme would be appropriate any time but is especially important today. The emphasis of our day is self and self-seeking. Self-assertion is proclaimed through the land that we love. A great number of Americans (like the Athenians in Paul's day—Acts 17:21) are fascinated almost to the point of obsession with new gadgets, new ideas, new movements and new approaches. This mentality has spilled over into the way we view the Most High God. Religion has been turned into a self-serving religion. It seems that God is the servant and men are the masters. Thus we will study the theme: "To God Be The Glory."

Men in our lifetime and for thousands of years have disputed over these questions: Why are we here? In other words, what purpose do we have? Do we simply live upon this earth to gather material gain in order to have a good time? Do we exist simply to satisfy our own desires and wishes? The Bible answers these questions in such a way that no soul could misunderstand. The Psalmist penned:

Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the
LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD
the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD

Introduction

in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the LORD
is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth:
the LORD is upon many waters (Psa. 29:1-3).

God deserves the glory from His creation.

This book would not be possible without the help from many people at East Hill: Linda Ball, Kelley Burns, Beth Cooper, Chris Stampfly, Suzanna Stampfly, Steffany Woodard, Heather Woodard, & Mark Woodard. Without each of these amazing people I could not have put this book together and I am so thankful for them.

Of course, without the willingness of our speakers to take the time to write a manuscript, there would be no need to thank anyone else, Each speaker had to, in addition to his regular responsibilities to the local church, and his family, find the time to do the research and writing necessary for this project. I am humbled and thankful for their dedication to the Lord's work.

To the reader, we hope that this book will help you find ways to serve the Almighty God. "To God Be The Glory."

~ Jonathan Burns
Editor 2016

Dedication

For sixty five years the East Hill Church of Christ has stood as a beacon of truth in the Giles County area. Over the years many wonderful people have come and gone. Some have been born and others have passed away. **Mrs. Dot Cheatham** and **Mrs. Katherine Whitworth** have shown me the value of Christian service over the last two years.



Here are a few qualities they exemplified daily:

Daily Prayer (1 Thess. 5:17),
Daily Study (2 Timothy 2:15),
Daily Love (Matthew 22:37),
Daily Zeal (2 Corinthians 7:11), Daily Teaching (Acts 2:42),
Daily Service (Luke 9:23), Daily Giving (2 Corinthians 8),
Daily Example (Matt. 5:16), Daily Faith (Romans 1:16-17),
Daily Work (1 Cor. 15:58), &
Daily Purity (Matthew 5:8).



Mrs. Dot Cheatham and **Mrs. Katherine Whitworth** both passed away recently and they will forever be etched into the Hebrews 11 of my mind. Thanks be to God for wonderful Christian examples. Remember: "To God Be The Glory."

~ Jonathan Burns

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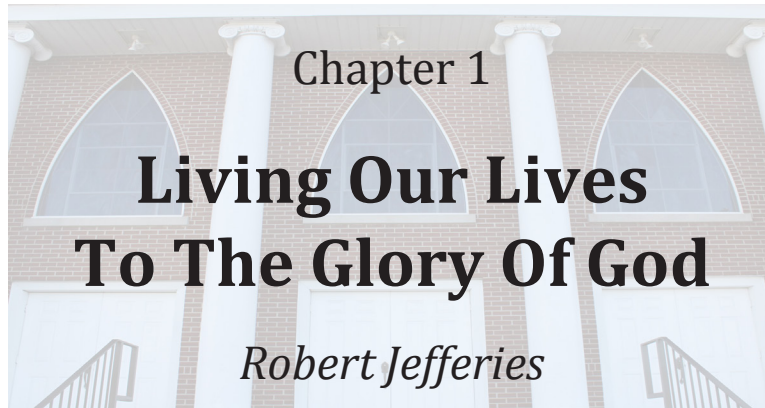
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What an honor and privilege it is to be asked to speak on the great Truth in Love Lectureship and to be able to contribute a chapter to the book "To God Be The Glory." I am thankful for your good elders as well as to your preacher, Jonathan Burns, for the invitation. Secondly, I am thankful for your godly elders with their long stance for the truth and for the shining light that the East Hill congregation strives to be, not only to the Pulaski, TN area, but also to the entire world.

The theme selected for this year's lectureship is one that is very timely. The title is taken from the hymn, "To God Be The Glory," which was written in 1875 by Fanny J. Crosby (www.hymnary.org). However, long before the writing of this song, the apostle Paul through his inspired pen directed our minds to the glory of God when he wrote,

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father,
and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave
himself for our sins, that he might deliver us
from this present evil world, according to the

will of God and our Father: To whom be glory
for ever and ever (Gal. 1:3-5).

For this particular study, we want to center our attention upon the topic “Living Our Lives to the Glory of God.” To do so, we want to answer four questions from God’s Word. (1) What does it mean to glorify God? (2) Why should I glorify God? (3) How can I glorify God? (4) Is there an example of one who lived his life to the glory of God?

What Does It Mean To Glorify God?

The word glorify in all its forms is found sixty-three times in the New Testament. It is taken from the Greek word “*doxazo*” which is a verb that is defined as “to magnify, extol, or praise.” It can also mean “to ascribe honor to” (Vine, 267). There are times when it is translated into the English words magnify or honor. In essence, when one glorifies God, they bring honor to Him by magnifying and praising Him.

Consider the following verses that reference a few of the occasions where the Scriptures speak about God being glorified. When the apostle Paul wrote the first inspired letter to the Corinthians notice what he says about glorifying God, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). Did you pay close attention to the last part of that passage? In every aspect of life, we are to bring honor to and magnify God. In the Gospel account of John, Jesus said, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:8). Jesus lets us know

that glorifying God is accomplished when we bear much fruit in our life. It was our Lord who said that by a person's fruit they are known (Matt. 7:20). Are we bringing honor to God or the devil in our life?

Why Should I Live My Life To The Glory Of God?

In the midst of Paul's first inspired letter to the Corinthians, the apostle helps us to answer our question. Notice what he writes, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20). Three key points help us to understand why we are to live our lives to the glory of God.

First, we have been purchased (Winkler, p. 33). As Christians, we have been bought with a price from the slavery of sin. We have been purchased with the highest of prices: the death of Jesus and the shedding of His precious blood. Notice what is recorded in Matthew's account of the Gospel, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). Later in the New Testament, Peter affirms the following words,

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:18-19).

If there is no other reason to glorify God this is reason enough. Someone loved me so much that He was willing

to die for me. In fact, during the middle part of the 2nd century, while in the midst of persecution, Polycarp proclaimed these famous words, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and he never did me any injury; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior" (www.christianity.com). He understood that he had been purchased by the blood of Christ and even in death Polycarp was going to live to the glory of God.

Second, we have a purpose (Winkler, p. 33). Our purpose is to glorify God in our bodies. This was not a suggestion or a recommendation. This is something that is commanded and expected of a child of God. In the context it would have to deal with living a pure life, and fleeing from certain things.

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body (1 Cor. 6:18).

Third, we have been possessed (Winkler, p. 33). Since we have been purchased by the blood of Jesus, we now belong to God. Some may say, "it is my body, and I will do what I want to with it." Please understand, you did not hear that from God. That is not a statement that can be found in His Word. The Scriptures teach us that we are now God's property. My body, life, mind, and heart belong to God (Bill Jackson, p. 56). Do others see that my life belongs to God? When we refuse to use them to participate in sinful things, and reserve them for obedience to God (p. 205, Gareth Reese), it shows to whom we belong.

How Can I Live My Life To The Glory Of God?

It Will Be Seen In My Life. In order to glorify God, one must first understand that it is not about self. Jesus proclaimed,

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, **let him deny himself**, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (Luke 9:23, emphasis added).

The apostle Paul wrote a very similar message to the Corinthians,

And that he died for all, **that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves**, but unto him which died for them, and rose again (2 Cor. 5:15, emphasis added).

If one is going to be a follower of Christ, one must understand that they are no longer the guide for their lives. When one becomes a Christian, he no longer looks at life the same way, because his devotions have changed. The reason being, Paul says we are a “new creature in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:17). When one is a new creature his affections will change as well.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col 3:1-2).

One will be interested in spiritual things that help him grow closer to God. Furthermore, in writing to the Romans, Paul stated that when we obey the Gospel certain things happen.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; even so **we also should walk in newness of life** (Rom. 6:3-4, emphasis added).

A second way that it is seen in our life, one must understand that Jesus is to be the center of the Christian's life. The apostle Paul wrote,

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20).

In a related passage, he penned these words to the brethren at Philippi, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). The apostle Peter uses some similar wording to that of Paul's, "That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Peter 4:2). A Christian's life falls into two distinct categories. One's life before obedience, and one's life after obedience to the Gospel. Afterwards, it is a life in service to God. It is important for one to remember, the past cannot be changed, but our future can.

Thirdly, when one lives their life to the glory of God, it will be seen in a person's actions. When the apostle Paul wrote to the brethren at Ephesus, he talked about the old man and the new man. There are certain things that must be put off, and then there are certain things that are to be put in place in the new man's life. Notice what he writes,

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Eph. 4:25-32).

Fourthly, when one lives their life to the glory of God it will be seen in one's example. How many people have an influence? Everyone. How many people have an example? Everyone. Every single person has an influence and an example that is either good or bad. Our examples are like magnets, they will either attract someone to Christ or repel them from Him. Notice what Paul told Timothy about the importance of an example and the areas to be an example, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).

It Will Be Seen In My Habits. A habit is something that is done with regularity. A habit can be something that is good or bad. Let's make sure that we have some regular

spiritual habits that are a part of our lives that help us to live to the glory of God. First, let's be sure that we are in the habit of daily Bible study. When the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy notice carefully what he says about this subject, "Till I come, **give attendance to reading**, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:13, emphasis added). Two verses later Paul writes, "**Meditate** upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. 4:15, emphasis added). The word "meditate" means "to resolve in the mind" (Strong's). When one resolves in the mind, it means that they are thinking about the things that they have read. How many times have you ever read a Bible passage at night or possibly first thing in the morning, and you thought about it throughout the day at work, school, or around the house?

Another related Bible passage that comes to mind is in Paul's second inspired letter to Timothy where he writes,

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15, emphasis added).

When Paul says to study, this is not something that God is recommending or suggesting for us to do. Study is a command that God expects of us. This is the way that the God of Heaven communicates to the universe. Let's be sure that we make this a daily habit in our life. However, some may say, "Well, I just do not have the time to study. I'm too busy." Most people find time to watch TV, read the newspaper, surf the internet, talk on the phone, text, etc...If we can find time for all of these things, but cannot find time

to take a few minutes each day to study from God's Word than we need to check our priorities. There is nothing wrong with being busy. However, when we are too busy to make time for God, our priorities are misplaced. Let's make sure that we do not crowd out the things of most importance in our life.

Perhaps you struggle with daily Bible reading, here are a few suggestions to consider: (1) Find a daily Bible reading program and stick to it. It may be finding one on the internet, it may be reading nine chapters each day in the New Testament (with this method you will read through the New Testament completely in one month, which translates into twelve times a year), or read a proverb a day that corresponds to the calendar day of the month. (2) Another idea to consider might be to write down topics that are of interest to you and do a topical Bible study, by searching out the related Bible passages that go with that topic. How often should I study God's Word? Take a few minutes **daily**. Let's be like those noble Bereans,

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).

One person said to read God's Word every day that you eat. Most people eat everyday, so that means that we need to let God feed us with His Word each day. What happens if we neglect to make time to study God's Word? Our spiritual body will eventually go through an emaciation process, which means, that we are depriving our soul of the most

important nutrients needed to survive. Let's make sure that we have a longing desire for God's Word, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

Second, let's be in the habit of having a healthy prayer life. What if you could sit down and have a conversation with anyone of your choosing, who would it be? The President? The Queen of England? A famous athlete? Your favorite singer? Your favorite actor? What if I were to tell you that the Creator of the universe longs to have a conversation with you. The way that God communicates with us is through His Word. However, the way that we communicate with Him is through prayer. The Bible tells us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Does this mean that we are to pray every waking hour throughout the day? No. However, it does mean that we are to let talking to God be a natural part of our life. Prayer is vital to the life of a Christian. Some may neglect their prayer life because they do not know for what to pray. Perhaps you fall into this category.

Let me suggest to you the 5-fingered prayer. When you pray, think about your fingers and how they represent certain things for which to pray. Our thumb represents those who are closest to us, our family members and friends. Our index finger represents those who teach and instruct. Think about all the school teachers and Bible school teachers that teach our children. Our middle finger is our tallest finger and represents those who are in positions of leadership. Think about those who are leading in a secular way and also those who are spiritual leaders. Our ring finger is our weakest finger. Ask any piano player

what their weakest finger is and they will tell you their ring finger. This represents those who are sick or shut-in. Finally, our pinky finger, which represents praying for ourselves (www.sermons4kids.com). Hopefully these thoughts will help us to develop a better prayer life in the year 2016. Once you learn what to pray for, let me challenge you to pray five times a day. Once, when you wake up. Each time that you eat (most eat three times a day). Then, right before you go to bed.

Third, let's be in the habit of visiting. James wrote,

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To **visit** the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world (James 1:27, emphasis added).

What does it mean to visit? Most would suggest that it is simply making a social call to someone else. However, when we examine Luke's writing, it actually entails a little more than a social call.

And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and **visit our brethren** in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and **see how they do** (Acts 15:36, emphasis added).

The word "visit" means, "to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes" (Thayer's). When one considers the numerous "one another" passages of the New Testament, we see that we are members one of another (Rom. 5:12), love one another (Rom. 13:8), edify one another (Rom. 14:9), honor prefer one another (Rom. 12:10), compassion one to another (1 Peter 3:8), hospitality one to another (1

Peter 4:9), and all of these can be accomplished through visiting.

Fourth, let's be in the habit of growing spiritually. That means that we will never be content. The apostle Peter wrote,

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall (2 Peter 1:5-10).

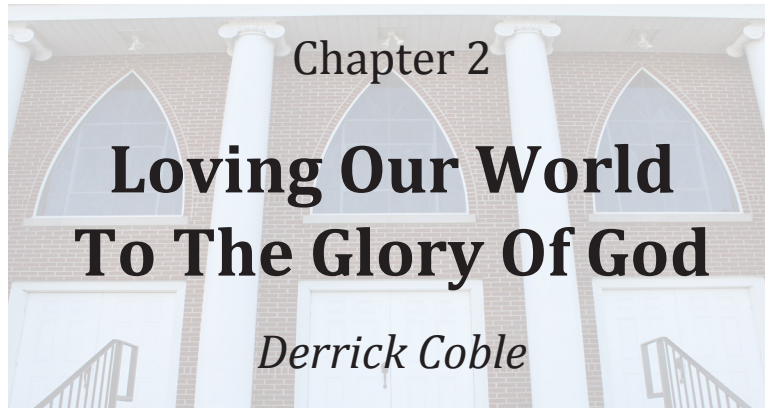
Conclusion

Dear Christian, when we sing the song "To God Be The Glory," does our life and habits demonstrate the words that we are singing? Does our life and habits magnify and bring honor to the God of Heaven or to the god of this world (John 8:44)? Jesus made it His mission in life while He was here upon this earth, to glorify the Father (John 17:4) Let's make it our number one goal in life to live our lives to the glory of God every single day.

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Living Our Lives To The Glory Of God



Introduction

In everything the child of God does, God's glory is always first and last on his mind (1 Cor. 10:31). According to Vines, "glory" (Gr. *doxa*) "primarily signifies an opinion, estimate, and hence, the honour resulting from a good opinion" (*Vines Expository Dictionary of NT Words*). To this thought Thayer adds, "magnificence, excellence, preeminence, and dignity" (*Thayer's Greek Definitions*). It involves recognizing God as God and treating Him as God (cf. Rom. 1:21) because God's glory is more important than man's glory. This is why the Savior said,

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16; KJV).

When sinners analyze the motives of Christians what do they see? Hopefully, they will see that each one truly desires to direct others to God and His Son. It is not worldly favor that will advance the love of God, but only the cross (1 Cor. 1:18). Think about the attitude of the apostle Paul and

how desperately it is needed amongst Christians today:

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal. 6:14).

Christians are called “to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:3). That glory is not personal, but the Lord’s own glory. It is manifested by virtue or moral goodness—lives that reflect humility, obedience, and praise to God by leading others to glorify Him out of love (1 Peter 4:11; Eph. 3:21).

God’s Love For The World

Perhaps, the best known verse in the Bible speaks about God’s love for the world.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

There are two important words that stand out in this verse. The first one is **LOVED**. The kind of love that God has for the world is termed in the Greek as *agape*. This type of love is the key to all our relationships with God and man. John said, “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him...We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:16,19). This love says, “I want what is best for you and I will stop at nothing to accomplish it.” It is a love that “moves in the interest of others with no thought for self” (Mayfield, 58). That is how God loves and how we are expected to show forth love.

With this in mind, it is important to note that God's love is for "the world" (Gr. *kosmos*). Some environmentalists have erroneously asserted that the "world" of John 3:16 "always included not only individuals, but also the whole creation" (Gibbs). How can the trees, plants, and animals believe in the Lord? Not only that, but God never promised that the physical world would be everlasting. In fact, Jesus said that the world would "pass away" (Matt. 24:35) and Peter revealed that "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). So, the world cannot include the physical creation—only individuals. Yet, there are other passages where "world" is used in a limited scope. Does that apply here? John indicated that the "whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19), but in the same verse he affirmed that those who were Christians were not lying in wickedness but "of God." Therefore, he was not talking about every person being wicked, but only those following the god of this world—Satan (2 Cor. 4:4). Jesus even told the apostles,

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you (John 15:19).

Here, the term does not denote all men, but only those who were wicked and worldly minded (Hastings 193). So who is it that God loved? Is God's love limited or universal? The truth is that God has shown His love for **all** humanity. Jesus is "the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but **also the sins of the whole world**" (1 John 2:2, emphasis DC). Paul made it clear that God loves the world so much He "will have all men to be saved, and to come

unto the knowledge of the truth” which is why Jesus “gave himself a ransom **for all**” (1 Tim. 2:4,6, emphasis DC). No wonder this verse has been called the “Golden Text” and “Everyman’s Text” (Butler 111).

The second word that stands out in the verse is **GAVE**. True love involves giving. We experience this in small ways such as: holidays where gifts are exchanged, giving/sacrificing for our children, volunteering our time to help others. Yet, God gave the ultimate gift—His only begotten Son: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Likewise, John wrote,

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him (1 John 4:9).

The world needs to know that God gave Jesus in the fullness of time out of love (Gal. 4:4). The world needs to know how unselfishly Jesus loved the world by humbling Himself and giving Himself to the death of the cross (Phil. 2:5-8). Wayne Jackson has rightly observed,

Giving is characteristic of God. He has given us life (Acts 17:25), and his gifts of providence are daily evident (Acts 14:17). He is the source of all good gifts (James 1:17), and the greatest was the gift of his Son. Seven centuries before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah announced: ‘...a child is born...a son is given...’ (9:6). Surely we must say with Paul: ‘Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift’ (2 Cor. 9:15) (*The Golden Text: A Study of John 3:16*).

God's love is so magnificent it reaches across the entire world! Christ suffered for sins once to bring us unto God (1 Peter 3:18). The world needs to know the love of the God of Heaven who offers anyone with obedient faith the hope of eternal life (Gal. 5:6; 1 John 5:11; Eph. 2:8,9; Col. 1:5; Titus 2:11,12).

The Christian's Love For The World

There is a sense in which Christians are commanded to withhold love from the world and a sense in which we should extend our love to the world. John wrote,

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15).

It seems contradictory at first; yet, John is not speaking about the people of the world, but the "world of sin." In other words, Christians cannot be actively participating in sinful worldliness—that would be extending fellowship against the will of God and making oneself God's enemy (Eph. 5:11; James 4:4). Yet, loving the souls (people) of the world is a different matter.

Every sinner in the world needs to know that Christians love them. Paul prayed for the church at Thessalonica to "increase and **abound in love** one toward another, and **toward all men**" (1 Thess. 3:12, emphasis DC). The love of which Paul speaks is the same love (Gr. *agape*) that God has for each person in the world and an example that all Christians today must follow. We can show this type of love to the lost souls of the world, despite the fact that they often hate us (1 John 3:13), because it goes

out to everyone—even those who are unworthy (Kelcy 77). By doing this, we are following the very footsteps of Christ (1 Peter 2:21).

How Do Christians Show Love For The World?

Remember, the key to God's love is giving and sacrifice. Thus, imitating that example, our love must be shown in the same manner. We show our love for God by giving ourselves to Him. The churches of Macedonia were commended for their generosity because "they first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8:5). Think about the impact the church would have in our world today if everyone had that same attitude! God does require our bodies in His service for His glory (Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:20); nonetheless, it takes a heart of love that is willing to be "crucified" with Him (Gal. 2:20). Imagine if every thought, action, and motive were given over to the Lord's control daily (1 Cor. 15:31). Without a doubt, there would be more dedication to God, less love for worldly lusts, and more love for the people of the world. So, what do we have to give to the world?

The Gospel

The greatest way to show forth our love is by giving others the good news that they can be saved from sin. As it has been said, "Christianity is not about what we can get, but what we can give." Salvation can only come through obedience to the Gospel (Rom. 1:16) and it is only in the church which Jesus purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The world needs to hear this from faithful men

and women in a spirit of love (Eph. 4:15). No one wants to think about living for an eternity in Hell (Matt. 25:46). That is why Jesus commanded us to “go...and preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15).

Although Christians realize that their friends, family, and neighbors need the Gospel, it seems that too many act as though “going” is not necessary. Multiple excuses are often made: “I don’t know enough,” “I am too uncomfortable,” “That is not my talent,” “I am too busy,” or “I don’t see the need.” Perhaps, it is necessary to be reminded that God does not command His children to do anything that is too difficult (1 John 5:3). A Christian can tell someone how to be saved by his own experiential knowledge. He can comfortably leave Gospel tracts/bulletins, etc. in conspicuous places or find a talent in teaching through the mail or over the internet. Christians can give priority time to the Lord amidst a busy schedule and remind himself there is a great need for the so called “churched” and the “unchurched” to hear God’s saving message. The bottom line is the Lord said He would build one church (Matt. 16:18), there is only one gospel (Gal. 1:6-8), and only one way to be saved (Acts 16:17). We are living in an age where some have departed from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1) and out of love; it is our responsibility to give them guidance into the narrow way.

Mercy

It can be extremely difficult to show love to those who do not seem to love us. This is where mercy steps in. God is rich in mercy and by mercy, He has shown His love for the world (Eph. 2:4). Mercy says, “I know you deserve

punishment, but I will withhold that from you, and try to share your feelings and be compassionate.” Jesus preached about the importance of mercy when He said, “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matt. 5:7). The enemies we have don’t care about us, but Jesus demands blessing them, doing good to them, and praying for them (Matt. 5:44). When neighbors treat us badly or our own family members disappoint us, the challenge is to respond without strife “in lowliness of mind” (Phil. 2:3).

When Jesus was approached by a certain Jewish “law expert” He was asked the question, “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:25,29). Answering this question, Jesus told a parable of a man (most likely a Jew) who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho and was struck by thieves and left half dead. He noted how a priest saw the wounded man and passed by on the other side. Then, how a Levite came and looked on the wounded man and also passed by on the other side. Finally, a Samaritan had compassion on the wounded man and immediately bandaged his wounds and brought him to an inn and took care of him (Luke 10:30-35). Jesus’ question was this: “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?” (Luke 10:36). It could easily be asked, “Which of the three showed love for the wounded man?” The answer from the Jewish lawyer is of interest. Instead of naming the Samaritan, he named his action: “And he said, He that shewed mercy on him” (Luke 10:37). The world notices when we respond lovingly! Jesus commanded, “Go and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37). The Jews and the Samaritans were enemies because of their distant heritage. Jews were considered pure descendants of Abraham, while the

Samaritans were considered as “half-breeds” due to the intermarrying of God’s people amongst other nations after Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom (Orr). Every person has been an enemy of God at some point in time, but God has shown His mercy (Rom. 5:10; 1 Tim. 1:12,13). The enemies of the cross today need all the mercy (pity, sympathy, and compassion) that Christians can possibly give. The mercy we extend might mean the difference between salvation and condemnation:

And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear (Jude 22,23, ASV).

Unity

God has emphasized unity throughout the Scriptures. David wrote about how good and pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity (Psa. 133:1). Paul emphasized that Christians should be of the “same mind” (Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 1:10). Peter also said, “be ye all of one mind” (1 Peter 3:8). But, how does this show the world we love them? When Jesus prayed to the Father for us, He specifically said,

That **they all may be one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: **that the world may believe** that thou hast sent me...that they **may be perfect in one**; and that the **world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them** (John 17:21,23 emphasis DC).

If Christians can show unity to the world, it will help the world to believe in Christ and in the love that God has for

them! Think about it. What person desires to be a part of a broken and divided family that seems to always be arguing and in disagreement with one another? Would you say that love is lacking in that family because of discord? Would the father of that family be known for his love? With the same reasoning, why would any sinner want to give up his rebellious lifestyle to be a part of a Christian family that is equally rebellious with envy, strife, and division (cf. 1 Cor. 3:3)? That person would have no reason to believe in the power of Christ to break down hostility and make peace (Eph. 2:15). Furthermore, that person would have no reason to believe that God truly loves him (cf. 1 John 4:7). That is why those who sow discord among brethren are an abomination to God (Prov. 6:19).

God desires that His people are united by love so that the world knows we are followers of Christ (John 13:34,35). The current trend of dividing into thousands of denominational groups is foreign to the Scriptures and the glory that Jesus has given His church (John 17:22). The measure of glory that the church possesses is to be a reflection of the unity that exists between the Father and Son (John 10:30). The Father's plan was salvation through Jesus (1 Thess. 5:9) and Jesus was united with this (John 14:6). The Father's doctrine and Jesus' doctrine were the same (John 7:16) as Jesus avowed that He would only do the will of the Father (John 6:38). Our purpose is to show the world that we are speaking the same thing without personal glory, personal preferences, or pride (cf. Prov. 29:23; 1 Cor. 1:10). The world should see that the church loves one another and desires the mind of Jesus in all things (Phil. 2:5). Various doctrines, unhealthy cravings

for controversy and constant friction among God's people will never glorify God nor bring the world to Christ (1 Tim. 6:3-5).

Impartiality

It should never be forgotten that Jesus gave His life "a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). That means the Gospel is not limited to one race, class, country, or gender. Favoritism has no place in the life of a child of God who truly loves the souls of men. It is truly devastating to the Lord's church when congregations "limit" evangelistic efforts to exclude "poor" areas, exhibit racial prejudice, or refuse to extend the Lord's invitation to homosexuals, drunkards, adulterers, thieves, etc. The apostle Paul never knew of such restrictions as he converted some of the Corinthian Christians who had once practiced those very sins (1 Cor. 6:9-11). It is also harmful to the body of Christ when those who attend worship are judged solely by the way they dress (James 2:2-4). James commanded that we show no "respect of persons" nor make distinctions (James 2:1,4). Have we forgotten that Jesus did not come to "call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13)? Have we forgotten that we were purged from our old sins because we lack love (2 Peter 1:7,9)? There are no distinctions whatsoever in Christ (Gal. 3:28).

This was the heart of Peter's connection with the household of Cornelius (Acts 10). God's law demanded that Israel show kindness to those who were "strangers" (not of Hebrew nationality). Moses recorded, "thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt"

(Exo. 23:9). Yet, even though this law was in place, Israel still developed an attitude of superiority over the Gentiles. The sacrificial love of Jesus would change all of that to allow the “strangers and foreigners” to be “fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19). Therefore, the Gentile Cornelius was told to send for Peter; “Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:14). God helped Peter see that all men should have the opportunity to obey the Gospel since “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:35; cf. Rom. 2:11).

Conclusion

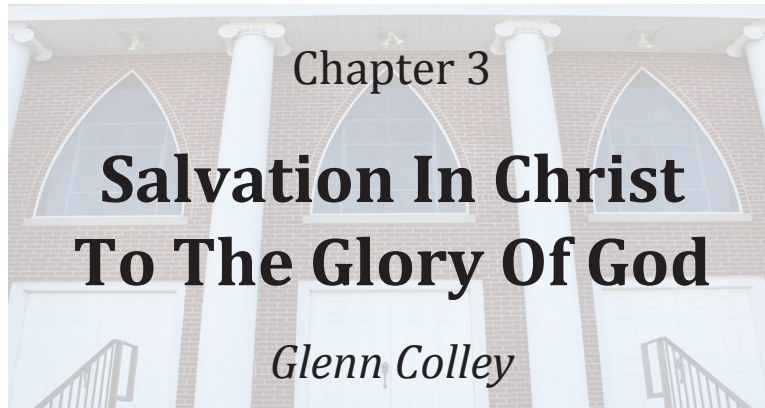
The ultimate goal of every child of God is to love Him supremely and keep His commandments (John 14:15)—to have a home in the everlasting Kingdom (2 Peter 1:11). To do this, it involves denying ourselves and manifesting the spirit of sacrificial love as the Lord has done (Matt. 16:24; 1 John 3:16).

Love ever gives.
Forgives, outlives,
And ever stands
With open hands.
And while it lives,
It gives,
For this is love’s prerogative—
To give, and give, and give (Oxenham).

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Loving Our World To The Glory Of God



Isaiah 53 is generally regarded by Christians as the mountain peak of Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. It has been called “The heart of the Old Testament,” and “The gospel in the Old Testament.” For centuries now it has been the golden chapter foretelling the suffering of our Savior in glorification of His father.

Jesus was glorified in the cross. In John 11:4, when Jesus was told that Lazarus was gravely ill, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” It was the raising of Lazarus that facilitated the crucifixion (John 11:53).

The Father was glorified by the cross of His Son, and Isaiah plainly declares it in chapter 53:10-11,

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his

knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

This lesson is centered on Isaiah 53; the salvation in Christ that glorified His Father.

The Ethiopian asked Philip to whom Isaiah was referring in Isaiah 53. Perhaps if one studied this chapter by itself, it would be difficult to determine the identity of the servant referenced here. But studying the New Testament makes it quite obvious. Over and over, Jesus applied Isaiah 53 to Himself.

And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought (Mark 9:12).

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end (Luke 22:37).

And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? ³¹And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. ³²The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before

his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: ³³In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. ³⁴And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus (Acts 8:30-35).

Consider next that the author's primary concern is not with the servant's suffering, but rather with His amazing triumph over suffering. All the various references to His suffering, therefore, are translated in the past tense. On the other hand, the verbs that speak of His triumph and glory are translated in the future tense.

Pay attention to the fact that the vindication of this man described in Isaiah 53 comes after His death. His death is not defeat, but victory. It is His noblest achievement and the means by which people can be reconciled to God. It is the act which made God's offer of salvation possible.

Notice this wonderful prophetic text:

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? (vs. 1, emphasis added).

The ASV says, "Who hath believed our message?" Stated literally "our message" is "that which we have heard." The message refers to the communications which had been made respecting the Messiah.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things

spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? (John 12:36-38).

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him (vs. 2, emphasis added).

The description, "...as a tender plant" means that Jesus would be humble and unpretentious in His origin. It pictures His beginnings as being somewhat fragile, especially when combined with, "...As a root out of dry ground." Exposed to the elements, a massive Jewish headwind of resistance He would encounter when He taught, it seems unlikely that He would survive.

"He hath no form nor comeliness." Despite the many beautiful paintings of our Lord created in the imagination and on the canvases of artists, there was in His external appearance no such beauty as to lead men to follow Him. He didn't stand out in a crowd and draw attention like someone as tall as King Saul or as handsome as King David. It was necessary for Judas to identify Jesus with a betrayal kiss in the garden of Gethsemane instead of merely telling our Lord's enemies, "He is the one who is extraordinarily tall and handsome." He wasn't. In fact, the New Testament gives no hint of His physical appearance. The reason, presumably, is to prevent any painting, statue,

or figure of Jesus to be considered a correct rendering. In view of the massive number of imaginary depictions of Jesus in Catholicism and other faiths, some even being worshipped, imagine what men would have done if they had actually known what He looked like.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not (vs. 3, emphasis added).

Our Lord was the object of scorn, ridicule, envy, and contempt. It is hard to imagine the darling Son of God, who is our Creator (John 1:1-3), being described in these awful terms. He was “rejected of men,” and not just the lowly ones; the original word for “men” here implies “men of importance.” Perhaps Isaiah used that word with his prophetic eyes on the chief priests:

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: ⁴³For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:42-43).

He was a “...man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” The Hebrew word employed here, “sorrows,” is commonly used both of physical and mental pain. Remarkably, Jesus’ life was so filled with suffering and heartaches that it can truly be said by the prophet that sorrow was the main characteristic of the Savior on earth.

There are three occasions in the Scripture where it is recorded that Jesus shed tears:

Jesus wept (John 11:35).

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation (Luke 19:41-44).

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared (Heb. 5:7-8).

“...And we esteemed Him not.” We (speaking in synecdoche), the human race, esteemed Him as nothing. We did not value him. In order to give greater energy to a declaration, Hebrew writers would often express a thing positively and then negatively, and that emphasis was employed here: The positive is “...he was despised.” The negative is, “...we esteemed Him not.”

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken,

smitten of God, and afflicted (vs. 4, emphasis added).

Those who saw Jesus suffering imagined that God was punishing Him because of His own sins. Were it not for revelation, we might have thought so, too. Yet, the truth of the matter makes all the difference in making us love and follow Him; “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed (vs. 5, emphasis added).

Notice the five times the word “our” occurs in verses 4-5. It underscores the fact that what’s under consideration is vicarious suffering; “He hath borne **our** griefs,” and carried **our** sorrows...He was wounded for **our** transgressions... bruised for **our** iniquities... the chastisement of **our** peace was upon him” (emp. mine, GC). The suffering was for us; in our place.

He was “wounded.” The Hebrew word simply means “pierced or wounded.” “Wounded” carries the idea of painful piercing and it refers to some infliction of physical wounds on the body; not merely emotional sorrows. It takes our minds to Zechariah 12:10,

...and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

“The chastisement of our peace” refers to the chastisement that procured or purchased our peace. “Peace” here refers to a right relationship with God. This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote, “For He is our peace” (Eph. 2:14). We have that peace or reconciliation to God when we make contact with the forgiving blood of Jesus. John the author of Revelation wrote, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5).

“With His stripes we are healed.” Again, observe that Peter reaches back into Isaiah’s historic prophesy and proves it to be inspired when he, reflecting back to the cross, writes,

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (1 Peter 2:24).

As you eat the Lord’s supper, let these six words go deeply into your heart. With each lash of the whip, His injury resulted in my healing. He did for me what I could never have done for myself. As one man observed, “He, being infinite, did in a finite amount of time what I, being finite, would have suffered for an infinite amount of time.”

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (vs. 6, emphasis added).

This has reference, not to merely a portion of the human race, but indicates, rather, that all have departed from God. Perhaps Peter was thinking of this when by

inspiration he wrote, “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). Paul wrote, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth (vs. 7, emphasis added).

Apparently for emphasis, Isaiah repeats himself, and twice asserts “He opened not His mouth.” This picture is now one of Christ as the Lamb of God (John 1:29) being led by those who would harm Him, yet without resistance. Jesus was not submissive to this leading because He was ignorant about the impending events. He had witnessed crucifixions many times, both from heaven and, perhaps, while on earth. It is instead the case that He resigned His will to the Father’s will to accomplish His assigned task. “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Peter 2:23). It would be a normal reaction for a man to go to his cross kicking and begging. Jesus went to the cross without any attempt to defend Himself or to escape. In fact, He deliberately refused the rescue He had at His beck and call (Matt. 26:53). He put His head into the lion’s mouth and volunteered to suffer for our sins, though sinless Himself.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living:

for the transgression of my people was he stricken (vs. 8, emphasis added).

Let your mind now sort through the mock trials of Jesus; first to Annas, then to Caiaphas and his Sanhedrin, then to Pilate, to Herod, and, finally, to death. He was convicted without even minimal justice. “Who shall declare His generation?” means, “Who will stand up for Him?” As the old spiritual says, “Jesus walked that lonesome valley; He had to walk it by Himself.”

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth (vs. 9, emphasis added).

This verse represents a remarkable prediction concerning the details of the death and burial. Jesus was crucified and died with the wicked. He died between two condemned criminals. Note that in the Hebrew, “wicked” is plural, but “rich” is singular. That is accurate. He was crucified between two thieves, and buried in the tomb of one rich man. The reference to the rich refers to Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57-60).

Combine this with some of the details in Psalm 22 and be amazed at the intricate specifics of inspired prophesy:

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (vs. 1).

“All those who see Me ridicule Me;

They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

“He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him;

Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him” (vs. 7-8).

“They pierced My hands and My feet” (vs. 16).

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he

hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (vs. 10-12, emphasis added).

We must not think that God took pleasure in the sufferings of Christ in the sense of delight. Rather, God was pleased with the effects that His death accomplished.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die (John 12:32-33).

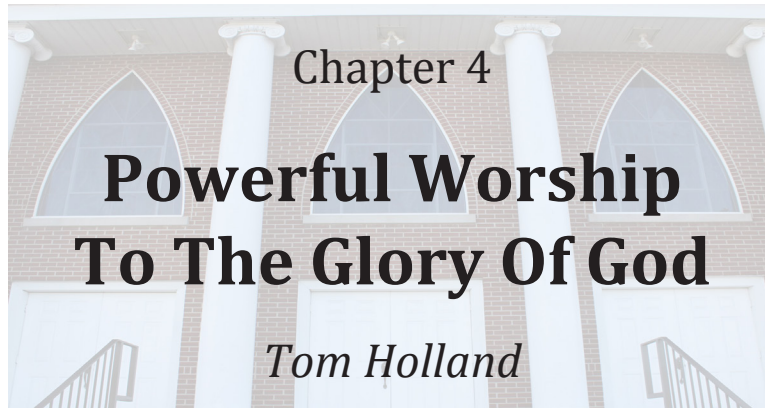
For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

“Divide him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong...”. What does this phrase mean? The Bible is its own best commentary. Paul wrote

in Romans 8:17, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” He came from heaven to bring those who would choose to serve God, the elect, back to heaven with Him for eternity.

Never forget the Giver of salvation; the One who delivered up Christ to be crucified. Never forget that the death of our Lord was to the glory of Him who sent Jesus to die:

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things (Rom. 8:32).



Introduction

Worshipping the Eternal God of heaven and earth is the mind's greatest challenge and the hearts highest conquest. Our Lord Jesus Christ said that God the Father is seeking true worshippers and true worshippers of the Father are seeking the Father.

In this presentation about worship our attention will focus on the challenge of true worship, the requirements of true worship to God, and third, the blessings of being a true worshipper of the Father.

The Challenge Of True Worship

True worship involving the worshipper's mind and heart is not done accidentally nor without thought and commitment of one's life.

The word most frequently used for worship in the New Testament is a compound word which literally means, "to kiss toward," "do reverence to" (Vine, 686). True worship is more than an attitude of respect for God, as vital

as reverence for God is required, worship involves action in God-ordained avenues or acts. In the Old Testament, worship often involved a “bowing down” to God.

The challenge of true worship is seen in the substitutes for true worship, especially entertainment with fleshly appeals which stir the emotions. For example, music has power to move one emotionally. Today it is not unusual for so-called worship services to feature bands with drama and various kinds of instrumental music. A prominent religious leader said,

Churches still use the word worship but its meaning has changed. Too often ‘worship’ is only a word people use to give religious respectability to whatever they’ve planned for the congregation to do on Sunday morning, whether God is the focus of the meeting or not.

Churches now announce two kinds of worship services: “traditional” and “contemporary.” The “contemporary” features instrumental music. A church in Brentwood, Tennessee has a sign for two kinds of worship services: one service is a capella and the other service is instrumental.

Another tradition has developed in denominational churches. Instead of having services on Sunday, they assemble on Friday or Saturday nights. As one denominational leader said: “These services are heavy on entertainment.”

What do all of these experiments with worship assemblies demonstrate? The intellectual and the spiritual

challenges of worship. It is easier to be involved in religious entertainment than it is to worship “the Father in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Worshippers God Seeks

Jesus said that “the Father is seeking true worshippers” (John 4:23).

God is “Father” to those who are His children. Some 15 times in our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount Jesus identified God as “Father.” The apostle John said that God has bestowed on His children a special “manner of love” (1 John 3:1-3).

A specific and special relationship with Christ Jesus is the way we become God’s children. In days of the Old Testament, God had a covenant relationship with the descendants of Abraham. Now the Hebrews/Jews and the Gentiles are God’s children “in Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27). Believers who are penitent and who obey the Lord’s command to be baptized, are “baptized into Christ,” into the relationship with Christ, whereby and wherein we become God’s children (Gal. 3:26-27).

The Father is seeking worshippers who know God (John 17:3). “God” is not just a word, or a name for an eternal Reality. God is known as One would have knowledge of an earthly, a reality.

In a day when the so-called “new atheism” seeks to destroy faith in God’s existence, we know God and this knowledge goes beyond the realization of God’s Reality. We know Him as a loving Father in whose providential care we are blessed to abide. A Father, who, as the apostle Peter

declared, “cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). A Father whose throne of grace and mercy we may approach because the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian’s heavenly High Priest, gives us the access to that throne (Heb. 4:4-16).

God is also seeking worshippers who love Him. It is interesting to observe the times in Moses’ Deuteronomy, the repeating of the law of God to Israel, that Moses talks about loving God.

When Jesus was asked to identify the great commandment of the law, Jesus quoted Moses, “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart” (Matt. 22:32-40).

Love for God is a motivation to honor the Father in true worship. I cannot worship a God I do not love.

The Bible reveals some people who “hate God” (Rom. 1:30). People who hate God cannot honor Him in true worship.

Our love for God is subject to a test as proof of that love. Obedience to God’s commands was the real proof of love for God (Deut. 30:6, 8-10).

The same test of genuine love for God is revealed in the new covenant. John declared,

For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3).

Our love for God is our spiritual strength to successfully withstand the temptations that we face (James 1:12). When we love God, we do not want to sin against Him.

God’s true worshippers find delight in doing those things that please God. A solid faith in God’s reality

pleases God (Heb. 11:6). A firm conviction of mind that God rewards those who seek Him also pleases God (Heb. 11:6).

What the Father wants us to do in worship to Him is not in a religious realm to be directed by the “doctrines and commandments of men” (Col. 2:22). Worship directed by the doctrines of men can lead people into “will worship,” or “self-imposed religion” (Col. 2:23; 2:23 NKJV).

People under the New Covenant (Heb. 8:7-13) are to be directed in worship, not by human traditions (Matt. 15:1-9), but rather by “the word of Christ” (Col. 3:16).

We know from the word of Christ, given by the Holy Spirit guided apostles (1 John 16:13; Eph. 3:1-5), that the children of God sang with “grace in their hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16), and that they accompanied their singing with the human heart (Eph. 5:19).

We know by what the apostles led them to do that the Lord’s people kept a memorial to the Son of God, even as He has said “This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). We know they kept this memorial on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). They kept the memorial when “they came together/assembled” (1 Cor. 11:23-27).

We know that they were commanded to give “on the first day of the week” (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

We know that they had proclamations of God’s Word when they “came together” (Acts 20:7-11).

We also know that the church prayed (Acts 12:5). Simplicity was one of the characteristics of the worship of God’s true church.

The Blessings Of Being A True Worshipper

One of the fundamental lessons of life is based on God's desire for our good. In respecting the law, Moses informed God's covenant people that:

The Lord commanded us to do all those statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day (Deut. 6:24).

The New Covenant is also for our good. In fact, the apostle Paul said that God's will by which we are spiritually transformed is "good, acceptable, and perfect" (Rom. 12:2). The Father is seeking true worshippers for His own praise, adoration and honor, but also for the good of the worshippers. There are blessings that come to true worshippers of the Father (John 4:23).

There is the blessing of a sense of satisfaction that we are doing something that pleases God, and like Enoch who pleased God, we may also please God. The apostle John wrote about the possibility of pleasing God. John said,

And whatever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight (1 John 3:22).

As surely as God seeks true worshippers, when we offer true worship to God, we please God.

A desire to please God in worship is an indication of our love for God. We desire to please those we love. We have already seen that one of the requirements of true worship is a love for God.

In contrast to what people want in "worship" or what

appeals to people and attracts a crowd, the focus of true worshippers is God the Father. What does God want? What pleases God? There is spiritual strength in knowing that we are pleasing God in the way we worship Him.

Another blessing of being a true worshipper of God is the spiritual strength we receive from being in the presence of our Heavenly Father and being reminded of God's reality include the blessings we receive from His gracious hands: the salvation from sin and for life now and eternally, the grace, the mercy, the love of God, the sacrifice of God's Son for me, the joy of fellowship with God's people, and strength to withstand Satan's efforts to deceive, discourage and demoralize us.

The apostle Peter reminds us that in God's spiritual house, His church, we "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

For instance, that is power in "offering the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 13:15).

There is spiritual strength we receive when we commune with Christ in the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 10:15-16).

Another blessing of being a true worshipper is the spiritual strength you can give your fellow worshippers. One reason the Lord said we should not forsake the assembly is because in the worship assembly we can "provoke (stimulate) one another unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24-25).

We are "created in Christ unto/for good works" (Eph. 2:10). The inspired Scriptures furnish us the information and motivation for good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Lord

Jesus died for us so we, as His people, would be “zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14).

In the worship assembly, we may “teach and admonish one another” in singing (Col. 3:16); the preaching of God’s word can motivate us to serve the Lord by seeking the lost (Matt. 28:18-20); restoring the erring (James 5:19-20; Gal. 6:1); and comforting the discouraged and those who are in sorrow (1 Thess. 5:14; 4:18).

People might worship God because of fear of not worshipping Him. After all, sinning willfully immediately follows the admonition, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” (Heb. 10:25-27). One might worship God because he/she is afraid not to worship Him. But how much real honor is given to God if fear is the motive in worship? How can I touch God’s heart with praise, thanksgiving, and adoration if my main motive is a dread of the consequences if I don’t worship Him?

Furthermore, a sense of duty could be the driving force of my worship God’s people certainly need to have a sense of responsibility. But there is a limitation to the motivation of duty (Luke 17:10).

Our motive for worship may be to please people, our parents, a spouse, friends, or people we respect.

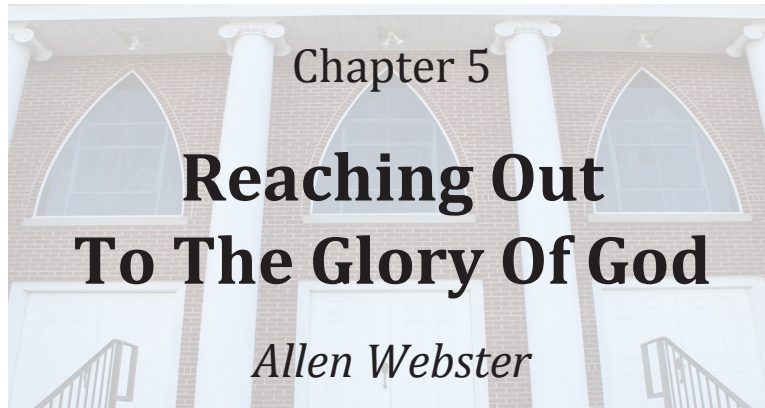
There is a motive for worship which will cause people to prefer worship to the Father in preference to a golf game, the Super Bowl, the World Series, a fishing trip, a hunting party, a little league ball game, or any other kind of sports or recreation. When we really learn to love the Father who loves us, then worship to the Father will not be a burden to be carried, but true worship to the Father will be an honor and joy to be experienced!

The ideal would be for us to say with the Psalmist: "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'" (Psalm 122:1). In anticipation of assembling with the true worshippers may we sing Thomas Hayward's worship hymn: "Welcome, Delightful Morn:"

Welcome, delightful Morn,
Thou day of sacred rest!
I hail thy kind return:
Lord make these moments blest;
From the low train of mortal toys,
I soar to reach immortal joys;
I soar to reach immortal joys.

To spend one sacred day
where God and saints abide
Affords diviner joys
than thousand days beside;
I love it more where God resorts,
to keep the door than shine in courts
To keep the door than shine in courts.

Powerful Worship To The Glory Of God



A six-year old boy restlessly struggled to listen to what seemed like a very lengthy sermon. After the service, the little boy asked: “Dad, what does the preacher do the rest of the week?”

Dad replied, “Well, he’s a very busy man. He takes care of church business, visits the sick, studies the Bible, teaches Bible studies, and counsels with people. And he has to take some time off to rest up. You see, preaching in public is not an easy job.”

The little boy thought about that for a minute and said, “Well, listening ain’t so easy either!”

Evangelism “ain’t so easy either,” but it is a work God blesses.

The words to the song “Lead Me to Some Soul Today” remind us of the great task we have before us:

Lead me to some soul today;
O teach me, Lord, just what to say;
Friends of mine are lost in sin,
And cannot find their way.
Lead me to some way-ward soul,

To one who's wandered from the fold;
Help me turn him unto Thee,
Thy blessings to behold.
Lead me from self-righteousness,
May Christ always be seen in me;
How can I do anything less,
Than lead more souls to Thee?
Open hearts of those I love,
To hear and heed the gospel call;
May they start to heav'n above,
And may they never fall.

CHORUS

Few there are who seem to care,
And few there are who pray;
Melt my heart and fill my life;
Give me one soul today.¹
If your heart is touched and tender
Toward a sinner, lost and low,
It might help him to do better;
If you'd only tell him so.

Lead Me To Some "Soul" Today

Asking the Lord to lead us to some soul indicates that we recognize the value of every single person (Matt. 16:26). The Bible sometimes uses soul to refer to a whole person (Acts 2:41; 1 Peter 3:20) or to one's life-force (Matt. 16:25), but here it refers to that part of us that lives on after death (Matt. 10:28; 16:26; 1 Peter 2:11).

Your most valuable asset is not your house, your car, your heirlooms, or even your family. Your most priceless possession is your soul. You can lose your eyes, and things

will eventually work out; you can lose your hands and still survive; you can lose your feet, and get around in a wheelchair; but you never want to lose your soul (cf. Matt. 10:28). Every person you know, every person you love, every person in your life has a soul. That soul will live beyond this life and will enter into the next one.

Clarence Darrow was an outstanding American criminal lawyer. Born in Ohio in 1857, he died in 1938. Perhaps Darrow's most famous case was the Scopes Monkey Trial in 1925 in Dayton, Tennessee. Defending the right to teach evolution in the Tennessee public schools, Darrow was opposed by William Jennings Bryan.

Darrow lived to be nearly eighty-one. Near the end of his days, in his seventy-eighth year, Darrow wrote:

All my life I have been seeking proof of God, something I could put my finger on and say, 'This is fact.' But my doubts are at rest. I know that such fact does not exist. When I die, as I shall soon, my body will decay, my mind will decay, and my intellect will be gone. My soul? There is no such thing.

How sad. Darrow, along with so many others, will be surprised on the world's last day.

T. H. Huxley, a well-known agnostic, was with a group of men at a weekend house party. On Sunday morning, while most were preparing to go to worship services, he approached a man known for his Christian character and said, "Suppose you stay at home and tell my why you are a Christian." The man, thinking he couldn't match wits with Huxley, hesitated. The agnostic said, "I don't want to argue with you. I just want you to tell me simply what this Christ

means to you.” The man did, and when he finished there were tears in Huxley’s eyes as he said, “I would give my right hand if only I could believe that!”

Since as Christians we have greater knowledge of the future than those around us, we have greater responsibility to tell them how to prepare. George Sweeting tells of John Currier who in 1949 was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life in prison.² Eventually, he was paroled to work on a farm near Nashville, Tennessee. In 1968, Currier’s sentence was terminated, and a letter bearing the good news was sent to him. But John never saw the letter, nor was he told of it. Although life on that farm was hard and hopeless, John kept doing what he was told, even after the farmer for whom he worked had died. Ten more years passed. Finally a state parole officer learned about Currier’s plight, found him, and told him that his sentence had been terminated. He was a free man.

Would it matter to you if someone sent you an important message—the most important in your life—and year after year the urgent message was never delivered? As Christians, we know that Jesus died to set all men free (John 8:31–32). He has put the letter in our hand to deliver it.

“Lead” Me To Some Soul Today

The average Christian comes into contact with 1,783 people in a week.³ Of those, perhaps, a thousand or fifteen hundred are lost (cf. Matt. 7:13). How many of those thousand could be saved with the right conversation? A hundred? Ten? Nine hundred? One? The answer is unknown, but even if it is a single soul—and surely the

answer could not be zero—the possibility is exciting.

Think of the opportunities that you may have this day to find a soul for the Savior. When Jesus sent the Twelve out on the Limited Commission, He included this admonition, “As ye go, preach” (Matt. 10:5–7). Instead of setting up scheduled speeches at synagogues or lecture halls, they were to preach as they went along each day. Their audiences would be anyone they happened to encounter as they moved from street to street, village to village, house to house.

Later when Jesus gave the Great Commission, He said “Go ye therefore, and make disciples” (Matt. 28:19, ASV). The phrase “go ye therefore” could read “as you are going.” In other words, as you are going about your daily business, as you are going to school, as you are going to work, as you are going to the doctor, as you are going to buy groceries, as you are going to get gas, as you are going to visit relatives, as you are going on vacation, as you are going to the ball game, as you are going out to eat, etc. As you are going anywhere...you are going into your mission field.

This was the method that Jesus seems to have employed. Follow Him as He went:

- “As Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew” (Matt. 9:9).
- “And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples” (Matt. 9:10).
- “As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil” (Matt. 9:32).

- “When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matt. 9:36).
- “As they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him” (Matt. 20:29).
- “As he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt. 24:3).
- “There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat” (Matt. 26:7).
- “Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers” (Mark 1:16).
- “And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him” (Mark 2:14).
- “And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole” (Mark 6:56).

Our daily business takes us to many places and in contact with many people. That is how the “go” command is fulfilled. There is nothing magical about a movie or a plane ride, but when our eyes are opened to souls, every journey, errand, and encounter is an adventure.

Our song is a request for God to help us in converting these sinners we contact each day. The same God who can lead us away from temptation (Matt. 6:13) can lead us to a lost soul. Although God doesn't speak to us directly as He did to inspired men in the first century, we should still seek His providential help in handling wisely our opportunities. There is no lack of people to whom we can speak because people all around us "are lost in sin, and cannot find their way" (Rom. 3:23).

Lead Me To "Some" Soul Today

The U.S. Center of World Missions reports that in A.D. 30, when the church was just getting started, there were 200 million people in the world and only about 5,000 Christians. That is a ratio of 40,000 to one.

John 4 is a good case study in evangelism.

- Jesus did not let culture close doors to souls (John 4:4).
- Jesus overcame fatigue (4:6). Most of the great things done in the world are done by tired people.
- Jesus began by engaging in friendly conversation (4:7).
- Jesus chose a time when others were not around (4:8).
- Jesus was not put off by potentially offensive statements (4:9).
- Jesus offered the woman something more than she had (4:10).
- Jesus had to gain her trust (prove His bona fides) (4:11-12).

- Jesus did not ignore sins that potentially could close the door (4:16–18).
- Jesus emphasized sincerity and truth (4:23–24).
- Jesus identified the Savior (4:26).
- Jesus used one contact to lead to many others (4:28–29).
- Jesus took advantage of a spiritual opportunity at the cost of physical loss (4:31–34).
- Jesus believed that there are always souls ready for harvest (4:35).
- Jesus saw joy in the future of both the soul winner and the soul won (4:36).
- Jesus recognized that some conversions require time and more than one teacher (4:37–38).
- Jesus rearranged His schedule when souls were at stake (4:39–41).
- Jesus knew that one person cannot reach all types of people and that a team is more effective (4:42).

Lead “Me” To Some Soul Today

Why people don’t evangelize:

- Ninety percent have failed in attempts in the past;
- They are biblically illiterate;
- They leave it to the professionals;
- They don’t want to impose their faith on others.

There is no soul-winning without people. Every person saved heard the gospel from someone else; somebody was involved. Another familiar hymn, “The World’s Bible,” explains involvement:

Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today,
He has no feet but our feet to lead men in His way;
He has no tongue but our tongues to tell men how He died,
He has no help but our help to bring them to His side.
We are the only Bible the careless world will read,
We are the sinner's gospel, we are the scoffers' creed;
We are the Lord's last message given in deed and word,
What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?
There is something here for "me" to do. We cannot afford
the attitude of "Let someone else do it." There is no one else.
We cannot afford to procrastinate. Sometime is not on the
calendar; someone is not in the phonebook.

The five great qualities needed in evangelism all come from within the soul-winner:

- **Urgency**—a sense of now is the time; people are lost without Jesus (2 Cor. 6:1-2).
- **Passion**—a deep love for people. Paul had it: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Rom. 10:1).
- **Effort.**
- **Zeal**—enthusiasm for the Lord. When the disciples saw Jesus' enthusiasm, they were reminded of the Scripture: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17; cf. Psalm 69:9). Paul had a double measure of missionary zeal:

I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that

believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek
(Rom. 1:14–16).

All Christians are to be “fervent in spirit; serving
the Lord” (Rom. 12:11).

- **Persistence.**

Ultimately we must decide whether we are going to
be involved or not; whether we will touch a soul or not;
whether evangelism is important to us or not.

Lead Me To Some Soul “Today”

This song was often used as a campaign song to urge
us in our evangelism. Jesus said, “I must work the works of
him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when
no man can work” (John 9:4).

Raymond Kelcy said, “It is better to wake up five-
hundred Christians than to convert five hundred sinners,
for if five hundred Christians really wake up, they will
win more than five hundred sinners.” In a recent survey
of church members, eighty-nine percent of them said that
the number one purpose of the church is to “take care of
my needs and those of my family.” Only eleven percent
said, “The purpose of the church is to win the world for
Jesus Christ.”

It is easy to make excuses:

- In summer we say, “Wait till school starts.”
- In school we say, “Wait till summer when we have
more time.”
- In summer it’s too hot; in winter it’s too cold.

At the scene of accidents there are three groups of people, each with a different response to those involved in the accident. The first group is the bystanders and onlookers. They are curious and watch to see what happens but offer no helpful involvement. The second group is the police officers. They investigate the cause of the accident, assign blame, and give out appropriate warnings and tickets. The third group is the paramedics. They are the most welcomed by those involved in the accident. Paramedics do not care whose fault the accident was; they do not lecture about bad driving habits. They are simply there to help. They bandage wounds, free those trapped in cars, and give words of encouragement.

Three groups—one is uninvolved, one assigns blame and punishment, and one helps. When it comes to reaching the lost, we will be in one of these three groups. We may be uninvolved and let others do the work. We may condemn people for their foolish behavior by saying things like, “It’s your own fault that you’re in this mess. If you had been going to church and doing like you should, this never would have happened!” The Pharisees were like this. They were more interested in condemning and criticizing sinners than in showing compassion. The first thing needed for reaching the lost is compassion (cf. Matt. 9:35–36). If we have compassion, we will help those who are hurting.

As two social workers walked through a rough part of the city one evening, they heard moans and cries for help from a back alley. Upon investigation, they found a semi-conscious man in a pool of blood. “Help me, I’ve been mugged and beaten,” he pleaded. The two social workers turned and walked away. One remarked to her colleague,

“You know the person that did this really needs help.” Yes, but what about the mugged man?

Which group are you in?

We close with the words of “The Gospel Is for All,” a powerful song composed in 1921 by J. M. McCaleb, pioneering missionary to Japan for fifty years:

Of one the Lord has made the race, thru one has come the fall:
Where sin has gone must go His grace: the Gospel is for all.
Say not the heathen are at home, beyond we have no call.
For why should we be blest alone? The Gospel is for all.
Received ye freely, freely give, from every land they call;
Unless they hear they cannot live: the Gospel is for all.

CHORUS

The blessed Gospel is for all. The Gospel is for all:
Where sin has gone must go His grace: The Gospel is for all.

Works Cited

- 1 Written by Will H. Houghton in 1936; the music is by Wendell P. Loveless.
- 2 **The No-Guilt Guide For (sic) Witnessing.**
- 3 <http://www.pubmedcentral.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1562421>.
- 4 Ron Hutchcraft, **Wake-Up Calls**, Moody, 1990, p. 30.



Have you ever heard of Jack Tinker? No? What about J. Walter Thompson? Still nothing? How about Barton, Batten, Durstine and Osborn? You likely have never heard of any of the ones previously mentioned and that's a good thing. You may not know Jack Tinker but you probably are familiar with the slogan "Plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relief it is" used by Alka-Seltzer. J. Walter Thompson may be a stranger to you but how many times have you heard the phrase "Mmmmm, mmmmm, good" which he coined for Campbell's soup? Barton, Batten, Durstine and Osborn may sound like a law firm, but they are actually an advertising firm which created the popular "Snap, Crackle and Pop" of Rice Krispies. You don't know J. Walter Thompson, Jack Tinker and Barton, Batten, Durstine and Osborn by design. They don't want you to know who they are, they want you to know who they represent. Their efforts are designed to point you to those they are promoting.

This is precisely the purpose of Christians imitating Jesus in their everyday lives. At the beginning of the

Sermon on the Mount Jesus instructed,

Ye are the light of the world...Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:14-16).

What we do at work, in recreation, in our homes, in our churches, with our friends and neighbors, is to reflect His glory, grace, mercy, love and compassion. When we call attention to ourselves we have failed to achieve our ultimate purpose, which is to point the world to Him. This is our purpose in all areas of our lives, but nowhere is this more vital than in the home.

Arguably the most profound influence upon us for good or evil is the condition of the home, making it essential that the home is a reflection of God's kingdom. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psa. 127:1). In that same Sermon on the Mount Jesus would conclude,

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it (Matt. 7:24-27).

The spiritual success or failure of our families may very well depend upon our living out the teachings of Jesus in the home.

The centerpiece of the home is marriage. Admittedly, in our present society, marriage is no longer the centerpiece of the home (at least not marriage according to God's design). However, for decades we have witnessed the great collapse of the home (Matt. 7:27) as marriage has eroded. The consequences of failed marriages include divorce, physical abuse, sexual abuse, addictions (drugs, alcohol, pornography), abortion, poverty and unwanted pregnancy. These consequences of failed marriages can have a catastrophic impact upon faith. The prevalence of sin, the lack of spiritual training and the pain inflicted often leads to generation after generation abandoning God. Because of all that has been previously mentioned, strong marriages are one of the most vital pieces of a strong and healthy faith that brings glory and honor to God. God's design and desire for your family is for it to be a picture of His love for His glory and it all starts with your marriage.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged (Col. 3:18-21).

When the marriage is built upon the foundation of God, and serves as the centerpiece of the home, everyone in and influenced by that home is positioned for success in glorifying God.

Strong Marriages Glorify God By Seeking To Understand One Another

Men and women are different. That statement is both simple and profound. God designed us as male and female, physically different, chemically different, mentally different and emotionally different (Gen. 1:27). These differences can be wonderful, enhancing the relationship and completing areas where one might be weak, but they can also be seeds for conflict, driving a wedge between us. It is for this reason that God intends for spouses to devote themselves to “learning” their partner.

When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken (Deut. 24:5).

While there were likely numerous reasons for this unusual (to us) law of God, certainly a part of it had to do with giving the newlyweds the opportunity to learn what it means to be husband and wife. As every spouse knows, there is a huge difference between dating and living separately, and being married and under the same roof. She married Mr. Right, she just didn't realize his first name was Always. He fell in love with his girlfriend because they talked on the phone for hours, but he got annoyed with his wife because she never stopped talking. He married her thinking she would never change and she married him thinking she could change him. The bottom line is, marriages only grow stronger with time if the couple is devoted to growing in their understanding of one another.

The importance of this cannot be stressed enough. Your relationship with God literally depends upon it. Peter wrote,

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

There are two very important points made in this text. The first is that God commands husbands to dwell with their wives according to knowledge. When you get married you are not allowed to use “I don’t understand my spouse” as an excuse. You must make it your priority to learn and understand your spouse. You should dedicate yourself to learning your spouse in the same way that a student commits themselves to learning a discipline like playing an instrument or obtaining a degree. It will take time, dedication and patience, but it must be done. Commit to becoming an expert in all things pertaining to your spouse. You may not know, but that doesn’t mean you cannot learn. Read books, attend marriage retreats or seminars, talk to older couples or experts and talk to your spouse.

The second important point made in this text is that your ability to commune with God is affected by your commitment to communing with your spouse. Peter warns that there is a consequence to not dwelling with your spouse according to knowledge, and that consequence is that your prayers to God are hindered. The word translated “hindered” means to sever. In the same way that a severed phone line would prevent communication, an ill functioning marriage relationship can prevent your

communication with God. Married Christians know all too well how powerfully the status of your marriage can affect your spiritual life. It is very difficult for your heart to open up to God to give worship and receive love when it is closed and wounded because of wounds inflicted by your partner. I have a feeling this is what Peter had in mind as the Holy Spirit guided him to write this warning about our prayers being severed. Yet, when spouses understand one another they can serve, love and honor one another appropriately because love, praise, joy and thankfulness blossom as a natural outpouring, resulting in God being glorified.

**Strong Marriages Glorify God
By Meeting One Another's Needs**

As we begin to understand our spouses better, we begin to learn what their needs are. Yet again this is another area where men and women tend to be very, very different. However, the Creator of both male and female knows us well and knows what each gender tends to need the most in marriage. To point us in the right direction and give us an advantage, He repeatedly advises us on this topic throughout Scripture. Several years ago Dr. Emerson Eggerichs authored a book that focused directly on this topic. His book is titled *"Love And Respect: The Love She Most Desires, The Respect He Desperately Needs."* The premise of his book is based primarily upon Paul's teaching in Ephesians 5. Although it would be unfair to limit the needs of a husband and wife to one thing, and certainly each individual might have certain needs that

are different, typically, most men desire respect and most women desire genuine love. Knowing this, God directed Paul to write that husbands should focus on loving their wives the way Christ loved the church and that wives should focus on showing reverence to their husbands (Eph. 5:25, 33). He illustrates these points in a way that both parties have their needs met and neither is left feeling forced into something that is detrimental to them.

The love that a husband is to show his wife is illustrated in two ways, one relates to self and the other to the Savior. The husband is to love his wife as he loves himself and his own body (Eph. 5:28-29). He is to nourish and cherish his bride. These words suggest that you value her. The message is clear: how you treat your wife indicates how much you value her. The other way that a husband is to love his wife is as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25). The direct context gives us insight into what it means to love like Christ loved the church, He gave Himself for it. If you go back to the gospel accounts there are other examples from the life of Jesus concerning how He loved His church. Those would include sacrificially, as a servant, patiently and with forgiveness. A man that commits himself to loving his wife in these ways will almost certainly meet the greatest needs that his wife has, and glorify God in the process.

The love that a wife is to show her husband is described by Paul as submission and reverence. Sadly, the word submit has developed a negative connotation in the years since Paul's writing. Strangely, those who have a tendency to get offended by the idea of the wife submitting to the husband, seem to be blind to the

fact that before making this statement Paul first said, “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:21). Submission is not a sign of inferiority (you cannot voluntarily submit if you are already inferior), but a demonstration of love, respect and trust. Whenever I step onto an airplane I voluntarily submit to the authority of the captain and gladly so. I trust that the pilot of the plane is qualified and committed to get us all to our destination safely. If I did not trust him in this area then I would not submit to him. When the wife submits to her husband she is assuring him that she loves, respects and trusts him to guide their family to their eternal destination. Because of his sacrificial and complete love for her, he would never abuse this trust or take it lightly. The husband receives the admiration and respect that he so greatly desire and the wife is showered with the genuine love she longs for. Both spouses have their needs met and God is glorified in His wisdom.

Although Paul is the author we consider most when discussing this topic, he certainly isn’t the only New Testament writer to emphasize this. Peter wrote,

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and

quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:1-7).

It is no coincidence that Peter's teaching is virtually identical to Paul's. Both are speaking truth as revealed from the Creator of man and woman, husband and wife. Both make it clear that for the man reverence/respect is typically of the utmost importance and for most women the greatest need is the loving care demonstrated by Jesus.

While it is true that both husband and wife can find these things outside of marriage, they are delivered in their most powerful and effective doses in marriage. When two become one it is vital that both sides of this one flesh meet the needs of the other. In the same way that the heart is one organ with multiple chambers, so it is with marriage. Yes, they are two unique, different individuals, yet they are inseparably connected and what affects one affects the other. If one chamber of the heart fails in performing its duties, the entire heart suffers and when one spouse does not meet the greatest needs of the other, the marriage will suffer. Just like the heart, if this deficiency is severe enough or lasts long enough, it can suffer irreparable damage and even die. However, when all the chambers perform

their duties and work together in rhythm, they become powerful, life giving and life sustaining. When a husband and wife come together as one and work together to meet one another's needs, fulfilling their duties, it results in a powerful relationship that is capable of bringing limitless joy and glory to the Creator of this blessed union.

Strong Marriages Glorify God By Strengthening One Another

We are all familiar with the old saying, "There is strength in numbers." This is certainly true and the wisest man to ever live shared this wisdom with the world thousands of years ago.

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken (Eccl. 4:9-12).

Perhaps this manuscript has been working backwards and we end where we should have begun. In marriage we strengthen one another. In marriage we strengthen one another by meeting one another's needs. In marriage we meet one another's needs only when we understand one another and what those needs may be. No one is strong all the time, not even the Lord Himself. On at least two occasions angels came to Him to strengthen Him and

minster to Him in a time of suffering, once after His forty days in the wilderness and once again on the night before His death (Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43). If the Lord needed help from time to time, you better believe you and I will too. This is most likely why God created a suitable helper for man in the Garden.

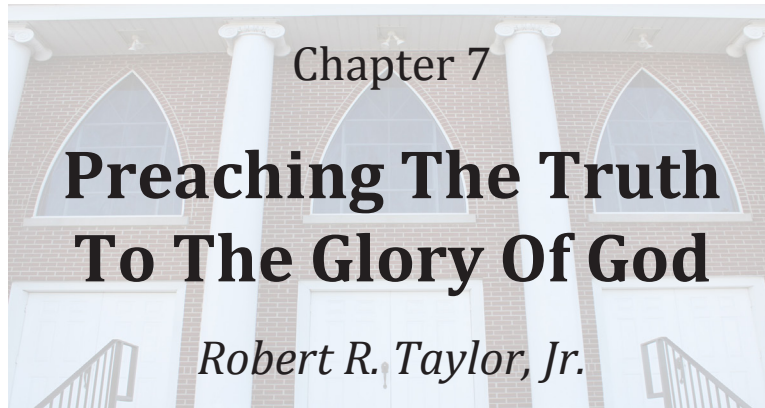
And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him (Gen. 2:18).

In marriage you have a constant companion and source of strength and help. As Solomon previously mentioned, if you fall there is one to lift you up, if you are cold you have a source of warmth, if you are opposed by an adversary you have another to help you prevail.

The final words in this section are too important to be overlooked. "...a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 4:12). The analogy is of a braided rope and the fact that three cords woven together increase the tensile strength. When applied to marriage the illustration easily fits the mold of each spouse representing one cord and the Lord representing the third. When two people weave their lives together around God it results in a life, a marriage, a home that is not easy to break. And so we end where we began, with the reminder that except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it (Psa. 127:1). The wise man will hear the sayings of Jesus and do them, thereby building his home on a foundation strong enough to weather any storm. How is God glorified in all of this? The nature of man is to practice selfishness and self preservation and all cost, but the wisdom of God guides him to be selfless and sacrificial. The result is his needs are met, his life is

Strong Marriages For The Glory Of God

enriched, he is strengthened, his needs are met and God,
Who is the Author of this wisdom, gets the glory.



I have always enjoyed the East Hill Lectureship each spring in picturesque Pulaski, Tennessee. Many thanks for having me once again. I believe this is my 24th one, having missed only two during these 26 years.

What a tremendous theme we have for this year's study, "To God Be The Glory." For many years we have sung the lovely lyric bearing this very title. It is a favorite of the Ripley, Tennessee congregation where Irene and I have our membership. This sublime concept surely belongs in song form, but also our preaching/teaching should reflect the glory that belongs to the awesome Jehovah God. The Bible overflows with the glory ascribed to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

There are four important words in the theme title assigned to me: preaching, truth, glory and God.

To his Ephesian brethren Paul wrote words that are cogent and comprehensive,

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ (Eph. 4:15).

Truth only can be spoken with agape love. With Paul and all the Biblical penman of Sacred Scripture, “It is truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth” that mattered. This is the only way God can be given proper glory—preaching the truth and doing it in agape love, the crowning Greek word for love.

Preaching His Eternal Existence Is To His Glory

Moses wrote about 187 chapters of the Old Testament. In addition to penning the Pentateuch, he also wrote one Psalm, the 90th one. In this precious Psalm he penned,

Before the mountains were brought forth, or
ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
even from everlasting to everlasting thou art
God (Psalm 90:2).

I recall very vividly listening to the late and lamented Gus Nichols expounding on this valiant verse. With an impressive gesture he pointed to his back and said that is the first everlasting and then pointed to his front saying this is the second everlasting. His is an eternal past, eternal present and an eternal future. He never had a beginning as we humans have. He will never cease to exist. Great glory fits His eternity. This we can preach/teach in the ardency of affection.

Preaching His Holy Attributes Is To His Glory

I shall number and name some of these. (1) ***He is omnipotent or all powerful.*** In Revelation 19:6 the

aged John alluded to Him as “the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” In educating Abram about Himself He told the faithful patriarch, “I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1).

(2) ***He is Creator.*** With power exceeding human comprehension, He created the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1:1. Time after time in the penning of Genesis 1 Moses used the power-packed trio of words, “And God said” (1:3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29). As creative Jehovah viewed what He had just made, He said, “it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). Israel’s Sweet Singer captures this with these well chosen words, “For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psa. 33:9).

(3) ***He is holy.*** Moses in the Old Testament and Peter in the New Testament affirm His holiness (Lev. 11:44; 1 Peter 1:15-16). In John 17 Jesus called Him, “Holy Father” (John 17:11). We frequently sing songs relative to His holiness. Likewise, we must preach/teach His holiness.

(4) ***He is omniscient or all-wise or all-knowing.*** There is nothing that escapes the All-Seeing Eye (Heb. 4:13). In Acts 15:18, James at the Jerusalem Council affirmed, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” In profound Romans, Paul was amazed at “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God” (Rom. 11:33).

(5) ***He is just always doing the right thing.*** Abraham recognized this attractive attribute in Genesis 18:25. The Judge of the earth will do right, never wrong. In two powerful verses from Psalm 85:10 and 89:14 we read:

Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness
and peace have kissed each other..Justice and

judgment are the habitation of thy throne:
mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

We are preaching the truth when we speak of God's unlimited wisdom and knowledge. Thus we bring nobility to His glory.

(6) ***He is omnipresent which means His influence fills the whole Universe.*** The opening verses of Psalm 139 depict this attribute in fundamental fashion. Those who promoted the song with the concept that no one knows what goes on behind closed doors did not take into consideration Jehovah's All-Seeing Eye. The two committing fornication or adultery knew but also Jehovah knew and He does not view this prominent sin in the favorable light that a permissive society now does.

A father once took his son at night into a neighbor's corn field intending to steal a sack of corn. Before plucking the first ear the father looked north, south, west and east making sure he and the son were alone. Then he began to pluck the ears placing them into his empty sack. The perceptive son looked in amazement at what his dad was doing on that moonlit night. He said, "Daddy, you forgot to look one direction." The father thought the son had seen something that eluded his gaze. He said "which direction, son?" The son said, "Daddy, you forgot to look up." The father poured on the ground all the ears he had placed into the sack. The father returned home with an empty sack and a very perceptive son.

(7) ***God is truth personified.*** There is no iota of falsehood in His immaculate character. Not only is His word truth as Jesus stressed in John 17:17, but He is the very essence of truth. When we preach Him as the God of

truth, we are glorifying Him.

(8) ***God is good.*** A song I used to sing with a children's class affirmed this lovely legacy, "God is so good; He is so good to me." Then we filled in with how He sent His Son and that He answers prayers. Israel's Sweet Singer wrote in the Bible's longest chapter, Psalm 119, "Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes" (Psa. 119:68). James assures us that every good gift and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights who never turns away from this attractive attribute. We glorify Him when we preach/teach His goodness, His perfection.

(9) ***He is merciful.*** His mercy is portrayed in Exodus 34:7 to a much moved Moses while at Sinai. Psalm 136 is unique with its repetition. There are 26 verses in this precious Psalm and 26 times we read "for his mercy endureth for ever." Were it not for His manifold mercy and deep love, there would never had been revealed the scheme of human redemption. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 1:3, pictured Him as "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." I frequently use that verse in conducting funerals for faithful Christians who have passed on to the next world. That could not have been said of any idol worshipped and served in the first century. It cannot be said of Allah, the god of Islam. When we preach His marvelous mercy, we are glorifying Him.

(10) ***He is a promise-maker and promise-keeper.*** He is not fickle as is man in these two departments of demeanor. He made a promise to Noah that never again would there be a universal flood. He has kept faithfully that promise to the great ark builder. He made promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Genesis 12, 26 and 28 and

faithfully fulfilled them. He promised David a continuing dynasty of rulers from his seed inclusive of the greatest Ruling King, the Christ, and He has kept that promise. It did not fall to the ground void of fulfillment. He has promised to send Jesus a second time and it will not fall to the ground in failure. Peter touched that matter in Acts 3:20. When we preach/teach Him as promise-maker and promise-keeper, we are glorifying God the Father.

(11) ***He hears and answers prayers.*** Many times in Psalms the various writers would pray and they knew their prayers would register in the All-hearing Jehovah. In Isaiah 38 Hezekiah was told he would die at age 39. He prayed for an extension of life and Gracious Jehovah gave him another 15 years meaning he would die at age 54—not 39. Preaching Him as One who hears and answers prayers is to His glory.

(12) ***God forgives.*** David experienced such after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Psalm 51 and 32 so prove. There are many allusions in the Bible about His forgiving nature. The father in the “Pearl of the Parables” represents Jehovah. The returning prodigal was forgiven in Luke 15. Acts 2:38; 3:19; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:12-14 and 1 Peter 1:18-19 are great passages on His amazing willingness to forgive. We glorify Him when we preach/teach His forgiving spirit.

When We Preach Christ In Truth We Are Glorifying God

This means to preach Him as eternal, as Creator, as Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament, Old Testament

prophecies about Him, His birth, teachings, miracles, the cross, the resurrection, the ascension, the Builder and head of His church, what He does as Mediator and what He plans for His people for a never ending eternity. In Acts 8 Philip the evangelist preached Him in Samaria and to the eunuch. Paul determined not to preach anything save Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). He stressed the same determination in 2 Corinthians 4:5. We glorify God when we preach/teach in truth and love His only begotten Son—the marvelous monogenes. We cannot glorify God by ignoring Jesus and His glorious gospel.

Preaching The Church of Christ Glorifies God

Prophets such as Isaiah, Micah and Zechariah all glorified God by preaching the coming Kingdom. John and Jesus glorified God by preaching the nearness of this coming Kingdom (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). So did the twelve in Matthew 10 and the 70 in Luke 10. From Acts 2 onward the Kingdom was preached as having been established with all the saved added to it in Acts 2:47. The rest of Acts, all the epistles and the Book of Revelation reinforce its establishment and continuation. New Testament penman knew the kingdom and the church were one and the same. This church or kingdom is called the body of Christ, the household or house of God, the Bride of Christ, the temple of God, etc.

In his article today (1/27/16) in our newspaper Billy Graham counseled an inquiring couple to **choose** the church of **their preference**. Mr. Graham surely has not explored the Biblical concept of seeking the church

of Christ's choice—not of one's own preference! No New Testament preacher of the first century ever gave such counsel to inquiring searchers for truth. We glorify God when we preach/teach the church of His Son.

Preaching The Gospel Plan Of Salvation Glorifies God

This flies in the face of modern preachers in religious error who tell people to say the so-called sinner's prayer or just invite Christ into their heart. This modern error has no more validity than the old mourner's bench of the past. A gospel preacher was once asked, "What is the difference between the mourner's bench and Acts 2:38?" His answer was "Acts 2:38 is from heaven; the mourner's bench is from the sawmill!" To put it in a modern day application would be "What is the difference between Acts 2:38 and the so-called sinner's prayer?" The answer would be: "The former is from heaven and the latter is from overheated human imaginations."

We should **never** tire of telling people what to do to be saved in our sermons and Bible classes. No alien sinner should ever leave one of our services ignorant of what one must do to be saved. They did not leave the service on Pentecost in Acts 2 ignorant of God's true plan for saving sinners!

Some years ago I preached in a meeting here in West Tennessee. During the initial sermon I spelled out the plan of salvation plainly and backed each stipulation with Scripture. There was a visitor that day from the State of Washington. He was visiting relatives and attended that

service and all subsequent ones. As he left the first service he complimented my giving this sublime plan. He said it had been a dozen years since he had heard his preacher back in Washington do what I did. Saying, “Come if you have a need” and leaving it at that surely cannot please the Great Head of the church—the Christ. The unsaved person in the audience may not have an awareness of a need in his life and this type of bland preaching will not convict him for a surety. Preaching/teaching the gospel plan of salvation in **every** lesson surely glorifies God.

We Glorify God In Preaching The Truth About All Error

Old Testament prophets did not leave error alone, but combatted it and refuted it soundly and solidly. They all breathed the spirit of Psalm 119:104, 128, which states the Psalmist’s hatred of every evil way. John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus did not leave the errors of the Pharisees and the Sadducees alone. Error was never safe in the presence of these two great preachers and defenders of the faith. They met error head-on and left it defeated when the battle concluded. The apostles and evangelists did more of the same.

The same should characterize us in the 21st century. We must combat the forces of atheism, agnosticism, infidelity, modernism, post modernism and relativism. The latter two are two of the most dangerous isms of our time. Both deny any absolutes as set forth in the Bible allowing people to craft their own religion or philosophy of life.

We must confront Catholicism, Protestantism, cults

and the world religions inclusive of Islam. It is growing and it is filled with and overflows with danger. They will never be satisfied until the world is Islamic and their educational system replaces all other systems of learning.

We must confront apathy and antipathy. We must confront and refute moral errors such as sexual sins. It is a sad day in America when the most heinous of sins such as homosexuality, gay rights, gay marriages and adulterous remarriages undermine all forms of decency in our land. Lawmakers by the masses and jurists by the multitudes are in their corner.

In prophecy, and while here, Jesus hated iniquity and loved righteousness (Psa. 45:6-7; Heb. 1:8-9). We cannot glorify God when we put truth and error on the same level. Love of truth will not allow toleration of error—any error, all error.

We Glorify God In Christian Living And Worship

We cannot glorify God in vain worship, in ignorant worship, in will worship or being guided by how ancestors worshipped (Mark 7:7; Acts 17:23; Col. 2:23; John 4:20).

We can glorify Him in songs, prayer, preaching and teaching, the communion and the contribution (Eph. 5:19; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:20ff; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). All the foregoing is to be done in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). God is glorified when we worship Him as He has directed.

We glorify God when we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16). Verse 16 spells out how we cause God to be glorified by people observing our good works. We glorify God when we avoid the works

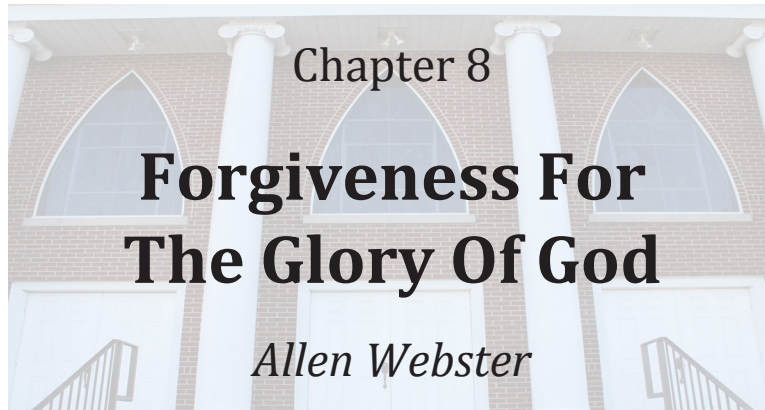
of the flesh and pursue the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:19-23). We glorify God when we add or supply the Christian graces to our lives (2 Peter 1:5-11). We glorify God when we deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-12). Positively delineated here is inward living, outward living and upward living with no earthly lust as our master.

We Glorify God By Preaching The Truth About Final Things

By final things I mean preparation for death, the second coming, the resurrection, final judgment, hell and heaven. For a surety, we cannot glorify God by ignoring these vital Biblical fundamentals.

Conclusion

We are at our best when we practice and preach the truth and love and glorify God by so doing. May we be zealous in majoring in these imperative matters.



“God could never forgive me. I’ve done some awful things.” How many times has that thought passed through the synapses of human brains? Does it frequently lodge in your gray matter? When you are alone at night with just your thoughts, are they thoughts of despair, hopelessness, or frustration?

The private thoughts of a prodigal boy in a pigpen of the far country gives us some hope (Luke 15:11–32). That boy was an invention of the Master storyteller to express a message about forgiveness; about a Father’s all-encompassing, incomprehensible love; about heaven’s sermon of hope when the devil preaches despair.

The hungry prodigal knew his rich father would not go to bed without supper that night—But his son would. The more he thought about it, the more he realized that nobody on his father’s farm would fall asleep with a growling stomach—But he would. Even his father’s servants had “bread enough and to spare” (Luke 15:17)—But he didn’t.

Since the father in the parable represents the Father

in the Bible, we can draw some interesting conclusions from the phrase, “bread enough and to spare.” God has never been stingy with His blessings. He gives to everybody abundantly, and does not do so begrudgingly (James 1:5; see also 1:17).

Take bread for instance. When Israel’s children needed food in the wilderness, they had all the manna they wanted: “Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer [literally, “a heap”] for every man” (Exo. 16:16). When a widow shared with Elijah what she thought was her last meal, God refilled her meal barrel, and no matter how much she dipped out, it stayed full until the famine ended (1 Kings 17:15–16). When Jesus fed five thousand men (beside women and children), the famished people ate all they wanted; still there were twelve baskets full of leftovers (Matt. 14:20). When He opened His buffet to four thousand another day, they too ate their fill and had seven baskets extra (Matt. 15:37). Since Jesus knew all things, could He not have prepared just enough to satisfy? Perhaps these nineteen baskets are in the Bible just to show us that God always gives extra.

When we think of man and see the magnitude of his sin, we can hardly understand how a single sinner can be saved, but when we think of God and see the magnitude of His love, we can hardly understand how a single one could be lost. God has no desire to punish a single person.

As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (Ezek. 33:11).

What God Wants To Do To Every Sinner

God wants to have mercy upon all (Rom. 11:32). He sent His Son to “taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9). God has no desire to send a single sinner to the place of punishment. He is longsuffering to us, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

So if God does not want to punish sinners, what does He want to do to them?

He wants to hug them. The first thing the loving father did to the prodigal boy was to hug him: he “fell on his neck, and kissed him” (Luke 15:20). That father represents God, and that boy represents a sinner returning from the devil’s far country. Therefore a fair deduction is that, spiritually speaking, God longs to wrap His omnipotent arms around each sinner who turns to Him.

He wants to take them home with Him. The second thing the loving father did was to restore the boy to his former position as a son in the family (Luke 15:22–24). Sleep in the servant’s quarters? The father wouldn’t hear of it. His son would get back his old room at the big house. When God forgives, He restores the offender to his former position of love and grace. As the Civil War neared its conclusion, the War Hawks of the North asked Abraham Lincoln what he would do with the rebellious Southerners. He replied, “I’ll treat them as if they had not gone away.” That’s what God longs to do, and ultimately, He wants all of us to live with Him in the mansions of heaven (John 14:1–2).

He wants to adopt them (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5–7). The devil is the father of sinners (John 8:44), but God longs to

adopt each person into His eternal family. One concept tied to forgiveness is reconciliation. We are estranged (separated) from God when we sin (Isa. 59:1-2). In forgiveness, Jesus' blood satisfies God's justice and allows us to draw near to Him as He draws near to us (Rom. 3:23-26; Eph. 2:13; James 4:8). He wants to give us a new name (Isa. 62:2; Acts 11:26), a new standing, new brothers and sisters (1 Tim. 3:15), and an inheritance (1 Peter 1:4). He wants to heal them. Sin renders our souls sick, cut, and diseased (Isa. 1:5-6; Matt. 9:12; 1 Cor. 11:30), but the Great Physician longs to bind every wound, pouring in oil and wine (Matt. 13:15; Mark 4:12). He wants to make us sound (2 Tim. 1:7; Titus 2:2).

He wants to pay their bills. Most of us dread the monthly debits and bills that have become a part of most Americans' lives. But there are debts that we incur for which there are no monthly reminders. Our sins have racked up quite a debt in God's court. (The word sin, in its various forms, occurs 825 times in the Bible, and many more times than this in our lives.) Just as violations of civil laws (speeding, fishing out of season, failure to pay taxes) have fines assigned to them, so violation of God's laws rack up "fines" with God (Matt. 6:12).

These debts will come due on Judgment Day. When God forgives, however, He removes the notation of the offense from His record (Acts 3:19), and He grants remission of the sin debt (Matt. 26:28; Acts 2:38). When God forgives, He remembers the sin no more (Heb. 8:12). God blots out the knowledge and history of sin (Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:34).

He wants to give them a good night's sleep. Oh the agony that many feel in the quiet of the night! They desire to relive life and not make the same mistakes, to be a better person, to fix the hurt they have done to others—on and on the mind runs. This longing for release for many manifests itself in seeking to forget by means of alcohol and drugs, come-and-go sexual experiences, workaholism, and the vain pursuit of power, money, and things.

God has a better way to get a good night's sleep. Sin does render us guilty (Exo. 34:7; Rom. 3:19; 1 John 3:4) and punishable (Matt. 25:46; Mark 16:16), but forgiveness justifies (Rom. 3:24–25; Acts 13:38–39). God grants us a full pardon (Psa. 25:11; Num. 14:19–20). This means that God no longer holds us accountable for the offenses—the guilt is gone!

The New Testament word forgiveness literally means: “letting go; forgetting—as though it never happened.” Every bad thought we ever thought is as if we had not thought it; every bad deed we ever did is as if we had not done it; every bad word we ever said is as if we had not said it; and every good deed we should have done but did not, is as if we had done it.

Jesus never met a man He would not save. Look through the Gospel records and see for yourself. You will never find Him saying, “I wish I could help you, but there’s nothing I can do.” You will never hear Him say, “Your case is too difficult for me.” He doesn’t leave any inkling of unwillingness or inability.

Every accountable person has sinned and is therefore eligible for this treatment from God (Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:10–23; Gal. 3:22; 1 John 1:8). Many Christians have

become weak and fallen back into sin (1 John 1:7–9), and are thus again eligible for these blessings (Isa. 53:5; 1 Cor. 15:3; Eph. 1:7; 1 John 2:1; 3:5).

Have you considered that God loved sinners better than He loved His own Son? “How can you say that?” you ask. He “spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32); but He spares sinners. He poured out His wrath upon His Son and made Him (the Innocent) the substitute for sinners, that He might lavish love upon us (the guilty) who deserved His anger.

Since God “freely gives us all things” (Rom. 8:32) and withholds “no good thing...from them that walk uprightly” (Psa. 84:11), what can we count on when we make the journey back to our Father from the far country?

With God, There Is Grace Enough And To Spare

No one has gotten up from God’s table still needing a snack of grace. Is your case a difficult one? Have your sins been shocking and frequent? Are your spiritual diseases strange and complex?

Consider that He who made the earth and stretched out the heavens like a tent to dwell in has no boundary to His strength nor limit to His might. In six thousand years, He has never failed at anything—will His first failure be saving you? Will your case prove too strong for omnipotence, boggle the mind of omniscient, or overtax the love of omni-benevolence? If He made you (Gen. 1:26–28), He can remake you (2 Cor. 5:17). If He claims you (2 Cor. 6:18), He can cleanse you (Acts 22:16). His “hand is not shortened, that it cannot save” (Isa. 59:1).

After all these years, is there still “bread enough” on God’s table of grace? Isaiah issued this invitation twenty-seven centuries ago:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (Isa. 55:7).

It still stands. God offers “abundant grace” (2 Cor. 4:15) and “abundant mercy” (1 Peter 1:3; cf. Titus 3:5–6), yea, “exceeding abundant” (1 Tim. 1:14). He is able “to save them to the uttermost” that come to Him (Heb. 7:25). Peter said, “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom” (2 Peter 1:11). Paul concluded: “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20).

There is no limit to God’s forgiveness. God’s boundless grace is sufficient for man’s ceaseless sin. Not all will obey, but there is room in heaven for all. He forgave Saul of Tarsus who persecuted Christians—beating some, killing some—and made havoc of the church of Christ (Acts 7:58; 8:1; 9:1, 13, 21; 22:4, 19; 26:10–11; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6). When Saul learned of his sins, he obeyed the Lord (Acts 9:18), was forgiven (Acts 22:16), and became the apostle Paul.

Satan has led everyone down the wrong road (Rom. 3:23). All of us have done things of which we are ashamed—or at least we should be (Luke 15:13–16). Yet God still loves us. When the Lord called the prophet Isaiah, he said,

Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips (Isa. 6:5).

Isaiah was neither the first nor the last to feel as if his past failures made him unworthy of God's attention. Simon Peter went so far as to ask Jesus to leave him. Peter said to Him, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5:8).

The Acid Test Of Forgiveness

Let's put this plenteous grace to the test in a real world of really bad sinners. Did God live up to His promises?

- The publicans and sinners were acknowledged (by others) and admitted (by themselves) to be notorious transgressors of God's Law. Yet when they came to Jesus, they always found grace enough and to spare (cf. Luke 15:1-2). More than any other group, they satiated themselves with the Bread of Life (John 6:35; cf. Matt. 9:10-11; 11:19; Mark 2:15-16; Luke 5:30; 7:34).
- Take the cases of the sinful woman whose reputation (quite literally) followed her (Luke 7:36-50), and the woman who was caught in bed with someone besides her husband (John 8:1-11). Would grace cover such scandal? Yes! Both found that Jesus had grace enough to cover their fleshly—but forsaken—sins.
- What about a traitor—one of the inner circle

who forsook the Lord even after he had been warned? (Matt. 26:34). Peter was all these; he denied his Master three times the night the Friend of Sinners most needed a friend. He cursed and swore that he did not even know “the man” (Matt. 26:72). Could grace cover such a high-handed misdemeanor? Yes. Jesus forgave Peter. But surely he was on probation; certainly he was counted second-rate—damaged goods. No, less than two months later, Jesus tapped him to be the keynote speaker at the greatest revival of all time (Acts 2). He featured him as the key character of the first half of Acts of Apostles, used him to write two Scripture books, and placed him as an elder in a local congregation (1 Peter 5:1–2).

- Those on whose hands God saw crimson stains that matched His Son’s blood type were told, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). About three thousand of them washed their hands “in the fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel’s veins” that very day (Acts 2:41; cf. Zech. 13:1), and many others took Him up on His offer in coming weeks (Acts 2:47). It would be hard to imagine a case today that equals that of the Pentecost sinners.
- What about moral delinquents? Without doubt, perverts and swindlers and drunks are not welcome at the Father’s banquet. Right? Again, we find they are—provided they repent. Paul wrote of some who had been fornicators, idolaters,

adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners (1 Cor. 6:9–10). But by God’s grace, they had been washed, sanctified, and justified (6:11).

- Saul of Tarsus, who was public enemy number one in the kingdom of heaven at the time, tested the “grace enough and to spare” principle as perhaps no other individual has. He was a blasphemer of God and a murderer of innocent Christians. He organized and supervised the mob killing of Stephen, for instance, who left a wife and child on earth (assuming as most do that he was a deacon and met the qualifications of 1 Tim. 3) when the fatal rock prematurely sent him into eternity (Acts 7).

Surely Saul would find that grace could cover only so much—and that he had long ago crossed that line. No, he also found “bread enough and to spare.” Years later he wrote of himself—still calling himself the “chief of sinners”—as one “who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy...And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant” (1 Tim. 1:13–14). Is it any wonder that Paul wrote more of grace than any other New Testament writer—in fact, more than all the others combined! (75 of the 131 times the word grace is found in the New Testament).

Can God forgive you? Yes! Will God forgive you? Yes. The question is, “Do you really want to be forgiven?” Are you willing to take God on His terms? What are His terms?

Learning of Jesus	— John 6:44–45
Faith in Jesus	— Acts 16:31

Repentance because of Jesus — Luke 13:3
Confession of Jesus — Romans 10:10
Baptism into Jesus — 1 Peter 3:21
Faithful living for Jesus — Revelation 2:10

The Bible gives us confidence that God wants to save us:

- “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee” (Isa. 41:10).
- “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil” (Jer. 29:11).
- “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:31–32).
- “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13).
- “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

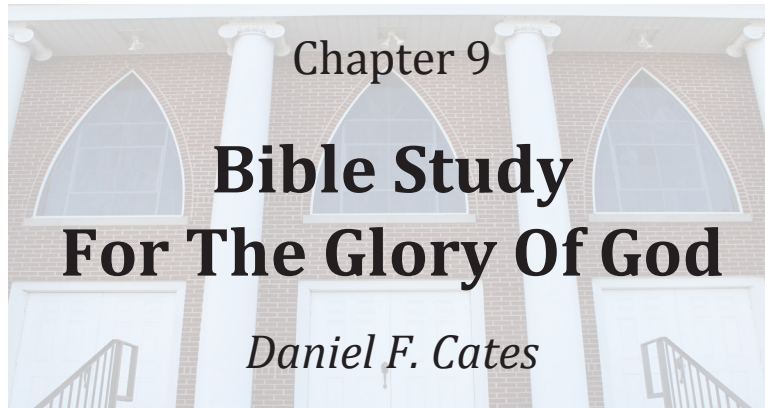
“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). I have never met anyone who came to Jesus and was refused. Have you? There is no record of Jesus Christ ever refusing anyone. Thieves came to Him, and He took them in. When people flung a woman at His feet and said that she deserved to be stoned, He took her in. When a cursing, swearing fisherman crossed His path, He took him in. The

Bible teaches that Jesus has never refused anyone. He “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Rom. 8:32).

That is why I know He wants you to be saved. “He . . . spared not his own Son.” Can you possibly believe that God would give His only begotten Son to suffer and die on the cross of Calvary, then not want you to be saved?

**Trust in Him. Obey Him.
Plan to live with Him forever!**



The writer is honored to have been invited to speak on the lectureship here at East Hill on the theme To God Be the Glory! He appreciates and values his friendship with Jonathan Burns as well as with others associated with the lectureship. May the lectureship contribute to the devotion of many who strive to give the glory to God. One means by which God is glorified is through the study of His Word; that is the subject of this particular lesson: “Bible Study for the Glory of God.”

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Paul’s words likely echo in the minds of most Christians and, rightly, motivate Christians to study God’s Word. Sadly, Paul’s instruction does not accomplish the task; rather, it only demonstrates the Divine imperative (“Study to shew thyself approved unto God”), shows the result (“a workman that needeth not to be ashamed”), and explains how (“rightly dividing the word of truth”). It is left to man, then, to follow the command and to follow it effectively. The question is how

to study effectively. The answer is with propriety! One must study the Bible with the proper attitude, with the proper approach, with the proper action, and with the proper ambition.

The Proper Attitude

There are any number of considerations which could be tied to having the proper attitude for Bible study; ones especially valuable are the need for the Bible student to study with expectation, reverence, humility, and love.

When one opens any book, he should do so expectantly. If it be a rule book, he should do so expecting for standards to be established; if it be a text book, he should do so expecting to be taught something; if it be a cookbook, he should do so expecting to find meals that he could prepare; if it be a fictional novel, he should do so expecting to be entertained. With no expectation, there can be no purpose for reading in the first place. When one opens the Bible to study it, he should expect to be able to understand it, apply it, and be benefitted by it! Unfortunately, too many approach Scripture taking for granted that they cannot truly understand it—in part if not in whole; more unfortunately, some religious leaders have cultivated that thought so as to make their opinions on religious matter be too high for common students and, therefore, unquestionable. The great American orator Daniel Webster, in laying out his *“Confession of Faith,”* suitably answered such a fallacy; he wrote,

I believe that the Bible is to be understood and received in the plain and obvious meaning of

its passages; since I cannot persuade myself that a book intended for the instruction and conversion of the whole world, should cover its true meaning in such mystery and doubt, that none but critics and philosophers can discover it (10).

If the common people heard the Lord gladly, and they did (Mark 12:37), then anyone should be able to expect for Scripture to be as simple for him as for any other—is not “the man of God” for whom Scripture is profitable, perfecting, and furnishing (2 Tim. 3:16,17) ultimately anyone who is “of God?”

In any library there are books in various states of decay. Some may have deteriorated due to their being neglected, others due to their being often used, then there are ones which may have been treated frivolously—tossed here or there, stepped upon, or otherwise abused. God’s Word too often falls into the former and latter categories, rarely occupying that middle place. Reverence for the Word of God will be demonstrated through its not being allowed to gather dust, be devoured by silverfish, soak up years of water damage, or idly sit upon the coffee table; equally, reverence for the Word of God will be demonstrated through its being handled carefully—literally and figuratively. Reverence for the Word of God will see it be carried to worship, opened in Bible study, consulted in times of need, of devotion, and of weakness. In all, the feeling of the Psalmist will be shared: “...but my heart standeth in awe of thy word” (Psa. 119:161).

An attitude which the Christian must show at all times is humility. Jesus concluded two lessons against

exalting self, proclaiming that the one who “exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:11; 18:14). That attitude must carry over into Bible study. The Lord said, “...but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isa. 66:2). Scripture and its singular meaning (cf 2 Peter 1:20) is God’s prerogative—man may only simply humble himself and receive the inspired message from God, deferring to the One Who gave it.

Love is another universally required trait of children of God; love of God, love of family, love of brethren, love of others, and love of self are all essentials. Along that first line, the Christian must love the Word which the Holy Spirit has given. Psalm 119:97 was the expression of David’s affection: “O how love I thy law!” Of this expression, Charles Spurgeon wrote:

It is a note of exclamation. He loves so much that he must express his love, and in making the attempt he perceives that it is inexpressible—and therefore cries, ‘O how [to what great, indescribable extent-DFC] I love!’ We not only reverence but love the law, we obey it out of love, and even when it chides us for disobedience we love it none the less. The law is God’s law, and therefore it is our love. We love it for its holiness, and pine to be holy; we love it for its wisdom, and study to be wise; we love it for its perfection, and long to be perfect.

The Proper Approach

When contemplating actions, ones will often consider when, where, how, why, to what extent, and other such. As Bible study requires action, these same types of considerations should be taken into account to decide what type of approach will be taken to Bible study. Some of these considerations will vary depending upon the situation of the student, but some will be universal.

Where should one study the Bible? The first place should be in the assembly. Congregational worship (on the first day of the week as in Acts 20:7) includes Bible study, and usually there are additional periods allotted for Bible study before or after the worship service, perhaps in the evening, and/or midweek. In this environment, study is directed by the preacher or a Bible class teacher who has prepared a lesson which should be beneficial for the worshippers or students in the areas of education, edification, benevolence or motivation to act along these lines. These are important and should be viewed by individual Christians as indispensable; however, Bible study should not end in the church building. There is also a place for group Bible studies away from the church building, or “cottage” studies. These studies may not be as organized as a typical Bible class and should not be used in place of congregational worship, but may have the same type of impact as Bible study in larger numbers—in fact, in some situations, ones who would not step foot in the door of a building of the Lord’s church might be comfortable and reachable. These environments might foster more discussion and practical application—although those should not be avoided in Bible study periods in the

congregational setting. For the individual, there should also be periods of personal Bible study—sometimes even as a family unit. This may be a period of personal devotion, meditation, or even a full diving into God’s Word. This type of study may be practiced at home, in the office on a break, in the park on a sunny afternoon, or anywhere else that the student can be alone with God’s Word. No matter the setting, Christians will be taught, challenged, and motivated by any genuine study of the Word of God; and when they are, God will most certainly be glorified!

When should one study the Bible? As hinted in the last paragraph, the answer is not merely on Sundays, but anytime! Some will have better concentration or retention at one time and others may have better at another time, so the student should decide when he will be best benefitted by the study period. The only rule that God has set forth is that the worship be conducted on Sunday. The elders of the local congregation may choose another day (or more) in addition to that—in fact, the early church gathered daily (Acts 2:46)—but not in the place of that. A good day to meet again is sometime midweek so that the brethren can recharge their spiritual batteries. Sometimes there are extra periods such as Gospel meetings, vacation Bible schools, youth days, and the like aside from the regularly schedules periods. These things are decided above the individual’s level and should take into consideration days and times when people can be available to study together. The same rule should apply for determining when a group might gather to study away from the building. Time for personal, or even family, Bible study should be determined by ones work schedule and other obligations. God should

not merely get the “leftovers,” but some times are not practical for Bible study. As was mentioned, one should also choose times to study when he will be energetic and aware—not merely going through the motions. Only when ones can be benefitted from the period of study can God truly be glorified!

How often should one study the Bible? This is another area where Scripture gives no specific ruling. However, the need of Christians to grow spiritually (Heb. 5:12,13; 1 Cor. 3:1-3; 1 Peter 2:2) ought to motivate regular study—perhaps several days a week, perhaps even daily, perhaps even more often. The Psalmist spoke of meditating upon the law of God all the day (Psa. 119:97) and day and night (Psa. 1:2)—as Joshua had been before instructed (Josh. 1:8). The Bereans were commended for they “searched the scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11). These questions beg to be asked: first, did the Psalmist glorify God meditating so often on God’s Word? Did Joshua glorify God by meditating so often on God’s Word? Did the Bereans glorify God by studying so often God’s Word? Will Christians today glorify God by studying God’s Word only once a week? What about less often? What about little more? Neither the student’s gain nor God’s glory will be accomplished by irregular Bible study.

How long should one study the Word of God? Generally, one thinks of study in increments of one hour. One hour for a Bible class; one hour for a worship, one hour for a Gospel meeting, etcetera. The Bible does not set forth any “at least one hour” or “no more than one hour” guidelines. Rather, Scripture contains some very short sermons (Matt. 13), some very long ones (Acts 20:7),

and even days of following the Lord (Matt. 15:32). Some of this answer is cultural—attention spans are not what they were in years past. Some of the answer is sacrificial—how much of one’s own time is he willing to give God. Some of the answer is dependent upon the energy of the student—the spirit may be willing, while the flesh may be weak (Matt. 26:41). Some of the answer may be age or health related—young children cannot and must not be expected to sit quietly for hours, neither should those who have physical limitations especially associated with age. In this area, consideration for others should be weighed in with consideration for God.

The Proper Action

The proper action of study will require the proper reasoning, tools, and application.

“Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation. ...Sacred hermeneutics is the science of interpreting Scriptures” (Dungan, 1). The word science indicates that this interpretation ought to be systematic, unbiased, and that the conclusions ought to be observable and unavoidable; that is, what is found in the Scriptures by one should be that which others will find also—this is similar to the idea of 2 Peter 1:20, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” God’s Word should not be subject to the reader; rather it is His singular, unified, reasonable (cf Isa. 1:18) product which is in every part and in its sum truth (Psa. 119:160, ASV)!

Ultimately there are two potential means of

hermeneutics. The first is “exegesis” which “means to lead out. It is the application of principles of hermeneutics in bringing out the meaning of any writing which might otherwise be difficult to understand” (Dungan, 1). In contrast to “exegesis” is “*eisegesis*” which Merriam-Webster defines as “the interpretation of a text (as of the Bible) by reading into it one’s own ideas.” In studying a passage, any passage, the Bible student must be careful not to read into the text what may be his own biases and presuppositions; rather, one must check any such at the door and approach the text with the attitude that he is going to receive from it what the original recipients would have received. As an example, the doctrines of Calvinism which had really originated with Augustine would not have originally been considered in studying Psalm 51:5 or Ephesians 1:4-6; rather, the reader of David would have considered what had taken place in David’s mother’s history that caused him to be conceived in iniquity, and the church at Ephesus would have realized that the church to which they had been added in baptism was a Divinely foreordained institution. Likewise, the doctrine of premillennialism which began shortly after the close of inspiration under a man named Cerinthus would not have been on the minds of the disciples leaving Jerusalem who heard Jesus prophesy of the destruction of Judea and of the Second Coming (Matt. 24); if not before, then when they saw the Romans at Jerusalem’s doorstep, they would have recognized that Jesus was speaking of two separate events. If the Bible student can remove what he may have erroneously been taught and can put himself into the shoes of the original recipients, then he can begin to study exegetically.

The proper action requires the proper tools. A carpenter would not go to work with a sewing kit; a mechanic would not go to work with a physician's bag; and a physician would not go to work with a lumberman's tools. The Bible student must have the right tools. The first and primary is the Word of God—the Bible. One should choose a faithful translation which is more concerned with conveying God's words than merely his thoughts; that is, he should choose something more literal than paraphrastic, and yet still readily understandable. It is not necessary to know the original languages in order to know God's Word. There are a couple of demonstrations of that fact: first, Jesus used a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Greek Septuagint, when He would quote from it; second, God's Will is that all be saved; therefore, it can be reasoned that He will have and will yet providentially make sure that His Word be transmitted faithfully. One may be sure, then, that he can have an accurate copy of God's Word, but he must be discerning in choosing which one to study—some that are reliable include the King James Version, the American Standard Version, the New King James Version, and the English Standard Version; some that are not include the New International Version, the Revised Standard Version, the Message and others.

What are some other tools which may be of use to the Bible student? The Bible class may be considered a tool and should not be avoided on the congregational level; moreover, there are other avenues through which one may attend Bible classes, for example, auditing at a school which is striving to faithfully teach the Word of God—some of the programs may have a financial cost

while others may be free; others may have a set time schedule while others may be flexible. Either way, there are sound schools which are open to any who wish to take classes. A congregation's, school's, preacher's, or other individual Bible student's library can be a helpful tool for Bible study. Some good Bible encyclopedias and dictionaries, commentaries, atlases, lectureship books, class books, and so forth can help to broaden a student's understanding of what the Bible says. The message of Scripture is clear, but sometimes the extra tools can help bring out nuances that make the study even richer than it may otherwise have been. Increasingly sound media (CDs/DVDs/television/radio/internet) is being produced that can promote, supplement, or even provide Bible study—and these are increasingly available for lower costs. Some of the classes from various sources such as the World Video Bible School, the On-line Academy of Biblical Studies, and the Memphis School of Preaching MOST program are available in one or more of these formats. Also today, there is a proliferation of Bible programs for computers, tablets, smart phones, and other devices. Many of these programs contain vast libraries which are ever growing. Some of these like Accordance and Logos can have some hefty costs involved, while others like e-Sword may be available for free on some platforms. As with many other things, you generally get what you pay for in ease of use and greater variety of tools being available for a premium.

The most important action in Bible study is application! If the Word of God will not be applied, it might as well be unopened. David could pen, "I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts" (Psa.

119:100) and "...a good understanding have all they that do his commandments..." (Psa. 111:10). Jesus said,

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it (Matt. 7:24-27).

The Proper Ambition

Why does one hope to gain from Bible study? There are three aims: first, to please God; second, to glorify God; and third, to save himself and others.

"Without faith it is impossible to please [God-DFC]" (Heb. 11:6), and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). God is pleased when the Bible students so develops faith and then acts upon it through doing the Will of God!

When God's Word is studied and applied, it will be lived by those who are His and will be seen even by those who are not—so shall God be glorified! To this end, Jesus told His disciples, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Moreover, when those

others are themselves won to the cause of Christ by the Bible student, God is glorified; again, as Jesus said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit..." (John 15:8). Only the diligent Bible student will be able to speak and labor effectively for God; that speaking and laboring gives God glory. Peter wrote,

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever (1 Peter 4:11).

The Psalmist wrote, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. ...Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." It is through Bible study, proper application, and the sharing of God's Word, that the Christian may save himself and others (1 Tim. 4:16).

Conclusion

With the proper attitude, the proper approach, the proper action, and the proper ambition, one will find that his Bible study is successful and God-glorifying. May Bible students ever make effective Bible study a key part of their service to Him.

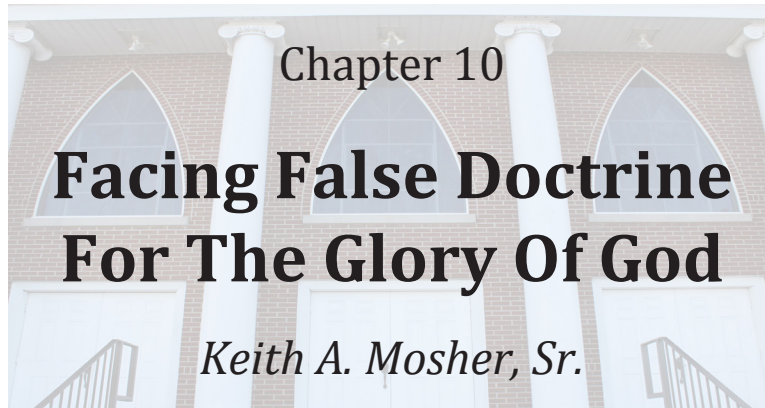
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Two facts were discovered in researching the material concerning facing false doctrine while giving glory to God. In the first place, trying to identify the essence of false doctrine, as that doctrine affects churches of Christ, is much like trying to describe a million shooting stars hitting the earth all at once. Those who propagate false teachings have no real, objective structure to their thinking patterns and are much like water which can exist as gas, liquid, or solid depending on the external temperature. Those who teach false doctrine can appear as conservative, objective, subjective, intellectual (or non), compassionate, and loving (unless questioned), depending on the external nature of the audience.

In the second place, trying to scale down the huge amount of error available in books and websites is much like trying to stop a tsunami. There were found 20,834 sites on the internet covering error and churches of Christ without including the thousands of other sites that indicate the relationship between the thought patterns of liberal politicians and liberal theologians. Facing false doctrine is

like trying to capture the wind! Note the following quote from those who teach error:

We see the church floundering between two equally disastrous paths. On the one hand are those who advocate a rationalistic orthodoxy (i:e faithful Christians, K.M. which arrogantly imposes its own limited scheme upon the Bible and places human restrictions on God. On the other hand are those who are increasingly attracted by a generic Protestant pietism—sprinkled generously with therapeutic terminology—which eagerly caters to the shifting whims of the surrounding society. We have little sympathy with either of these secularizing options. We plead for a return to our own historic roots in the central message of the Bible (Allen 2).

By the phrase, “the central message of the Bible,” the author meant that only baptism and the Lord’s supper were essential elements in fellowship. And the same author added:

We have used the term “transcendence” often in this book. By this term we point to the fact that God is infinitely greater than ourselves, that he is the majestic sovereign of the universe upon whom we must depend for life itself, that he works in mysterious ways which defy our shallow understanding, that he is the very standard of holiness in whose light our nobelist efforts are meager indeed, and that we finally must acknowledge his will and not our own (Allen 3).

All Christians exalt the Bible, but what the above author meant is that the Bible does say certain things about God, but He is above the Bible and man cannot restrict God to His Word because man cannot properly interpret that Word since God, in His **mysterious way** transcends His Word. To those who teach false doctrine, then, the Bible is not enough but the psalmist wrote:

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name, for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth, **for thou hast magnified thy word above thy name** (Psa. 138:2, emphasis added, K.M; KJV).

To face false doctrine and to give glory to the Father requires recognizing that error is not new; that false teachers are an arrogant lot; that error is unstructured and ambiguous; that those in error view the Bible as restrictive; that error is ritualistic; and that those in error believe that their theories are facts.

False Doctrine Is Not New

Sawyer pointed out that the father of modern liberal theology is usually thought to be Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (6). Schleiermacher was educated in Moravian pietism, but then embraced **romanticism**, which stresses the subjective analysis of a doctrine rather than the logical examination of all of a teaching's parts (Ibid.). Those who follow such error are prone to argue for a **relevant** or **modern** profession of Christ that allows one to be a disciple yet be up to date with the world. Sawyer also argued that the goal of such modernism was not "to

destroy historic Christianity,” but to salvage some form of discipleship from the leftovers of the seventeenth century enlightenment (1). Coats also noted that modern error was not new but was borrowed from its forefathers (7).

Certainly, Bible students know that Satan introduced error to the very first humans (Gen. 3:4-5). In order, then, to face any false teaching, God’s people must realize that what they are hearing is not new at all, but is the grandchild of thousands of years of built up error originating with Satan. Centuries of religious philosophy have infiltrated the modern mind so that feelings, and a myriad of things foreign to God’s Word have to be encountered. However, not one of the modernist’s ideas is new.

False Teachers Are “Arrogant”

False teachers are actually in a very awkward intellectual bind:

Their ideology clearly has the coloring of a religion but part of that theology is the renunciation of religion in favor of rationality. For them it is a real Catch—22! Without reflection, liberals of today have adopted the labels of secularism that have been attached to the liberal fallout from classical dialecticism (cf. Marxism and evolution, K.M.). Those in error really believe that their ideology is scientific (Liberalism 5).

Applying the above arrogant secularism’s position to false teachers in churches of Christ, or in all religion, is not difficult. If one examines the messages spewing forth

from some of **our** universities and realizes that **every** nineteenth and nearly every twentieth century college was started by brethren apostatized (West and Coats, 41-238), one soon recognizes how prideful false teachers are. An unknown author wrote: “Our modern ideologues still retain the ancient antagonism of leftists against religion.” [In churches of Christ such false teachers despise Bible quoting, K.M.] This is especially true of liberal intellectuals most of whom firmly believe that religion is an “albatross carried around by the unenlightened” (Liberalism 4).

False teachers seek change for the sake of change and they usually want things **their way**. Some, in recent years, have removed the sign in front of the building that indicated that the church of Christ met there for worship and put up a sign that read community church or such. But many, who love change, do not take down the sign about the church. Why? False teachers, who are arrogant intellectuals, must appear to be sincere and must try to change all things in a hidden way. Jesus identified such false teachers and warned about their deviousness:

Beware of false prophets, which shall come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matt. 7:15-20).

For the Christian to give God the glory while facing such arrogance, he must follow the advice of Peter and not run with the false teacher in the “same excess of riot” (1 Peter 4:4). Paul noted that:

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord (Rom. 12:18-19).

But, at the same time one is practicing compassion for those in error, one must not compromise doctrine: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). Anti-Bible teachers want to redefine all belief systems and will bad-mouth biblical instructors as the radical, religious right. While at the same time, the false teacher is proposing a **truce** with the Bible (Momem 2). Such a mindset of being opposed to the Word of God, as stated above, can be traced to the dawn of humanity (Gen. 2:16-3:6).

False Teachers Are Unstructured And Ambiguous

Theological agnosticism is the term invented by scholars to describe the theories of Albrecht Ritschl, who saw religion in terms of personal efforts to establish his idea of the kingdom of God on earth by a subjective determination of moral and ethical values (Sawyer 7-8). Rational (i.e what the Bible says about God) was out and religion, per Ritschl, was strictly a phenomenological

experience (Ibid.). That is, only what one sees for oneself in **this** world (cf. existentialism) or in **verifiable** history should be considered religious. Ritschl said that: “Knowledge of God as He was in Himself, His essence and attributes falls outside the possibility of human experience so no positive assertions concerning His nature can be made” (Ibid.). Such views as Ritschl’s try to divorce faith from reason, but God said: “Come now, let us reason together” (Isa. 1:18a).

To give God the glory when facing false doctrine in today’s post-modern world requires the understanding that, to most, the existence of God **cannot** be rationally demonstrated, but since man **appears to need some higher power, one probably exists**. Therefore, the “god” of Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Stoicism, or any other “ism,” is the same for all. The apostle Philip once asked Jesus to “shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us” (John 14:8).

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father (John 14:9)?

In essence, Jesus told Philip that he had all the objective evidence he needed to know the God of heaven and that to **know** Jesus was to **know** God. The most that can be said about God by false teachers today is that since someone named Jesus did exist in history then there is the **impression** left that God does exist. It is often necessary today, when studying with anyone for the first time, that the very existence of God must be proven to the student and believed by him before any further study can be done.

For, in order to be saved, one must know God, and such a concept gives glory to God (John 17:3).

False Teachers View The Bible As Restrictive

One false teacher, claiming association with churches of Christ, has written:

Accepting our status as finite, time-bound mortals, we must also accept the finite and therefore revisable status of our theological pronouncements. Theology, in fact, might be defined as human interpretation of divine revelation. God has revealed himself in history and in Scripture, **[It is most interesting to note that the pronouns referring to God are not capitalized but the word, scripture, is in this quote, K.M.]** but our interpretation of that revelation takes place within time, under the conditions of creaturely finitude. For all of his protests against theology and theologians, Alexander Campbell himself wrote theology—a great deal of it in fact. He even wrote a book called *The Christian System* (1835), where he tried to lay out in a somewhat systematic way his interpretation of the Christian faith. But it was partly (maybe even mostly) the Christian system and partly the Campbell system. (How much of one or the other depends to a considerable degree upon how one views the tradition which Mr. Campbell did so much to inaugurate.) Such an awareness teaches us that,

while we acknowledge God's great claims upon us, we make modest claims for our theology. It teaches us that we must continue our efforts with humility, prayer, and the encouragement of others who also attempt to live out the Christian commitment. We can continue our quest with vigor and excitement, welcoming new and deeper insights and revising older, settled ones in the process, because we know that it is not finally our theology that saves us but the gracious work of God proclaimed in the gospel (Allen 12-13).

A careful reading of the above quotation will lead one to the conclusion that the author did not believe that absolute truth was ever attainable and that all churches of Christ had was a **Campbellian** tradition from which to practice faith. The above writer would revise his teaching whenever he thought he was too restrictive or unlike the world; but he then makes the amazing claim that he knew of the gracious work of God and "proclaimed in the gospel" (Ibid.). One wonders how he could know what the gospel is, since he would think such knowledge should be revised! To give God the glory, one must understand that the truth can be known and followed (John 8:31-32).

False Teachers Are Ritualistic

Modernistic false doctrine is filled with teachings regarding **killing God** (i:e a plethora of attempts to eliminate His influence from society) and with the idea of replacing Christianity with ego-centered humanism

(Wilbur 2). Ancient biblical truths are considered by humanists to be pre-rational myth and any conversations with such persons about Holy Writ are deemed by them to be a huge waste of time, because to the modernist the Bible is **unscientific**. Those who would preach the gospel message in order to transform the world embrace the God of the Bible, are by their definition, **on a witch hunt** (Wilbur 3).

False teachers, who are satiated with modernism, and now living among churches of Christ, find it appalling that one would try to convert another out of a denomination. For example, only a few **core scriptures** apply and all others are to be disregarded and never taken literally. In other words, when facing false doctrine today, one must remember that even so-called members of the church of Christ have decided to go to their places of worship, go through the motions, but leave the rest of the world to itself. This latter attitude is ritualistic, for the modernist believes that one experiences God, but one can learn little about Him from the Bible.

Anyone who has dealt with one having a mind filled with error is well aware of the vitriolic nature of such individuals whenever their teachings are questioned. Seemingly, the psychological impetus for the ad hominem attitude coming from false teachers is that they, having ensconced themselves on a throne of religious authority, are quite incensed when any other person questions their reasoning. [One brother, when questioned about his teaching that philosophy and higher education are the sources of faith, wrote and accused the questioner of being “narrow-minded, bigoted, and unproductive in the

salvation of the lost” (Shelly, personal letter to Keith A. Mosher, Sr.)]

One facing false doctrine, in order to give God the glory, will become acquainted with the concept that a person teaching error actually believes that his theories are facts. Psychologists label the thought processes of a conservative thinker as **convergent**, but the tag put on the liberal’s intellectual efforts is **divergent** (Momen 11). Convergent thinking is deductive, objective analysis and focuses on all the facts to draw a conclusion warranted by the evidence. Divergent thinkers, however, prize intuition and aim to include all probabilities, rather than arriving at any conclusions. The apostle Paul described divergent thinkers as “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:7). Perhaps when faced with modernistic false teachers, the faithful child of God can have some sympathy for such twisted thinking, for the amazing thing is that they think that their intuitions are facts.

It is the case that evolutionists and social scientists dominate among divergent thinkers, and in the church, such thought processes result in the belief that absolute truth is unobtainable. The false teacher will stereotype the Bible believer as **legalistic** and opposed to academia and the one who is in error actually believes that only modernists are true thinkers (Momen 1). Coats wrote:

It is heart breaking to see many of our young brethren deceived by liberal philosophy. They call it contemporary. The false teaching has an appeal to young minds when men use smooth words and fair speeches. What a tragic waste

when brothers become imbued with the heretical ideas propounded when brethren sit at the feet of modernist professors long enough to learn how to copy them, then infiltrate our schools with borrowed infidelity. I do not know why the liberal professors try to impress people with their abilities, when they are nothing more than the ability to repeat what infidels have offered (16).

The answer, as to **why** false teachers **borrow from infidels**, is that they believe that their theories are facts, as does the evolutionist who has such faith in his non-scientific conclusions as to count them as scientific absolutes. Christians view the Bible as absolute truth, whereas a false teacher sees Holy Writ as an error-filled guide to his own experiences. Glory to God is shown by those who believe the Bible and, when facing false teachers, by those who are embarrassed even to listen to their theories without an answer (Eph. 5:11).

Conclusion

A false teacher, is not, by definition, a secular person because in today's world "there are two groups of people in the world, the 'tolerant' and the 'enlightened' versus the 'intolerant' and 'unenlightened'" (Choice 1). A false teacher is a kind of gnostic modernist who has not rejected the spiritual realities in life, but at the same time he has rejected the Bible. Christians must not grow discouraged, for such false teaching is not new, but is ambiguous, ritualistic, and views the Bible as too restrictive for

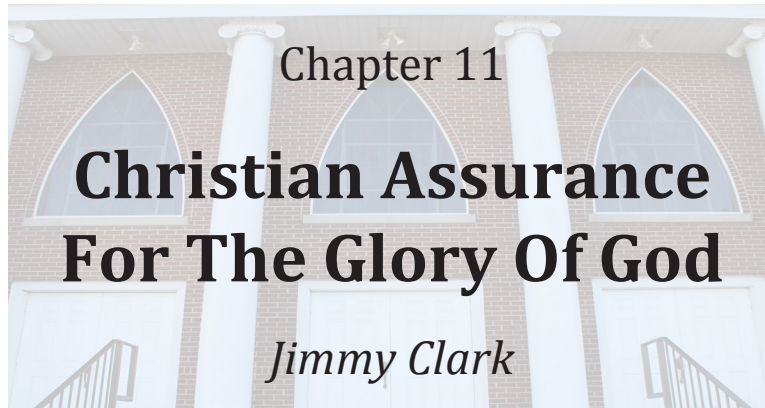
its psychological comfort. Giving God the glory under such circumstances requires an understanding that the positions held by those in error are thought of as facts by the false teachers (but in reality they are mere assertions or theories) and requires learning that from the time that Eve heard Satan, God's children have faced false doctrine. But, Jesus said that those who were persecuted would be blessed, if that persecution came because of standing for truth (Matt. 5:10-12).

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Facing False Doctrine For The Glory Of God

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Everything that the child of God is to do is to be to the glory of God. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31, KJV). While the Christian lives to serve God, there is an honest understanding that one will not be sinless in one’s life. John wrote, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). How can the child of God know that he comes far short of the glory of God (cf. Rom. 3:23) and have assurance unto the glory of God at the same time? The breadth of the New Testament gives insight into this topic.

Paul wrote to the Roman brethren,

Therefore 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 (Rom. 5:1-2).

These words are set against the background of the scheme of redemption that is found in Christ. Three

items will be considered in exploring the Christian's assurance.

The Plan Of Redemption In Christ

The Lord God knew that man would sin before there was the creation of heaven and earth. Paul wrote,

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him (Eph. 3:8-12).

All of that is one complete sentence in the third chapter of Ephesians. The scope of those words goes from before creation unto the time of Paul's inspired writing, and even beyond to today and the end of time. The gospel Paul preached to both Jew and Gentile was to bring the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose to fruition; namely, the existence of the church, the saved, on earth. This is what God had in mind before the words "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3) were ever spoken. God intended to save man from his sins and bring him into fellowship with both the Godhead

and the redeemed. Man's proper understanding of how God would save man would have a spiritual effect upon the mind and heart of the saved ones. Notice again how Paul closes the above sentence, where he says, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Eph. 3:12). Those words are synonymous with Christian assurance.

The scheme of redemption is the divine plan of God to bring man out of his sin and into a right relationship with God. When the wise woman of Tekoa approached David about bringing Absalom back home, she stated,

Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished. For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him (2 Sam. 14:13-14).

This means or plan devised by God is summarized in Paul's words to the Roman brethren, where he wrote,

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:24-26).

God's plan through the redemption in Christ was to both establish God's righteousness to condemn those who are outside of Christ and the justice of God in saving those who have access to forgiveness in Christ. Therefore, the work of Christ in redemption was to provide assurance of both forgiveness of sin and reconciliation to God. Herein lies man's peace and hope and confidence.

The Place Of Man's Faith In The Obedience Of Faith

The height of the conflict in the minds of men concerning salvation is that salvation is never by meritorious works, but through faith that is tied to the work of Christ in redemption. Calvinism and the doctrines that gave rise to that systematic belief system pervert the true and clear teaching of the New Testament as it relates to what man must do to be saved. Man did not tell God how to save him and thus the plan was of God and not of man. Paul wrote again to the Roman brethren,

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen (Rom. 11:33-36).

The eternal plan devised by God was without any help from mankind. It is man that must rely on God's wisdom in

the gospel, not make God dependent upon man's thinking for his salvation. The meritorious works system of many ancient religions was followed up by the opposite extreme system of Calvinism that placed all responsibility upon God without man's effort. Both pervert the true nature of the plan of redemption, the nature of man, the nature of Biblical faith and thus the nature of assurance.

The application of God's saving plan is by grace through faith that is tied to the obedience of that faith. Paul wrote in the book of Romans,

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name (Rom. 1:1-5).

Again,

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith (Rom. 16:25-26).

It is faith that keeps such commands as repentance, confession, baptism, righteous living, etc. from becoming meritorious works. All actions of obedience are simply expressions of faith toward the work of Christ to the application of the grace of God that is extended. Therefore, there is no boasting on man's part (cf. Rom. 3:27) where he understands his total dependence on the merit found in Christ, not in man or his own actions. Obedience is necessary (cf. Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Thess. 1:8-9), but such is not meritorious in the actions. Where Calvinism would place all responsibility upon God for salvation and sanctification seeing that the fundamental doctrine of Calvinism is total hereditary depravity, such would lead man to think that he is assured without responsibility on his part. This places God in an awkward position of saving all [which while it is the desire of God that all be saved (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4), it is equally true that all will not be saved (cf. Matt. 7:13-14, 21-23)] or being a respecter of persons [which is contrary to the nature of God (cf. Rom. 2:11)] to save some and condemn others. The faith of man expressed in obedience to the conditions given by God place the glory upon God and not upon man. This is the heart of salvation by grace. Grace does not encourage man to sin (cf. Rom. 6:1-2) but to live unto God who has saved him from sin (cf. Rom. 6:3-13). Therefore, it is as Paul stated, "That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31). The redeemed have confidence that the Lord will be faithful to keep the promises. Works of men excluded from faith become meritorious works and thus would produce confidence in man's abilities and not God's work through Christ (cf. Rom. 9:31-10:4). Faith as

mere personal acceptance without the expressions to meet the conditions to show the obedience of faith is merely a faith without works or a dead faith (cf. James 2:17, 26). Such a faith is worthless and could not produce anything but a false sense of security. It is not man's actions alone or man's faith alone but a faith that works by love (cf. Gal. 5:6) that avails.

The Pursuit Of Living In View Of Such Assurance

The New Testament books from Romans to Revelation give the disposition of mind and the manner of life that comes from a proper view of grace and its corresponding effects. Paul wrote to the Roman brethren after having discussed the depth of God's righteous plan in Christ,

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

Paul wrote to the Ephesian brethren,

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called (Eph. 4:1).

Paul wrote to the Philippian brethren,

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and

see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27).

Paul wrote to the Colossian brethren,

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory (Col. 3:1-4).

Paul's confidence at the end of his life (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7-8) shows his application of such passages.

The book of Hebrews gives several passages on the subject of confidence. It is written,

But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end (Heb. 3:6).

Again, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14). Another word for confidence in the book is the term boldness. It is written further,

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, ye without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy,

and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:15-16).

Again,

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) (Heb. 10:19-23).

It is with those passages that the following exhortation is made, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Heb. 10:35).

The book of First John is an excellent example of the assurance that Christians have in Christ and in the hope of eternal life. John wrote,

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us (1 John 5:13-14).

John wrote previously,

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God (1 John 3:18-21).

John's epistles were written to give confidence in the brethren that the faith that was embraced by them would see them through to the end.

Jude wrote in troubling times, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21). Again,

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24).

The strong faith that keeps one to the Lord's side would be rewarded in the end.

The book of Revelation is a book that is strong in encouragement. The seven congregations in Asia Minor were suffering from both within and without (cf. Rev. 2 and 3). John began the letter with the words,

I John, who am also your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:9).

John would encourage with such words as, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). Again,

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (Rev. 7:16-17).

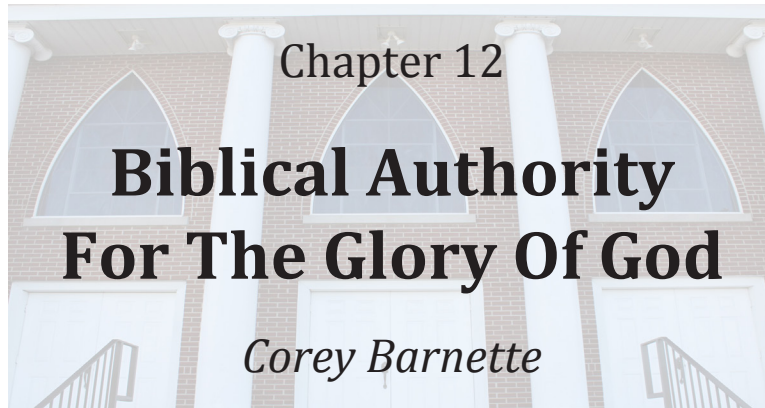
And again,

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 (Rev. 12:11).

Furthermore,

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them (Rev. 14:13).

All of the New Testament books were designed to produce faith with its corresponding way of life and to strengthen that resolve, even in the face of extreme difficulty. Jesus did not say in vain, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4) quoting Deuteronomy 8:3. The blessed assurance of the Christian is tied to the strength of the word of God in the heart and life. Jesus Himself exemplified that and all those who follow such a course know by application the values thereof.



Let me begin by thanking the East Hill congregation for the privilege of being part of such a good work as this lectureship. The theme, “To God Be the Glory,” is a great topic to be discussed, for indeed He deserves the glory.

Introduction

One of the most common reasons that some of the people of God go into error is a lack of respect for God’s authority. This is not a new phenomenon that has just come on the scene. It has been the case in every dispensation of time that some of God’s children have rejected the authority of God. Thus, in so doing, God has not been glorified!

How can I state that God has not been glorified when people reject His authority? Simply, I can refer to two verses. Children of God are to live their lives in ways that “...glorify...” their “...Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).¹ Paul then commanded the church at Colosse,

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him (Col. 3:17).

To do things "...in the name of the Lord Jesus..." is to do as He has authorized. When I do not care enough about the authority of God to make sure that my actions are in accordance to His Word, then I cannot truly glorify God.

Since my being pleasing to God hinges on doing things in His name, it is my duty to search God's Word to see how and what He has authorized. As an aid to this work, I would encourage the reader of this manuscript to obtain a copy of the late Roy C. Deaver's book, *Ascertaining Bible Authority*. It helps the Bible student in this endeavor. As one studies, he will learn that along with expediency, there are three distinct ways that God authorizes through the Bible. These three are direct statements, approved examples and inferences/implications.

Direct Statements

Our first discussion on how God authorizes is the topic of direct statements. In other words, God explicitly commands an action, or actions, to take place. If God has plainly said what He wants done, and then man does otherwise, God is not glorified.

Take for instance Noah's building of the ark. God was very specific about the design and construction of the ark (Gen. 6:14-22). The ark was to be made of a certain wood, gopher wood (v. 14). There was to be a certain length, width and height of the ark (v. 15). There was to be a single window and a single door of the ark (v. 16).

God made it abundantly clear what was expected of Noah. Contrary to those today who advocate doing anything and everything so long as one is “sincere,” Noah understood that when God gives direct statements, He wants them followed to the very letter (v. 22). If Noah had used any other wood than gopher wood, he would not have brought glory to God. If Noah had built the ark with different dimensions than those given by God, he would not have brought glory to God. If Noah had made more windows and doors than prescribed, he would not have brought glory to God.

Surely Noah had other types of wood at his disposal. Why did he not just use oak, maple, fir, pine or some other kind instead of gopher? Surely Noah could have made the ark larger or smaller. Why did he make it with just the given specifications? Surely Noah could have made more windows and doors. Why did he just make one a piece? Noah understood that God authorizes through direct statements. Therefore to give God glory, Noah had to do precisely as God commanded (v. 22).

Another good example of God’s authority being demonstrated through direct statements is found in the account of Saul and the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15). God had made it clear in the time of Moses that there would be a punishment and destruction brought one day upon the people of Amalek (Exo. 17:14). The fulfillment of this destruction was to come by the hands of Saul and the Israelites.

God, through the prophet Samuel, make it very clear what was expected of Saul.

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass (1 Sam. 15:3).

This is what God authorized. It was directly stated. Therefore, the only way that Saul could glorify God through this process was to do exactly as God said. Unfortunately, as is the case with so many today, Saul failed to give God glory.

The Bible has recorded for us the sad news that:

...Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly (1 Sam. 15:9).

Saul did not do what was authorized! Oh yes, he tried to claim that he did such. He was even so bold as to say, "...I have performed the commandment of the LORD" (1 Sam. 15:13). Also he claimed, "...Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me..." (1 Sam. 15:20).

Saul tried to make it seem that doing part of what God authorized was enough to be pleasing to the LORD and enough to glorify the LORD. Yet, as has been said many times before, "partial obedience is disobedience." When man violates God's authority of a direct statement, then that man sins. Samuel made that point profoundly by saying:

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath rejected thee from being king (1 Sam. 15:23).

One way to bring God glory is to do what He authorizes through direct statements.

Approved Examples

Our second discussion as to how God authorizes through the Bible is the study of approved examples. In other words, are there records in God's Word of how faithful Christians behaved that show us how to glorify God? The answer is yes. When we see the first century church doing certain actions, and in turn, God being pleased with those actions, we know that we can emulate those behaviors so far as we are able.

There are obviously some things that the first century church did that brought glory to God that we are unable to do today. The performing of miraculous deeds is not possible, nor needed, for Christians in the twenty-first century (1 Cor. 13:10). Therefore, the examples of first century Christians utilizing the nine spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 is not an approved example for us.

However, there are things that Christians did then that are still binding on us today. Some of those things are not found authorized by direct statements, but rather by the practice and execution of the church in the first century.

Perhaps the most widely discussed approved example is found in Acts 20:7. It is this verse that shows the pattern of behavior of the Lord's church pertaining to

when Christians should partake of the Lord's Supper.

It should be noted that the observance of this memorial feast is authorized by direct statements, but the actual timing of the practice is never directly given (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-34). Therefore, how can we be sure that we partake at a time that is authorized by God, and thus gives glory to God? That answer is found through an approved example.

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight (Acts 20:7).

It was the regular practice of inspired apostles and faithful brethren to partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week. It was a known occurrence of the first century church. Paul, being in the company of the disciples during the documented occasion, no doubt partook himself that day. Would Paul, and other faithful brethren, have engaged in such an action if it were displeasing to God? Would those Christians have continued to do something that brought shame, instead of glory, to God? The answer is obviously no.

Those first century Christians had understanding of what God authorized when it came to the timing of the Lord's Supper. Through their execution of what was authorized, they brought glory to God. When we, who are Christians today, follow their approved example, we in like manner are doing as God has authorized, and thus we bring glory to God as well. It does not matter if the clock reads 8:00 A.M. or 5:00 P.M. when it comes to the partaking of

the Lord's Supper, just so long as the calendar indicates that it is the first day of the week.

Any group that does not heed this approved example does so at the expense of being pleasing to God and being able to glorify God. Some groups may partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, but not every first day of the week. Perhaps they partake only twice a year, or maybe once a month. They still make sure that they do such on the first day of the week, but are they doing what God authorizes through the approved example found in Acts 20:7? No! Some may try to partake on some other day than the first day of the week. Is this practice going to give glory to God? No! "The point which makes it sinful to observe the Supper on Thursday night is the fact that there is no authority for it."² The approved example of the first century Christians was to partake of the Lord's Supper each first day of the week.

A second way that God is glorified is by doing what He has authorized through approved examples.

Inferences / Implications

Our third discussion as to how God authorizes is the study of inferences or implications. In other words, are there things that God authorizes that are neither found in directly stated passages or examples that are to be followed? Has information been supplied that suggests a certain behavior is acceptable and therefore able to glorify God? Yes!

We must be careful to understand the proper way to determine what is being inferred in Scripture. "Inference

deals with correct reasoning, but correct reasoning (in this context) with regard to what God has implied.”³ George Beals put it this way,

An implicit statement or teaching of the Bible, as the name ‘implicit’ suggests, is a teaching which the Bible implies. That is, it is a teaching which the reader can correctly deduce from the very words which are in the Bible. Or, put in another way, the Bible’s implicit teachings are those statements which must also be true due to the truth of the Bible’s explicit teachings.⁴

Let us take for example an explicit teaching of the Bible. “And the time of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:” (Acts 17:30). This verse implies that John Doe has to do something that is authorized by God. That something is repent. Please notice that nowhere in Acts 17:30 is John Doe’s name explicitly stated. Yet, since John Doe is a man, and since God commands all men to repent, the Bible infers/implies that John Doe must repent to give glory to God. Therefore, inference/implication is another way that God authorizes.

How about another example? Remember the Ethiopian eunuch mentioned in Acts 8. That man had been studying the writings of Isaiah, and with a little help from a Gospel preacher, had learned about Jesus. Upon learning of Jesus, the eunuch desired to be baptized for the remission of his sins. He said, “...See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized” (Acts 8:36)? There is no verse that explicitly says that Philip mentioned the need to be baptized before the eunuch’s question. Yet,

through inference/implication, we can rightfully conclude that when someone correctly preaches Jesus to another individual, baptism should be included.

Also, in that same segment of Scriptures the Bible authorizes John Doe to do something before he can be baptized. The Ethiopian eunuch was told:

...If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37).

Since belief in Jesus was necessary before the eunuch could be baptized, it is right to infer that John Doe must also believe before he can be baptized. That is authorized from Acts 8 and therefore gives glory to God. It quickly becomes apparent that inference/implication must be used frequently by a faithful Bible student. So if we want to glorify God, we must respect and accept the third way that God authorizes, which is inference/implication.

Conclusion

It will not take a person who is around me for very long to learn that I am plain spoken and politically "incorrect." I would rather someone come right out and tell me the way things are as opposed to tip-toeing around them. So that is what I am going to do here.

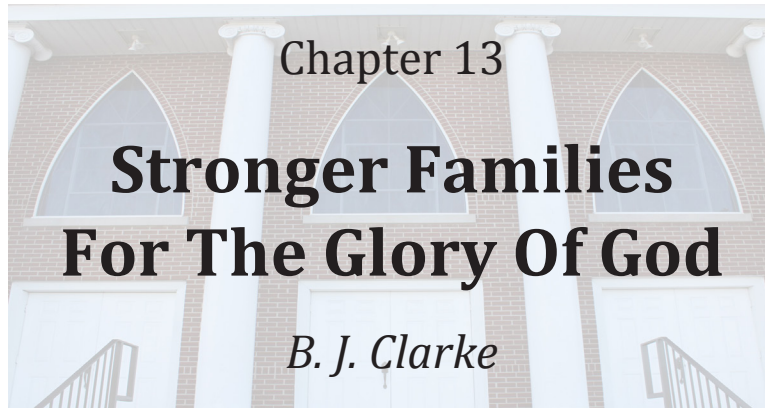
In many places, and due to the actions of many people, God is not being glorified today! Even though activities and practices are done with the intent of pleasing God, often times those efforts would have been better left undone. God has authorized man to do certain things, and if we want to give glory to God, then we will do only those

things that are authorized. We will also swallow our pride and extinguish our ideas that cause us to think that we can improve on what God has said. Look to the Bible friend. Are there direct statements that God has commanded? Follow them. Are there approved examples that God has authorized? Do them. Are there inferences/implications that apply to us? Obey them.

There are multitudes of individuals who no longer seemingly care what God has authorized. The ignorance, pride and disrespect that these persons are exhibiting is going to cause them to be punished in Hell unless they repent. Are you one of them? Please decide today to give God the glory by following His authority.

Works Cited

- 1 All Scripture references are from the King James Version of the Bible.
- 2 Roy C. Deaver, **Ascertaining Bible Authority** (Biblical Notes Publishing, 1997), p. 55.
- 3 Ibid., p. 57.
- 4 George F. Beals, **How Implication Binds and Silence Forbids Studies in Biblical Hermeneutics** (Ann Arbor, MI: PC Publications, 1998), p. 7.



Introduction

There are many things this world needs at this moment in history, but perhaps there is nothing it needs more than stronger families with stronger devotion to God. It is one thing to say that we need stronger families—it is quite another to show how to accomplish this goal. The formula for stronger families is not complex and mysterious. Reading and heeding the manual that the Creator of the family provided is the best way to glorify God in our families.

We know from Proverbs 14:34 that “Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” Obviously, if a home is a “Christian” home it is because the parents are leading the children to follow after the righteous principles of God’s Word. Hence, a Christian home is committed to righteousness. But what is righteousness? All of God’s commandments are righteousness (Psa. 119:172). Thus, the person who fears God and works righteousness, i.e., obeys the commandments of God, is accepted by God (Acts 10:34-35). John wrote that, “Everyone who doeth

righteousness (i.e., obeys the commandments of God) is righteous” (1 John 2:29).

So, put it all together and this is the pathway to stronger families: (1) Righteousness exalts a nation; (2) All of God’s commandments are righteousness; (3) A nation is righteous to the extent that it respects and obeys God’s commandments; (4) The more a nation respects and obeys God’s commandments, the more righteous it will be; (5) The more righteous a nation is, the more it will be blessed by God; (6) A nation cannot be any more righteous than the homes which make it up.

In other words, the more Christian homes we have in our nation, the stronger our homes will be; and the stronger our homes are, the more righteous our nation will be; and the more righteous our nation is, the more God will be glorified. Let us be more specific and discuss the method for producing stronger families to the glory of God. The Bible is made up of 66 books, with 1189 chapters and over 31,000 verses. Hundreds of commandments populate the pages of the Bible, but we can strengthen our homes by first focusing on the first two of these commandments. Our homes will be made stronger...

By Teaching And Practicing The First And Great Commandment

The greatest commandment is to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind (Matt. 22:35-38; Deut. 6:4-6). We cannot love God unless we believe that He exists. The home is made stronger when it is populated by those who believe that God is, and that He is the Creator (Heb.

11:6; Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6-9; Heb. 3:4). The home is made stronger when we educate our children about the truth of creation and the fallacies of evolution. It is an established fact that when children are taught that they are merely highly evolved animals, rather than the offspring of God, they end up acting like animals in their moral behavior. Even the atheist wants to live in and around people who live as if there is a God.

Once we have established the existence of God, we must remember that we cannot love God unless we listen to what He says. We must educate our children to believe that “there is a God in heaven” (Dan. 2:28) and that He “has spoken.” He has spoken in time past unto the fathers by the prophets (Heb. 1:1). In these last days He has spoken unto us by His Son (Heb. 1:2; Matt. 17:5; Acts 3:22-23). He has spoken unto us through His written Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 14:37; Eph. 3:3-5; John 12:48; Rev. 20:12). How will our children come to know the contents of the written Word? It is God’s will that fathers and mothers educate their children to know His will. Moses exhorted the children of Israel:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates (Deut. 6:6-9).

And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth (Deut. 11:19-21).

These verses make it crystal clear that God expected the children of Israel to educate their offspring concerning the commandments of God. Of course, it is self-evident that we cannot impart unto our children what we do not possess ourselves. Therefore, it is impossible for us to educate them concerning the Word of God, if we have not first educated ourselves. You can't teach what you don't know! Almighty God expects His followers to strengthen the home by educating their children concerning His precepts. Moreover, they were to teach these precepts "diligently," whether they be sitting in the house, walking by the way, rising up in the morning, or lying down for the evening.

People often write things upon the palms of their hands to remind them of something they deem to be important, or they post a note on the front door or the mirror where the message will be seen, and not forgotten. In a similar way, we must teach our children the will of God so diligently that it will be as prominently impressed upon their hearts as a message on a neon sign! The Psalmist echoed the same emphasis regarding the spiritual education of our children. He speaks of the will of God:

Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments (Psa. 78:3-7).

Our view of religion and theology is vitally connected with what “our fathers have told us.” As parents, we must not hide the truth from our children, but rather, we must make it known to our children in order that the generation to come might arise and declare them to their children. We must pass the knowledge of God down to our children as a precious family heirloom. This is precisely what occurred with Lois, Eunice and Timothy. Grandmother Lois passed her sincere faith down to mother Eunice, and they jointly transmitted such to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5). They made certain that from a child, Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15).

After crossing the Jordan River, a monument, consisting of 12 stones, was erected to memorialize the event. Joshua told the people:

...that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the

waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever (Josh. 4:6-7).

Parents of today have no less responsibility to educate their children concerning all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). We must not assume that our children will learn all they need to know about the Bible in their Sunday school class or Wednesday night Bible study. We need to be interactive parents who impress upon our children the fact that we consider their knowledge of God's Word to be the most important knowledge they can accumulate in this life. What impression is left with our children when we make certain they have their books with them before they leave the house for public school, but fail to see to it that they have their Bibles with them before they go to Bible class? Moreover, what impression do our children receive when we expect them to do their homework for public school, but never encourage them to prepare their lessons for Bible class?

Wherever the Bible has gone that society has been elevated. Even the atheist prefers to live in a community where people live by a moral code. When a Christian home teaches its members to respect the authority of God, they are paving the way for the members of that home to respect other authority figures. One will not respect the authority of his/her parents unless he/she has been taught to respect the authority of God. One will not respect the authority of a teacher, police officer, employer, etc. unless he is first taught to respect the authority of God.

How many problems in society stem from a lack of respect for authority and following the rules? Consider the following questions as proof of this concept:

1. Would highway deaths decrease if people had respect for the laws of the land? (Rom. 13:1-7).
2. Would sexually transmitted diseases decrease (or even cease) if men and women respected God's laws concerning fornication? (1 Cor. 7:2; Heb. 13:4).
3. Would fewer children be born out of wedlock? Would children cease being murdered by the horrific practice of abortion? (Prov. 6:17; Psa. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:44; 2:12).
4. Would divorces decrease if people had more respect for God's law concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage? (Mal. 2:16; Matt. 5:32; 19:1-9).
5. Would there be fewer hungry children if their fathers would honor God's commandment to provide for the family? (1 Tim. 5:8).
6. Would there be fewer heart-broken and lonely children if their parents would respect God's instructions for the home?
7. Would profane language cease if men respected God's authority? (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6; Matt. 12:35-37).

The answer to all of the above questions (and countless others which could be asked) is an unqualified "Yes!" The nation would be so much better off if each home was spiritually stronger, and each home would be stronger by teaching its children to love God wholeheartedly, by believing in Him and doing what He says!

By Teaching And Practicing The Second Commandment

The second commandment, like unto the first, is “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 22:39-40). Paul said, “Owe no man anything, but to love another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Rom. 13:8). What difference would it make in society if we would raise up our children to live by this creed? Consider the following things that would be so if every member of the home were to live by the second commandment:

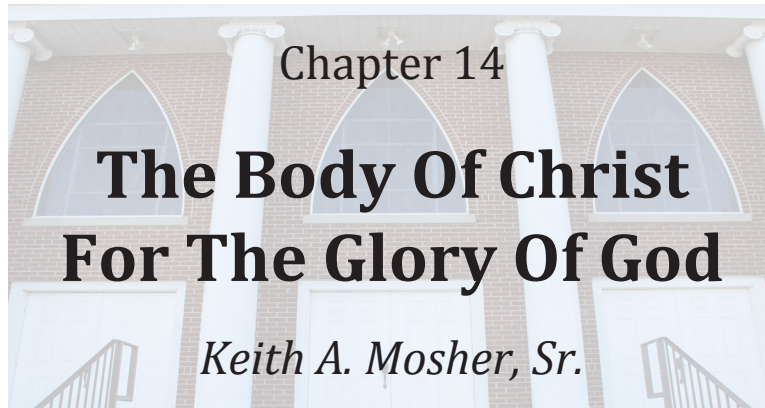
1. If I love my neighbor, I won't commit adultery with his wife (Rom. 13:9; Prov. 6:23-35).
2. If I love my neighbor, I won't murder him (Rom. 13:9; 1 John 3:15).
3. If I love my neighbor, I won't steal from him (Rom. 13:9; Eph. 4:28).
4. If I love my neighbor, I won't bear false witness against him (Rom. 13:9).
5. If I love my neighbor, I won't covet his possessions (Rom. 13:9).
6. If I love my neighbor, I will assist him in his time of trouble (Luke 10:25-37; Gal. 6:10).
7. If I love my neighbor, I will practice the golden rule, and do unto him, as I would have him do unto me (Matt. 7:12).

Conclusion

Imagine a society where Christian homes and Christian thinking dominated the culture. People would seek fulfillment in Christ—not in drugs, or the pursuit of

the pleasures of the flesh. The casinos and brothels would vanish off the face of the earth. Ungodly entertainment would no longer assault us every time we turned on the television. The evening news would not be dominated by reports of the latest rapes, murders and robberies. The preoccupation of each individual would be to fear God and keep His commandments (Eccl. 12:13).

This world will never completely eliminate wickedness, although we can greatly reduce it. However, the more Christian homes we have in a society the more God will be glorified, and the more people will be influenced to find a heavenly home! May we ever do our part, one home at a time, to be strong and to glorify God!



Introduction

One denominational writer admitted in his, *A Short History of the Baptists*, that it would be possible to “organize a church on the apostolic principle” (Vedder 10). However, we are living in a time when even those who profess to be members of the body of the Lord (the church of Christ) and who present themselves as real Christians write articles and preach sermons that cast slurs against the sacred church that was purchased at the highest price possible:

Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28; KJV).

One cannot overemphasize the importance of the church that is the very **body of Christ** and has Jesus as its Head (Eph. 1:22-23). The church’s existence required that the blood of the precious Second Person of the Godhead be

given as the purchase price (Eph. 1:7). So, it is sad to hear teachers, who ought to know better, talk and write about being loyal to Christ but not to the church for, according to them, there is too much **churchianity** among us. I do not know what **churchianity** means, for it is not a real word, but when a Baptist (Vedder, quoted above) can see that one could have a church by following the apostles' teaching, and brethren denigrate that same church, then it is past time on preaching on the one place that one can give glory to God—the church: “Unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3:20).

This study will cover sixteen marks that matter and that describe the church of Christ as set forth in the Bible and then **personal test questions** will be asked as to whether one is in that church or not. The one faith and the one church are under fire, as usual, and it is again time to go into battle against the forces of Satan and to “Abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good” (Rom. 12:9). There are too many today who are afraid of standing for the truth, knowing that there is only one body that will be saved: “And he is the savior of the body” (Eph. 5:23b).

The Church: Her Founder

As noted above, Jesus' blood purchased the church which was not the price of a building but the cost to separate His disciples from the world and to congregate them into one body: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13). Jesus not only bought His disciples

but He constructed them as a kingdom on earth that was to be taken up to God at Jesus' second coming:

And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, (**petros**, a pebble, K.M.) and upon this rock (**petra**, a huge cliff ledge, K.M.) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom, even to the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power (1 Cor. 15:24).

Jesus built His church on the rock bed foundation that He is Deity (Matt. 16:16) and established the fact that His kingdom and His church are the same (Matt. 16:19).

Because the Christ gave all for His bride, He serves as Head of the church and was given the foregoing position by the Father (Eph. 5:23). He is the only lawgiver for His disciples:

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

God receives no glory in a man-made institution and so the question here is: Did Jesus establish your church?

The Church: Her Foundation

The foundation of the true church is Christ (Matt. 16:18). He is the only properly **laid** foundation: "For other

foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). In fact, Jesus is the tried foundation:

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste (Isa. 28:16).

Since Jesus delegated authority to His apostles, they are also spoken of as a foundation of the church of Christ:

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20).

Men have begun a myriad of religions, but the church of Christ is the only one that, if the Bible were destroyed and no one alive knew its contents, the true church could not be established. Even if Luther and Wesley or another were eliminated, however, and their teachings annihilated, there could still be a Lutheran or Methodist group, for a man's ideas began each in the first place. Was your church built on the foundation of Christ or on a human creed?

The Church: Her Beginning

Jesus' death and journey into the hadean realm did not stop His effort to build His church (Matt. 16:18). Note the following: "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell (hades, K.M.), neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31). So, when Jesus came out of the tomb, and then went back to heaven, He began the process of establishing His church, the kingdom of God, on earth (cf. Isa. 2:1-4).

Jesus, on one occasion, told His disciples:

That there be some of them that stand here,
which shall not taste of death, till they seen the
kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1).

The **power** was to come in the city of Jerusalem (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit would come to bring the **power** and that **power** came on Pentecost in A.D 33 in Jerusalem:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come,
they were all with one accord in one place. And
suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of
a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house
where they were sitting. And there appeared
unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it
sat upon each of them. And they were all filled
with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with
other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance
(Acts 2:1-4).

The church started while some were still living who had actually heard, and who had seen, Jesus. Just as Isaiah had prophesied, the “word of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:2-3). Did your church begin on Pentecost in A.D. 33?

The Church: Her Designations

Apostolic authority designated the church of Christ as **my church** (Matt. 16:18). The church is also called **my kingdom** (Luke 22:30; John 18:36); **the kingdom of heaven** (Matt. 16:19); and **the kingdom of God** (John 3:5; Luke 22:16).

There is **the church** (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22; 3:10; 5:23-32). There is **the church of God** (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:13). The designation **churches of Christ**, referring to all the local congregations of God's people, was given by Paul (Rom. 16:16) and he also called her **the house of God** and **the household of God** (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:19). Also the church was known as **the household of faith** (Gal. 6:10); **the kingdom of God's dear Son** (Col. 1:13) and **a kingdom that cannot be shaken** (Heb. 12:28). Is your church ever mentioned in the above designations for God's kingdom?

The Church: Her Membership

The membership of the biblical church has **heard** the gospel message (Acts 18:8) and responded by **believing** that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Acting upon that belief, they **repented** of past sins by making a decision to live for God and not for self (cf. Acts 17:30). They then obeyed the two commands given to penitent believers to **confess** the Deity of Christ before witnesses (1 Tim. 6:12; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10) and to be **baptized**, at which point God took away all their past sins and **added** them to His church and no other (Acts 22:16; Acts 2:47). Have you met the foregoing conditions? Did someone vote on you in order to become a member of his group, or were you christened or confirmed in some denomination?

The Church: Her Worship

Those who respect biblical teaching realize that

only that which is authorized by the New Testament is acceptable to God in worship. If God says to do a thing in a certain way for a certain reason, then such an act should never be added to nor should anything be taken from it (cf. Prov. 30:6; Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19). The majority of religious folks, however, do not limit their worship only to that authorized in the New Testament and far too many will often argue that the Bible never says that we cannot do what we are doing. When God says to do something, then any addition or change is an ungodly act. If I had told my children to play in the front yard and they then proceeded to go into the street, did they disobey me? Or could they argue: "Daddy, you did not say we could not go into the street!" For example, God said to sing in worship using the instrument of the heart and no other (Eph. 5:19). Most add a mechanical instrument to their worship and disobey God.

God authorized the Lord's Supper to be taken on the first day of every week (Acts 20:6-7). Many observe the communion only quarterly or once a year. God authorized giving on the first day of every week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). [It is quite surprising how many non-biblical churches practice the foregoing!] God authorized prayer and preaching in the worship (1 Tim. 2:2; 2 Tim. 4:1-2) but no other acts of worship have biblical mandates. Does your church add to the authorized acts?

The Church: Her Work

The church (Christians) is to preach the gospel (1 Thess. 1:8; 2 Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:14-18). She is to provide

for the poor and widows (Acts 4:34-35; 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 5:16). She is to edify herself (Eph. 4:11-16). The church is not authorized in Holy Writ to do any other works. Is your church working the works of God or of men?

The Church: Her Doctrine

I was seated in another preacher's office one day when a female member burst in and without even a hello said: "Preacher, what do we believe about eating in the building." It sounded to me as if she thought that the church made up its own rules and taught them to others. But even if she did not mean to imply that there exists some **church doctrine** her question is a good lead-in to discussing the church and her doctrine.

Christ is the lawgiver, not the church: "Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ" (Eph. 5:24; cf. Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:7-16). The Holy Spirit made sure that everything needed to be known by Christ's disciples was given to the apostles:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come,
he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not
speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear,
that shall he speak: and he will shew you things
to come (John. 16:13).

And, the apostle's teaching is the only creed book for the true church of Christ for the early church: "Continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). A human creed book for the church is useless, for if it contained more than the Bible, it would be too big, and if less, then

it would not have what God intended. If it were to contain exactly what the Bible teaches, then why have it and a Bible? Is the doctrine of your church only the apostles' doctrine?

The Church: Her Organization

The church of the Bible exists on a local level and is organically independent of every other local church for it is self-governing under Christ, the heavenly bishop (Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:4; Phil. 1:1). A fully organized, biblical congregation has an eldership (never just one bishop), deacons to serve the eldership, and preachers to teach (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:2-4; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Heb. 13:17; 1 Tim. 3:8-13; 1 Cor. 12:24-27). Is your church organized in some greater way than just a localized government?

The Church: Her Enabling Grace

God's grace has given the true church of Christ His blood for the sacrifice (Heb. 9:26-28) and atonement (Heb. 9:14). She has Christ and the Holy Spirit as her intercessors (Rom. 8:26-27, 34) and the Christ as her teacher (Heb. 1:1-2). She has a King to rule, a judge to reward, and a hope in heaven (1 Tim. 6:15; Matt. 25:31-46; I Cor. 15:19; 1 Peter 1:3-5). Where does your church get her enabling help?

The Church: Her Destiny

The church has never been out of the mind of God (Eph. 3:11). Heaven's love purchased her and she is

kept by heaven's grace (Acts 20:28; Rom. 5:2; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 4:16). Therefore, the church hopes for heaven's glory and to heaven she will go (2 Tim. 2:10; Heb. 2:10; 1 Peter 5:10). There is a **rest** in heaven for God's people (Heb. 4:8-11). Is heaven really the destiny of man-made churches?

The Church: Her Unity

The church of Christ has never been, and never will be, a denomination. Jesus prayed that all of His followers would be one through obedience to apostolic teaching (John 17:20-21). The apostle Paul condemned all division (1 Cor. 1:10ff.). In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul delineated God's plan for unity (Eph. 4:4-6). Those who love Jesus will work together to perpetuate the one true church as described in God's holy Word. Many churches brag about being part of some denomination. Is your church a denomination?

The Church Universal

The commission given to Christians is worldwide (Matt. 28:18-20). The message is to be preached to every race, ethnic group, or nationality (Mark 16:15-6) for the invitation is to all (Rev. 22:17). The church will last until Jesus comes again and its fellowship is for all who are obedient to Christ (1 Cor. 15:23-26; 1 John 1:7). Is your church universal in its membership?

The Church: Her Message

The Bible is the true church's message. It has facts to believe concerning the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-58). There are commands to be obeyed as enumerated above under membership. There are promises to be enjoyed such as: remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19); all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3); and eternal life (Rev. 2:10). Does your church preach the pure gospel?

The Church: Her Government

The church of Christ exists under an absolute monarchy (Eph. 1:19-21) for her law came from heaven and under heaven she serves (Eph. 1:22; Rom. 8:2; Eph. 5:23-24). The church of Christ is the only group of people on earth who actually worship the God of heaven. Is the government of your church from heaven or from men?

The Church: Her Devotion

The church of Christ is devoted to the Word of Christ as the **eternal word** (Matt. 24:3); as the **inspired word** (2 Tim. 3:16); as the **life-giving word** (Matt. 4:4); as the **infallible word** (Psa. 119:160); as the **saving word** (James 1:18); as the **complete word** (2 Tim. 3:17); as the **sufficient word** (2 Tim. 3:16-17); as the **powerful word** (Heb. 4:12; Rom. 1:16); as the **comforting word** (1 Thess. 4:14-18).

The church of Christ is also devoted to the example of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21). She tries to follow His example toward His family (Luke 2:51; John 19:26-27); toward

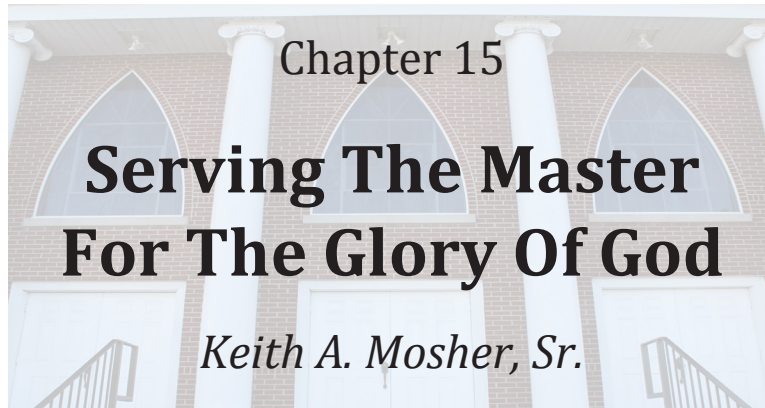
His heavenly Father (John 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; Luke 22:42); toward His enemies (Matt. 5:43-48; Luke 23:34); toward lost men (Matt. 18:11; Luke 15); and toward the church herself (Eph. 5:25). Is your church devoted to the message and example of Christ?

Conclusion

The only situation in which one can give God His due glory is in the body or church of Christ (Eph. 3:20-21). Those who belong to that group that has the Christ as its founder and foundation; those who belong to the church started in Jerusalem and solely guided by apostolic teaching; those who are members by obedience to the pure gospel; those who worship in spirit and in truth; those who work to save souls; those who realize that the church does not establish doctrine but that the New Testament does; those who are organized with elders and deacons and servants only on the local level; those who are enabled by grace and headed for heaven; those who understand that they are not part of a denomination; and those who, under the King of kings, devote their lives to Him; and those who have just one message—the gospel—are the body of Christ that gives Him the glory only He deserves.

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Introduction

I have read the following statement from an author whom I cannot recall, but I do remember what he said: “Most of us have not had a new thought about God since we were children.” The latter statement was written about thirty-five years ago and, unlike modernists who insist that God has changed, the former author was saying that God’s people should become more mature so that they would have the capability to appreciate God more as adults than they did as children. I found the following comments in some notes I have that were taken from letters written by children and supposedly sent to God!

‘Why is not Mrs. God’s name in the Bible?’

‘I know there is a God, because I pass by his house and see all his cars parked outside.’

‘Why did you only have ten rules and our school has millions?’

‘When you got elected, did you get all the votes?’

‘Why did you make people speak different foreign languages instead of English—like you and me!’

'Where did yesterday go? Do you have it?
Why not keep the sun on longer to save lights?'

When ancient sailors were in the middle of an ocean, they could not see anything but surface water for miles, but today humans know far more about the seas and also know that there is much more to learn. In order to serve the Christ and to give God the glory, the Christian has to know more and keep learning more in order not to remain a child, for there is a work that must be done that requires strong people: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10; KJV).

This study will involve reviewing the biblical concepts of God's nature; the biblical motivation for serving God; biblical peace of mind and the biblical idea that serving God can result in "great loss!" Those who are immature in their concepts, motivations, and inner desires for reward for service will never serve Christ so that He gets the glory.

Biblical Concepts Of God

The God we serve is omnipresent: "Whither shall I flee from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence" (Psa. 139:7). A mature concept of God is that He is everywhere at all times and must be served at all times in every place, not just "at church" on Sunday. The God we serve is omniscient:

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isa. 46:10).

A child once told a Sunday school teacher that he did not like God, "Because He is a snooper!" A mature view, that gives God the glory, is that God's presence is a comfort. The God we serve is also omnipotent. One of those things God wants His people to know about Him is "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Eph. 1:19). Those who serve the all-powerful One know that He is the **author** in **authority** and they do all things according to His will and, thus, are giving Him the glory.

Biblical Motivation To Serve

The Hebrews writer penned:

But without faith it is impossible to please him:
for he that cometh to God must believe that
he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that
diligently seek him (Heb. 11:6).

God is! He is eternal and is the ever-present **I Am**. The Hebrew word translated **I Am** (Exo. 3:14) is HWHY [having to read from right to left] and could be transliterated as YaWeH in English. The Hebrew term is a verb and the word was so venerated by the ancient Jews that they would not say it out loud when reading a scroll in public, but they would insert the term *adonai* [master] instead. Is it important to catch a glimpse of the sacredness and glory surrounding the idea of **I Am**? Note the following passage:

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the
Lord [HWHY, K.M.] sitting upon a throne, high
and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood the six seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord [HWHY, K.M.] of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord [HWHY, K.M.] of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, [HWYH, K.M.] saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; [Note the play on words here for Isaiah said here **I am!** K.M.] send me (Isa. 6:1-8).

At the moment Isaiah was cleansed, he was ready to serve the God of glory that the prophet had just seen. Is it still the case that until one understands the glory surrounding the God being served that that one will not be inclined to go and do what is expected in service? Note the following illustration:

A preacher visited a couple in a very remote place. They gave evidence of poverty and illiteracy. The preacher noticed a \$1,000.00 bill in a frame and hanging on a wall. The preacher

asked the pair: 'Where did you get that?' The husband answered: 'A city hunter was injured near our place in a hunting accident. We nursed him back to health and he gave it to us when he left. I thought the little picture was pretty and made a frame for it!' The couple had no idea of the value of the 'pretty picture' on that \$1,000.00 bill for all they had ever had were small coins.

How many grovel in spiritual poverty because they have never realized the full measure of the glory of God and how valuable it is to serve Him?

The above Isaiah passage is the record of the prophet's having seen the glory of **YaWeh** or **Jehovah** (Isa. 6:1). Yet the apostle John wrote that: "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18a). Whom did Isaiah see? He saw the Second Person of the Godhead (John 12:41) who, Himself, is the "express image" of the Father (Heb. 1:3). Those, today, who would glorify God by serving the Master would do well also to "catch a glimpse" of the glory due the Christ by studying His message and letting His mind be in them (Phil. 2:5). What is in one's mind is what motivates one's effort.

A teacher approached her end-of-school conference apprehensively, not knowing if her contract would be renewed. To her surprise, the principal commended her highly. 'Your class performed far above the rate of others and much more than the same group did the year before,' he said. She said: 'I appreciate your commendation, but any teacher should have done well with a group like this.' 'What

do you mean?’ asked the principal. The teacher answered: ‘Have you noticed how many of the class had IQ’s above 140? So I just kept prodding them to learn because of their great abilities.’ The shocked principal said: ‘You did not know their IQ’s because they have never been tested.’ She answered: ‘Their IQ’s are right there on this sheet just beside their names.’ The principal looked at the sheet and said: ‘Those are their locker numbers.’ With high expectations that teacher had taught that class all semester simply because of what was in her mind.

The Christian, who understands that God is Glory, has in his mind a true motivation to reach higher and higher in service to God.

Biblical Peace Of Mind

Some, or maybe most, think that with enough money they could buy whatever made them happy. Marilyn Monroe, movie star and earner of \$10,000.00 a week when making a film, died in 1962 and no one came to the morgue to claim her body and only one of her three husbands came to the funeral, Joe Dimaggio. Ben Franklin once said that: “Money, instead of filling a vacuum, it creates one.” Where is true peace of mind found? True serenity is the end result of serving God. The prodigal wanted his “portion” so that he could enjoy the good life (Luke 15:12-13). Eventually that boy’s money dissipated and he went to work in a pigpen (Luke 15:15). Finally, Jesus said of that young man that “he came to himself” (Luke 15:17) and then decided to become a **servant** in his father’s house

(Luke 15:18). Once the decision to be a **servant** was made, the “prodigal” son went home and, of all things, there was his father running toward him (Luke 15:19-20). How great was the peace that young man discovered just by his decision to be of service at home.

The Greek word translated **servant** in the New Testament is *doulos* and is said to be a term that serves “either to describe a slave or an attitude corresponding to that of a slave” (Rengstorf 261). Rengstorf added that to a Greek the thought of personal freedom was at the center of his thoughts of being dignified (Ibid.). For a Greek, then, to be a slave set aside his human autonomy and allowed some alien will to take precedence in his life (Ibid.). A *doulos* was thought to have “no possibility of evading the tasks laid upon him but who also had no right of personal choice, who must rather do what another will have done and refrain from doing what another will not have done” (Ibid.). **Every Christian is to be a *doulos* or slave to Christ and nothing else gives Him glory.**

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:13-16).

It is also the case that only in the sphere of the

teachings of Christ did the term, *doulos*, become a badge of honor and not so denigrating as the word, slave, had been to the Greeks. To be a slave of Christ is the highest honor of all for: "Prominent in the theological use of the word group in the New Testament is the idea that Christians belong to Jesus as His *douloi*, (plural of *doulos*, K.M.) and that their lives are thus offered to Him as the risen and exalted Lord" (Rengstorf 274). Those who were once slaves to sin have been liberated to be slaves of the Christ (Rom. 6:16-18).

The connection of those liberated from the *douleia* of the world of sin and death to the One who has liberated them links up the occasional use of the term for commitment to God. This naturally results from the goal of the redemption, which is obedience rather than autonomy. When Christ undertakes the work of redemption, He makes the redeemed His own possession, giving them directions and goals by which to shape their lives. This commitment is expressed linguistically by calling those who are thus obligated to Christ His *douloi*. The term shows us that the new state of Christians is fulfilled in...love and self-sacrifice (Rengstorf 275).

James wrote that as the half-brother to Jesus, James was still the servant or slave of Him (James 1:1). Besides putting himself in company with all of God's true servants, James used the word, *doulos*, to let his readers know that he was not a slave because he had been captured in war; for then he would have called himself an *adrapados*. A *doulos*, however, was one purchased to be set free, and

then, willingly, decided to serve. Great glory can be given to Christ when the service done is voluntary.

Biblical Service To God Can, Sometimes, Result In Great “Loss”

The account of Balaam in Numbers chapters twenty-two to twenty-four is one of those thrilling episodes recorded in the Old Testament that has served as the basis for countless sermons as part of the “things written aforetime for our learning” (Rom. 15:4). Balaam learned, eventually, that he was restricted by God for the pagan prophet said: “I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more” (Num. 22:18b). The Moabite king, Balak, who wanted Balaam to curse Israel, regretted Balaam’s decision and said: “I thought to promote thee to great honour; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour” (Num. 24:11). Such a “loss,” because one has to do what God has said, has been “repeated countless times in the lives of the faithful. There are many talented people, who could advance in a spectacular way, in fame and fortune—even to great honor—if it were not for the fact that they preferred to be faithful to God. The refusal of God’s faithful servants to compromise, or sacrifice their convictions is costly in the material things of life, but the compensations in spiritual progress and hope are much greater” (Wilhelm 29).

Christ, Himself, gave up His divine prerogatives and sacrificed Himself at great loss in order to save man (Phil. 2:6-8). But, even though He “learned obedience by the things he which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8), He still became the

“author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). He was made to be above all principality and power and became the Head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23). “If we are willing to serve Christ at a loss, we will have His mind and be richly blessed” (Wilhelm 29).

Note the following passage:

By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible (Heb. 11:24-27).

Moses chose to serve God rather than the “pleasures of sin” and cast his lot with a group of miserable slaves who had no materialistic prospects at all.

Jesus suffered the loss of heaven, life, and His divine dignity to ransom lost humanity (Matt. 28:20). And Jesus’ choice of Saul of Tarsus to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 26:18) was the beginning of a life of loss for that first-century missionary. Paul wrote:

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh, If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning

zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, **those I counted loss for Christ** (emphasis mine, K.M.). Yea doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ (Phil. 3:4-8).

Paul's desire to serve his Master and the apostle's honesty and integrity far out-weighed his want for earthly honor. Paul never indicated that he had made a mistake when he decided to spurn Judaism and his former prominence in that society and to become a prisoner for Jesus' sake. And, Paul recommended that same life of sacrifice and service to all other Christians (1 Cor. 11:1).

The concepts, that too many modern Christians have, have caused them to misplace lives characterized by loss for Christ, for lives of "going to church" and then to the restaurant. How many would give glory to God if everything they had was taken away and they were left as prisoners in a dark dungeon? "Real honor for God's children is enjoyed only by conscientious servants of God who rejoice, even in sacrifice, that they are right. They rejoice in their freedom from an accusing conscience knowing that the peace they have with God is something greater than a 'house full of gold and silver' could buy" (Wilhelm 30).

Service to the Master is **sincere** (Jos. 24:14); **energetic** (Ecc. 9:10; Mark 12:30); **ready** (Rom. 1:15; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 3:15); **voluntary** (Rom. 6:17; 2 Cor. 9:7; 8:12); active **in** Christ (Acts 2:38; Col. 3:17); **continual**

(Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 15:58); and **efficient** (Matt. 7:16). Many, young and old alike, have turned away from the pleasures of this life and, since they belonged to God, sacrificed in glory to Him.

Conclusion

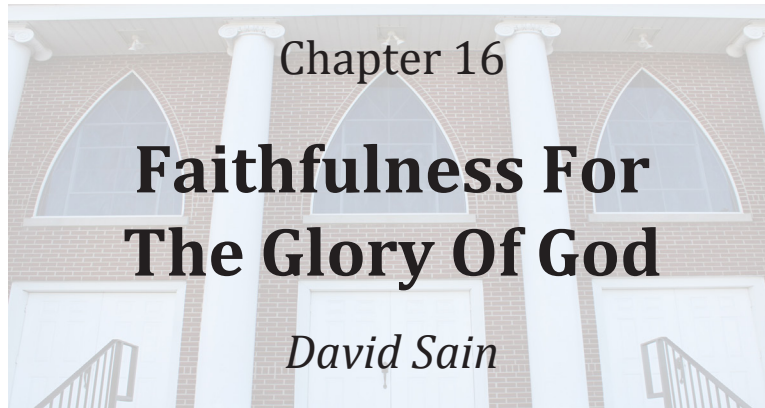
When one has a good concept of God's nature and when one catches a glimpse of His glory so as properly to be motivated to service, then, and only then, will that one be in the spiritual condition necessary to give glory to the God who saves.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever, A-men (2 Peter 3:18).

True peace of mind results for the guilt free Christian who serves God from a pure heart and who counts all of the material world as refuse in order to be the true servant of the Master who gave all for His children. The true motivation to serve is not just to avoid hell, but to give glory to the One who saved us.

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One of the defining moments in the life of Christ, on earth, was during a prayer that He prayed just before His arrest and crucifixion. As recorded in the Gospel according to John, in the first five verses of chapter seventeen, he told the Father,

Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee...I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do (Cf. John 6:38).

As I think about Jesus glorifying the Father on earth, I realize that the holy Scriptures teach us, as God's children, to do likewise. Dozens of Scriptures in the New Testament teach us to glorify the Lord. For example, Paul taught Christians to glorify Him in all that we do (1 Cor. 10:31). Further, Paul, in his epistle to the saints in Ephesus, declared that the church is to glorify Him (Eph. 3:20-21).

Later, I will list some Biblical texts that cite ways and reasons that we glorify God. But, first, I will state what I think is the natural beginning point, the

foundation, for this study and that point is God's faithfulness.

God Is Faithful

God, Himself, is the model we must consider in this study of faithfulness. The faithfulness of God is frequently and emphatically declared, either explicitly or implicitly, in both Old and New Testaments. It would be accurate to conclude that the faithfulness of God is a familiar refrain to all who are Bible students. To illustrate, consider what is declared about God, our heavenly Father, in the following texts (emphasis added).

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, **the faithful God**, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations (Deut. 7:9).

Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of **the LORD that is faithful**, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee (Isa. 49:7).

God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9).

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but **God is faithful**, who

will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10:13).

But **the Lord is faithful**, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil (2 Thess. 3:3).

If we believe not, yet **he abideth faithful**: he cannot deny himself (2 Tim. 2:13).

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for **he is faithful** that promised;) (Heb. 10:23).

Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto **a faithful Creator** (1 Peter 4:19).

If we confess our sins, **he is faithful** and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called **Faithful and True**, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war (Rev. 19:11).

The foremost message that one draws from these and similar texts is that our God is faithful. With a full awareness of this great quality of God, we sing to Him, in the words of the weeping prophet, "Great is thy faithfulness" (Lamen. 3:23).

Our Response To God's Faithfulness

God's faithfulness should arouse and motivate us to be faithful unto Him. In fact, if any one word captures the intent of God in His people, it is glorifying Him through "faithfulness." Note the following five Biblical texts, along with the conclusions and applications from each:

Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him (Isa. 43:7).

The very purpose of our existence is to glorify our Creator. John, the revelator, recorded the same truth in Revelation 4:11, describing the twenty-four elders when they fell down before the One who sat upon the throne, and said,

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

In the second text, in the famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples that they should glorify the Father through their good works. He said,

¹³Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. ¹⁴Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:13-16).

Jesus also addressed this purpose and design of discipleship when teaching the apostles in John 15. He told them, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). In his epistle to the Corinthian disciples, Paul reminded them of their responsibility to glorify the Father in their physical bodies.

¹⁹What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

When we use our bodies in committing immoral acts, like fornication, we dishonor our bodies and the sovereign one who created our bodies.

Peter wrote about the glorification of our heavenly Father in his first epistle to the saints. First, he taught that we are to glorify Him by humbly recognizing that the abilities we have are from the Father.

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (1 Peter 4:11).

Second, he instructed the children of God to glorify their Lord during times of trials. He said that we bring honor to our Father by having the right attitude toward the persecution that Christians sometimes have to endure. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Peter

4:16). I repeat, God's faithfulness should arouse and motivate us to be faithful unto Him.

What Does Faithfulness Mean?

The word "faithfulness" does not even appear in the New Testament of the King James Version. However, faithfulness, when the Bible student understands the meaning, immediately recognizes that the Bible is replete with emphasis upon man's faithfulness to God.

As a matter of fact, the Greek word that is translated "faith" in some Biblical texts can also be translated "faithfulness." For example, in the listing of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, in the King James Version, Paul listed "faith" as a fruit of the Spirit. However, in most recent translations (e.g., ESV, NIV, NASB, NKJV), the word that the KJV translates into "faith" is translated as "faithfulness."

In his commentary on *Galatians*, William Barclay wrote, "This word (*pistis*) is common in secular Greek for trustworthiness. It is the characteristic of the man who is reliable" (p. 51). Spiros Zodhiates defined it as meaning "good faith, faithfulness," "being faithful, sincere" and "all good fidelity" (*Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament*, p. 1162). In other words, Paul taught that the fruit (the result) of a life that is led by the instruction of the Spirit would be faithfulness unto God!

If one is characterized by "faith," he will be "faithful" unto God. In other words, a man who has faith in God plans to do whatever God asks of him. And the man who has faith in God will glorify God through his obedience to God's Will.

Consider the sterling example of faith, faithfulness,

and obedience in the life of Noah. The world was so wicked that God decreed that He would destroy all people and all creatures with a flood of water. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and God told Noah to prepare an ark for the saving his family, along with the animals that God instructed Noah to take aboard the ark. Noah acted in faithful obedience to God's instructions. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews declared of Noah:

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith (Heb. 11:7).

The righteousness of Noah, prior to the command from God, was seen in Noah's response to God's command. Because Noah had faith in God, he faithfully did what God told him to do.

In the Genesis account of that epic event, Moses declared, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22, also see Gen. 7:5).

Faithfulness And Stewardship

In the first part of the first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul emphasized the divine inspiration by which he spoke. That inspiration notwithstanding, Paul pointed out that he was but a steward of God. As a steward, he knew he was accountable unto God, and his first concern was to please the Lord, rather than pleasing himself or those to whom he wrote (1 Cor. 4:3-4).

However, in full context, it is quite obvious that Paul's

concern in referring to himself as a “steward” was being a “faithful” steward.

¹Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

²Moreover it is required in stewards, **that a man be found faithful** (1 Cor. 4:1-2, emphasis added).

Paul knew and remained aware that God entrusted him with the Gospel, and he knew that it was incumbent upon him to teach the Gospel faithfully. Note his words later in the same epistle, when he declared, “Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16).

David Lipscomb wrote the following sobering words about the matter of stewardship as a minister of the Gospel:

God entrusted to the inspired men the truths he revealed to them through the Spirit. These truths were given to them to be taught to others for their salvation and edification...So it is important that those entrusted as stewards with the truth of God should be honest and faithful in teaching to the world all that God has revealed for the salvation of the world. Not to teach all God’s commands is to leave the world in condemnation with its blood on the stewards who failed to teach the truths God committed to them [David Lipscomb, *Commentary on First Corinthians* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1935), p. 59].

Jesus taught the principle of faithfulness as a steward masterfully in the parable of the talents, in the twenty-

fifth chapter of the book of Matthew. There the Lord says that there was a man given five talents and another one two talents and another one, one talents. When the lord came back the one talent man, of course, had dissipated his opportunity, but the five-talent man gained five other talents and the two-talent man gained two other talents. When the lord commended those two men, the five and the two talent men, he commended them both alike.

He said to each of them:

Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee a ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord (Matt. 25:21).

He said the same thing. He did not make a distinction between them.

The point of the parable, in application to us, seems quite obvious. God's response to our lives is **not the amount** of "talents" or "abilities," that we have. His response is based upon our faithfulness in **the use** of that which we have.

God judges us according to our faithfulness in what He entrusts us with. The tremendously important lesson is this parable is faithfulness. All of us can be faithful.

Revelation 2

⁸And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; ⁹I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou

art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. ¹¹He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

The text above is the letter that Jesus wrote, through John, to the saints at Smyrna. Consider the meaning of His words in verse ten: “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Consider four things about those words: (1) what those words “faithful unto death,” mean, (2) what is implied by the words, (3) the conduct that was called for, in response to those words, and (4) the consequence—the result—that was promised by Jesus.

(1) The meaning of the words of Jesus, as He prepared the saints at Smyrna for upcoming persecution, is that they should set their minds to be faithful to the Lord, regardless of what they might have to endure—that they would be faithful to Christ to the point of dying before they would deny Him.

(2) The words of Christ carry the obvious implication that being faithful is something that everyone can do. Faithfulness is not a talent with which you are born, or that is given to you. It is a decision, a commitment, of which everyone is capable.

(3) The one who determines to be faithful will do what the Lord teaches him to do. In his daily conduct he

will do his best to do what is right, according to God's Word.

(4) In our text, the Lord declared that the result of being faithful unto death would be receiving the crown of life. And, by implication, it teaches that the one who is not faithful will be lost eternally.

Concluding Thoughts

Nearly two thousand years ago, a woman named Mary bowed at the feet of Jesus. She broke a box of ointment that was very expensive, and poured it on the head of the Lord Jesus. Note the reaction of those who witnessed it, and how Jesus responded.

¹After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. ²But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people. ³And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. ⁴And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? ⁵For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. ⁶And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. ⁷For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever

ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. ⁸She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. ⁹Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her (Mark 14).

When some of the people complained about what she did, Jesus said, “**Let her alone...she hath done what she could**” (emphasis added).

In other words, He honored her because she honored Him by doing what she could. That is what the Lord wants from each of us—being faithful, by doing what we can.

As someone (unknown to me) has written:

God does not require a lot of things from you.
You're not required to be brilliant.
You're not required to be articulate.
You're not required to be wealthy.
You're not required to be handsome or beautiful.
You're not required to be eloquent.
But you are required to be faithful.