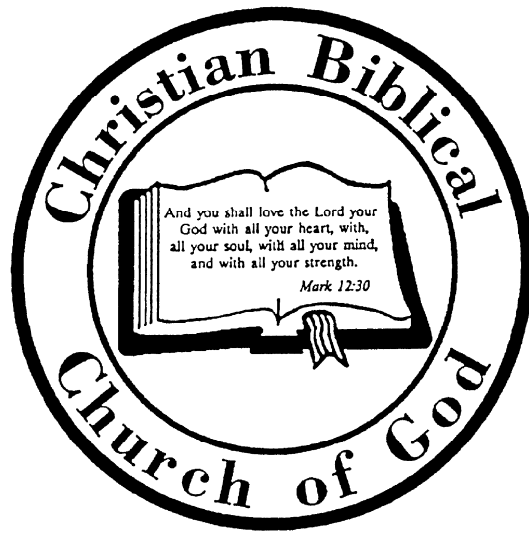


Study Package Two

Basic Christian Doctrines



Transcript Book

By Fred R. Coulter

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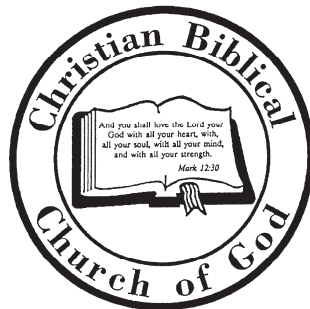
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Study Package Two

Series of 15 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



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Study Package Two

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Study Package Two

Basic Christian Doctrines

Foreword

This second study package contains the transcripts of fifteen sermons delivered by Fred R. Coulter and is intended to teach some of the basic doctrines of the Bible. These sermons describe many of the religions of men and how the true faith of Jesus Christ in us can free us from the things of the world.

The sermon “Worship God in ‘Spirit and In Truth’ ” explains why God hates *vain* religion and refutes the doctrine of omnipresence, a corner stone of many religions in the world. It explains the true worship of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son.

The sermon, “See ‘the Way’ with the ‘Eyes of Your Mind’ ” introduces the reader to the fact that God has called one to spiritual understanding. This understanding gives one the ability to distinguish the counterfeit good of the world from the good that comes through God’s Holy Spirit.

The next sermon in this book is “Who Started *Religion*?” It shows that ‘religion’ is a substitute for God’s way and Satan is a substitute for God!

The next sermon, “Which *Religion* Will God Retain in the Millennium?” explains what worship Jesus Christ will allow upon the earth when He returns to rule all nations, and all races that are upon the face of the earth.

The sermon, “Can ‘Religion’ Save?” explains that the many faiths upon the earth are merely human mechanisms designed to control people. The faith of God however is not a personal commitment but rather a calling.

“The Addicted Society” I, II, III and IV is a series showing the cause of addiction and how mankind can receive God’s help in overcoming addictions.

The subject of mankind’s nature is covered in two sermons. “Nature of Mankind I” and “Nature of Mankind II.” It is shown that man is made in the image of God so that God could become a man and that man could become God.

The next sermon “Resurrections” shows that there are two resurrections from the dead. One is the restoration to physical life as a human being and the other is a transformation to eternal life as an immortal being. Also covered is that there is no such thing as a second chance.

The sermon “Eternal Judgment” Shows that all the incorrigible wicked who have willfully reject the salvation of God will receive the sentence of the second death as their eternal judgment.

The last sermon is “Baptism by Fire” It shows that if one willfully goes on sinning not because of weakness, not because of temptation, but with planned determination to reject God after receiving the knowledge of the truth will experience the inevitable judgment of fierce fire, which devours the adversaries of God.

Special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Nancy Spaller, and Laila Patterson for transcribing the sermons.

Why God Hates Religion I

(Worship God in “Spirit and in Truth”)

Fred R. Coulter

Greetings brethren! At a Feast we had quite a controversy over a sermonette that Bob Hunnicutt gave; where he entitled it, *God Hates Religion*. One of the brethren there, especially took offense to it and then went home and did a paper and mailed it out to many other people. I just let the thing go. I haven't had time to answer it until now.

Now I'm ready to answer what the charges were and so forth. Let me just mention here what Bob Hunnicutt said. I've got a transcript of what he said concerning 'religion.' We're going to find that Bob Hunnicutt was right. We're going to find that God does *hate* 'religion.' We're going to find that where it talks about religion in James 1—about *pure and undefiled religion*—that has nothing to do with worship of God. Here's what Bob Hunnicutt said:

Religion creates hate... [that is true] ...It creates hate, bitterness, jealousy, malice, strife, greed, lust, murmuring, complainers, and vain speakers....

We've seen that—haven't we? So far true.

...Religion is a work of darkness and deception, therefore political.

We're going to find that that is true, just like Judaism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Mohammadism, Taoism and whatever other 'ism' there is, they're all a form of 'religion.'

Religion does not teach one the one-on-one relationship with God. It teaches a hierarchical system with an elite group of people controlling the followers. Religion teaches therefore, that a church or an organization can save.

I've got a big thick book at home I'm going to bring a sermon one of these days on the book: *Outside The Catholic Church There Is No Salvation*, written by Adam S. Miller, a Catholic, saying that no one is going to be saved if you are not in the Catholic Church. As Bob Hunnicutt says, it's a *substitute* for Jesus Christ.

Religion teaches what man can do to be saved. *The Bible teaches* by grace through God's mercy you are saved. Religion is self-serving and it is the work of the flesh.

We will see that that is true and we will see that's what Jesus told the leaders of Judaism in His day: that they *worshipped Him in vain*. 'Worship' there, is the same word for *religion*. It's the *exterior* thing.

Religion does not teach a way back to God, but how to approach Him in a form

of worship. Religion increases the importance of man in his own mind. Religion teaches worldly love, not Godly love.... [absolutely true] ...Religion is the blind leading the blind.

That's what Jesus said, 'Let the blind lead the blind and they will both fall into the ditch.'

Yet, religion is by sight. Religion is not one-minded. Religion is a broad way. There are many religions, many ways and it's always changing. You watch it.

They change it—this doctrine and that doctrine and the other doctrine.

Religion will always be changing to placate the political influences of their group. Religion teaches to find something that a man will believe. It is of men. Religion has its own Bible.... [that's true] ...They can use a *King James Version* or any other Bible, but they pick and choose their verses. Religion is cruel and an enemy of God and His saints. Religious people among us are the ones who cause the problems.

That is absolutely true, because they get self-righteous. They have a way that they are going to do things. They have a 'religion' and it's not of God. We're going to see God's way is not a 'religion.' ***God's way is a way of life!*** We will see how the Bible defines 'religion.'

Religious people expect the same benefits that a saint will receive from God.... [true] ...Many religious people will come to Me in that day and say, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name?' (Matt. 7:21).... [Won't they? *Yes, they will!*] ...Jesus will say, 'I never knew you' because you didn't do the will of the Father, 'Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness'... [against the Laws of God.] ...That's what 'religious' people think they are doing, wonderful works, saving people.

We're going to find out that 'religion' actually began shortly after the Garden of Eden; actually *in* the Garden of Eden; as Paul says here, because Satan came along and gave the *substitute* way from *God's* way and that was a 'religion.'

Religion financed by Satan...

That is so true. Once you get a 'religion,' once you get a hierarchy, once you get everything going, then

its money, money, money! I recently read two letters:

1. from the Worldwide Church of God, where Bernie Schnippert, the man who is in charge of the finances, told the ministers that they—whether they believe it or not—are to preach and teach the Sabbath and Holy Days. He didn’t particularly believe it, but they had to preach it, because that brought in the money. The name of the game is money. They want money.
2. United Church of God just sent out a letter pleading for the biggest offering that they could ever give, because of all the troubles that they have. They said, ‘The life blood of the Church is the daily income.’

Those are ‘religions’! They are merchandising the brethren.

- Are they destroying the brethren? *Yes!*
- Are they causing division? *Yes!*
- Are they robbing God? *Yes!*
- What is the life-blood of a Christian? *The blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit!*

You may be able to run a ‘religion’ on money, but the only way that the true Church of God is going to run is *by the Holy Spirit of God.*

Zechariah 4:6: “...‘Not by power, or might, but **by My Spirit,**’ says the LORD of hosts.” We need to really understand that we’re dealing with something very insidious within the Church when we talk about ‘religion.’

Bob went on in his sermonette, saying:

Religion held Israel captive.... [true]
...Religion killed the prophets of the Old Testament.... [true] ...Satan tempted Christ with religion.... [true] ...Religion killed Christ.... [true] ...Paul was a very religious person.... [true] ...But he repented and he is an example of those who can come out from religion. God tells us in the Bible in many, many places that religious people—that’s Satan’s church—would also infiltrate the Church of God. Christians are not causing it. The saints aren’t causing it. It’s the religious ones among us that are causing it.

He tells about the tares and brethren; *you can identify them!* Then he explains and goes through the part of the parable of the ten virgins and that was part of their problem. I hope you can understand where he is coming from here. I think he did a very good job on the sermonette that he gave. It was really good.

We are going to talk about *true* religion and *false* religion. But as a result of that sermonette some of the brethren in Cincinnati—called the *Cincinnati Brethren*—who were there at the Feast, decided to take things into hand and decided to go ahead and send out a whole package of material to brethren, to stir them all up and exacerbate the problem and cause real difficulties. Here’s part of the letter that they sent:

(letter from *Cincinnati Brethren*): The latest method is the concept of Christianity is not religion; it’s a way of life. There are a number of connecting tangent ideas that go with this totally manmade assertion.

I’m going to show you that it’s not manmade. It’s right out of the Bible. Nowhere does the Bible say: ‘Christian Religion’—*nowhere!*

First of all, one will have to come up with a definition of religion that differs from *Webster’s Dictionary*, *Strong’s Concordance* as well as other Bible helps.

No, we do not, because it’s not a religion.

Religion is defined in *Webster’s Dictionary*—when you look at a group of people, they say—‘those who worship God or pray or have catechisms’ and so forth. When you look at an organization—and if you want the world to define you as a religion, then go right ahead...

They probably will define you as a religion.

...But what is your standing before God? Are we to let God define what we are? What we are to be? Or are we to let the world define that for us? Are we to go by the Word of God or by *Webster’s Dictionary*? When James wrote what he wrote and what we find in the Bible, do those words have the same meaning as religion today? Or as translated during the days when the *King James* was translated in 1611—does it have the same meaning as it does today? What meaning did it have when James wrote it?

Secondly, a substitute for religion will have to be used.

No it won’t, because we’ll define it properly by the New Testament.

Thirdly, a definition for Christianity and showing it has nothing in common with religion—since God supposedly hates all religion, then Christianity couldn’t possibly have anything in common with it; after all, ‘what communion has light with darkness’—will have to be given.

God doesn't want you to be 'religious.' **He wants you!** There's a vast difference. I hope you understand it. God doesn't want something from outside. He wants it from your heart. **God wants your heart converted!** God wants His laws and commandments written in your mind and in your heart so that's what you live by *as a way of life*. I think we are going to be surprised—we're going to find that every statement that Bob Hunnicutt made was absolutely true.

The reason for this concern is based on recent Church history. I'll give just one example: When *born again* was being introduced to God's people, I remember two vital reasonings that had to be established.

1. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit—didn't mean what it said.
2. It's just a matter of semantics. It's no big deal.

Well, look at where the Worldwide Church of God is today. I don't intend to wait and see where this 'God hates religion' concept is going to lead until God's people have another mess.

Well, I'm sorry about that, but you are already in a mess by doing this. We did not cause this. We did not mail any of this out. This is a mess that *you* have created, not what we have done. We have to answer it, because you mailed it out to hundreds of brethren.

- What are you trying to do, undermine their faith?
- What are you trying to do, have a 'religion' of yourself?
- What do you mean by saying, 'Well, how am I going to explain this to *my* people back in Cincinnati?'
- Since when did the brethren of God become *anybody's merchandise*?

There are some very strong things that have been said and going around. So, let's see if we can clear the air here just a little bit. Here's part of what went out. Let's also understand something here that is very important:

- Nowhere does it say that God loves pure and undefiled 'religion.'
- Nowhere does it say that God loves 'religion.'
- Nowhere is the way of God called a *religion*.

There just isn't!

{continuing with letter}:

Recently, I've been hearing a lot of comments along the line: God hates religion.

Well, that only came from you and maybe some people you know.

I find this remark to be an unqualified assertion, curious and perhaps even dangerous.

Now I'm dangerous. Is that what it is? Bob Hunnicutt is dangerous. Is that what it is?

I was born and raised a Catholic.

Maybe that is some of the problem you're still living with. I don't know.

My mother was a Catholic convert who would occasionally read the Bible to us. This was my only real exposure to the Bible in my early years. I was primarily taught Catechism and grew up viewing Scriptures through the eyes of the Catholic dogma and ritual. This was my *religion*.

Well, at least you stated it correctly, but let's also understand it was not **God's** 'religion' and God had nothing to do with it other than the fact that you read some Scriptures.

When I was about nineteen, I was introduced to a couple of books.

And he talks about the Jehovah Witnesses and then Hal Lindsey's *The Late, Great Planet Earth*. He quotes James 1:26-27. We'll get to that in a minute.

Here are two plain verses, which fill the meaning and guidance concerning religion. One religion is called *vain*, the other *pure and undefiled*. Since God's Word states plainly that *pure religion* is what He expects of His people, I make no apologies for making it my daily goal. God does not hate religion. He hates *vain* religion. God loves pure religion.

Nowhere does He say He loves *pure* 'religion.' What kind of 'religion' are we talking about? What kind of 'pure and undefiled religion' was James referring to? You have to do more than just make a comment or an accusation. Now he quotes James 3 where it says: 'The tongue with which we bless even the Father, and therewith we curse men, which are made after the similitude of God.'

Brethren, he was talking to converted people.

Now, wait a minute—**James was not writing to 'converted' people**. That's the first mistake you made. When he says *brethren*, Jews always called themselves *brethren*. He was writing to the twelve tribes of Israel. You need to understand that. He was talking to the Jews who would go into the synagogues, James 2.

What is at the core of vain religion? The life of a Christian, a true follower of Jesus Christ is a life of overcoming vain religion by replacing it with pure religion and undefiled.

No it is not! The life of the Christian is one of *constant conversion, growing in grace and knowledge and developing the mind of Christ* and that is not a ‘religion.’ That is a complete recreation process that God is doing with you. What is happening here? God’s way, through these papers and this method, is being viewed as a ‘religion.’ But ***it is not a ‘religion,’ never intended to be ‘religion’ and wasn’t a ‘religion’!***

These plain, simple statements used in this article are but a small part in being able to force such a person to clarify themselves.

Well, I’ve been forced to clarify, so I will.

If they insist on defending such an assertion, I would personally be very suspicious of them.

Why are you sowing seeds of discord among the brethren?

The reason I am making such a big deal out of this is because denigrating religion could lead to an incremental way of doing away with God’s eternal spiritual law. Now, this is just an opinion that you have expressed. It is not true in fact. This is why I mentioned from the beginning, saying that God hates religion without qualification could prove to be dangerous.

So, now I’m dangerous and Bob Hunnicutt is dangerous and the Word of God is dangerous! I guess.

Maybe God in His mercy will lead us to live pure religion and undefiled and to remain unspotted right up until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then he gives the definitions here and so forth. He gives something about the Amish ‘religion.’ Remember, this is mailed out to a couple of hundred brethren and all of those who are supposed to be fellowshiping with us.

I’ll just tell you this. In 1995 I tried to have different men get up there and speak and give sermonettes and sermons. It really ended up being the worst Feast that we’ve ever had, because everyone there had his own way of doing things. Everyone had an agenda. I was constantly—the whole time—putting out fires here and there and everywhere. I had to go through a four-hour session with some people over *sacred names*. So, people are

going to have their agenda. If you have an agenda, you have a ‘religion.’ Well then, go have it to yourself, but don’t drag in other people; don’t drag in the brethren. Don’t try and bring them in on your side. It’s really quite a difficult proposition here.

Here’s another letter that was sent out. First of all, I didn’t say, ‘God hates false religion.’ That was my mistake when he called me and asked me about it. I said, ‘Well, then God hates false religion.’ Because at that time I hadn’t gone in to it and researched it and I told him I would. So, I did, but I changed the caption from ‘God Hates Religion’ to ‘God Hates False Religion.’ That was my fault when I did that.

(Another letter from Cincinnati Brethren):
God inspired James to use *vain* as opposed to *pure and undefiled*.

That is true, but what is he really talking about?

I wish Fred Coulter and Bob Hunnicutt would’ve done so to get a definition of religion. At least then I would have known what they meant by it and could have gone to my Bible to see if it fit God’s definition.

I hope you go to your Bible and see that it fits God’s definition.

Far from defining, they denounce and denigrate it with statements like: religion lies at the root of all strife, regardless of whether it’s related to religion or politics...

That is a true statement. Then in a second mailing:

...because we know about the conspiracy and the Illuminati and the Bilderbergers and the Trilaterals...

Then because we hate ‘religion,’ then I must be a Mason, because Mason’s say that all religions must be destroyed. So, you see there is an agenda somewhere. I have never walked into a Masonic Temple, except up in Seattle where I went to visit, when Worldwide Church of God was meeting there. To accuse me and Bob Hunnicutt and others of being Illuminists of Adam Weishaupt and being Masons—because of this—is pure emotionalism and throwing things at us that are not true. I’m not a Mason, never have been, but I’m for destroying all ‘religion.’

I use James 1:26-27 to highlight that God shows He doesn’t hate religion, but rather, He hates vain religion. When this happened I felt it necessary to show the “company” Fred Coulter is keeping, at least in terms of this teaching. So, an issue oriented packet was mailed out with a follow-up article.

Let’s go to James 1:26-27 and let’s take a look at it. It’s a shame that this even needs to be done. It shouldn’t even have to be done, but I’m going to do it simply because it was put out there and all the hatred and strife. We’re dealing with someone who wants to be ‘religious.’

- Are they creating strife like Bob Hunnicutt said? *Yes!*
- Are they dividing the brethren like Bob Hunnicutt said? *Yes!*
- Are they self-righteous in their approach to what they are doing? *Yes!*
- Do they have an agenda that they are working on? *Could be! One is to make a ‘religion’ out of God’s way!*

James 1:26: “If anyone among you...” This is written to the twelve tribes of Israel, scattered abroad, he says:

Verse 1: “...Greetings!...” Were the twelve tribes of Israel converted? *No!* This was not written to converted people. This was written to unconverted people who attended synagogues.

Verse 26: “If anyone among you considers himself to be religious, and does not control his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion *is* vain.” I think we have a little bit of that in this paper. ‘Bridles not his fingers’ from typing up accusations and mailing them out to brethren.

Verse 27: “Pure and undefiled religion before God and *the* Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” That’s what is called *pure and undefiled religion* has absolutely nothing to do with worshipping God, has absolutely nothing to do with the inner part of Godliness, but has rather to do with the outward part.

Let’s see how we are to worship God. God doesn’t want *exterior vain* ‘religion.’ He doesn’t want things on the outside. We’re going to see how God even views this. We’re going to see that one of the purest, one of the most undefiled men in all the history of the Bible, had to be corrected by God for *his* ‘religion,’ and that is Job. Here’s how God wants us to worship Him:

John 4:23: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth...” Having nothing whatsoever to do with ‘religion,’ but it has to do with the heart. It has to do with fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

“...for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in Truth” (vs 23-24). Not in a ‘religious’ form. I’m

sorry about that that; you didn’t really do your homework or your research the way that you should have.

Let’s look at some of the definitions. If you need a good Lexicon, let me recommend that you get *Bullinger’s Lexicon—A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament* by E. W. Bullinger. It’s very good. Here’s what he has to say with *religion* from the Greek word ‘*threskeia*’—*religious observance: the outward ceremonial service of religion, the external form*. What we read here is that James was an external form. You visit the fatherless; you visit the widow. That has nothing to do with the true converted relationship that one is to have with God.

God expects society to take care of the widows and the fatherless. Even the United States government has a whole welfare program to do that. Is that pure ‘religion’? *and* undefiled before God? *No!* So, it’s the *external* form as opposed to:

- ‘*eusebeo*’—the *practical piety rightly directed*.

That is defined as *Godliness*. Godliness is what we are to strive for, and that is Christ in us, not a religion.

- ‘*theosebeia*’—the *worship of God*
- ‘*eulabeia*’—the *devotedness rising from Godly fear*

There is also *religious*. We are going to look at how these words are used. There is also a ‘religious’ person. This is:

- ‘*threskos*’—*religious*, especially in a bad sense. *Superstitious*, as a substitute or for example, the zealous and diligent performer of the outward service of God. *Either of their mysteries or full of religion and so forth*.
- ‘*eusebeo*’—to *stand in fear and awe before God*
- ‘*threskeia*’—*the outward form of religion, the outward form of doing it*.

These are the words that are used in James 1.

Let’s look at some other areas where the outward form was used, showing how the scribes and Pharisees did theirs. We’re going to be amazed. Let’s look at it here. Here is ‘religious’ worship. We’ll see what Jesus Christ had to say. The scribes and Pharisees had a ‘religion.’ They had the *exterior* form. Everything they did was *outward*. Jesus Christ said, ‘You hypocrites, you scribes and Pharisees, you clean the *outside*, but the inside—you’re full of dead men’s bones and rottenness. First *clean the inside* and then the outside will be clean.’ They were full of hypocrisy.

Matthew 15:9: “But they **worship** Me in vain... [*religious*—the verb for *religion*] ...teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.” That’s what ‘religions’ do, no question about it. They teach “...for doctrine...” or teachings “...the commandments of men.”

Let’s analyze it a little bit more, because Christ gets very specific in Mark 7. Let’s see what happens with ‘religion.’ This is why God hates ‘religion’ and He does not want ‘religion’ in *His* Church. **He wants each one!** He wants *your ‘heart, your mind, your soul and your being.’* He doesn’t want the *exterior* form.

Mark 7:1: “Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem came together to Him... [they sent their committee around to follow Him—the *watch squad*] ... And when they saw some of His disciples eating with defiled hands (that is, unwashed *hands*), they found fault” (vs 1-2). They are hypercritical and ‘religious’ people are always hypercritical.

Verse 3: “For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders, do not eat unless they wash... [with the fist up to the elbows] ...their hands thoroughly” (v 3). The tradition of the elders was Judaism. Judaism is a ‘religion.’ Catholicism is a ‘religion.’ Catechism from Catholicism teaches you the Catholic ‘religion.’ ***The Bible teaches you God’s way of life!*** It’s entirely different.

Verse 4: “Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves. And there are many other things that they have received to observe, *such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables. For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, ‘Why don’t Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?’ And He answered *and* said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors Me with their lips... [it’s outward] ...but their hearts are far away from Me.”’ (vs 4-6). They had a ‘religion.’

There may have been some that had a *pure and undefiled religion*. But the Pharisees certainly didn’t. They were very hypocritical.

Verse 7: “But in vain do they worship Me...” *Worship* here is the verb form of *religion*. ‘Howbeit in vain are you ‘religious’ to me.’

““...teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.” ‘For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*.’ Then He said to them, ‘Full well do you reject the commandment of

God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition”’ (vs 7-9). That’s what ‘religion’ is.

‘Religion’ is the compilation. There may be things of the Bible in it—scribes and Pharisees had things of the Bible in it—but *that doesn’t mean it’s from God*. Mormonism uses parts of the Bible, but *that doesn’t mean it’s from God*. Catholicism uses parts of the Bible, but *that doesn’t mean it’s from God*. Many ‘religions’ use part of the Bible. As a matter of fact, even Mohammadism uses part of the Bible and recognizes Mary, and Jesus as a prophet equivalent to Mohammed. We need to understand what the Bible is really about. This kind of thing that was written shows a very complete lack of understanding of the Scriptures altogether and you’re not fulfilling what needs to be.

Let’s look at the Pharisees and let’s see what happens. Let’s understand what happens with ‘religion’ and Jesus made it very, very clear. When you have a ‘religion,’ you develop a *false faith*, because your faith is in the ‘religion’ and not in God. Your faith is in the way that you are doing things. That’s why so many people have said: ‘Once a Catholic, always a Catholic; once a Mormon, always a Mormon.’

Let’s come to the Pharisees and see what they were. Let’s understand that ‘religion’ *destroys the love of God*. The scribes and Pharisees had a ‘religion.’ *They did not have the love of God!* Remember, the Apostle Paul—before he was called—was Saul. He was breathing out hatreds and slaughtering. As we’re going to see, Jesus even told the apostles; ‘The time is coming when they are going to deliver you up and kill you and think they are doing service to God,’ which then, is an *outward* thing that they are doing. By the way, during the Inquisition, whenever they killed the saints it was a ‘religious’ service. They had hymns. They had prayers. This was an *outward* form of exterminating the heretics. Let’s understand it very clearly: If you are going to have a ‘religion,’ you are going to cut off the love of God.

Jesus is talking to the scribes and Pharisees, John 5:36: “But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works that the Father gave Me to complete, the *very* works that I am doing, themselves bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, Who sent Me, has borne witness of Me...” [by all the miracles and all the things that He did] ...You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time. And you do not have His Word dwelling in you... [they had their ‘religion’ abiding in them, but not the Word of God] ...for you do not believe Him Whom He has sent. You search the Scriptures...” (vs 36-39).

Because ‘religious’ people have their little

Scriptures that they go to. They really don't search them. Oh, they may do a study like we have here, but it wasn't thorough. This was very mediocre.

I've been receiving so many papers like this it's almost like 'teacher, teacher, teacher, who's got a typewriter? Let me do a paper.' It's unreal! Yet, there are people who will believe it. I think this is the way that God is taking care of a lot of the 'religious' people. God wants those

- who are dedicated to Him
- who love Him
- who serve Him
- who follow Christ
- who live under the grace of God

Verse 39: “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think that you have eternal life; and they are the ones that testify of Me. But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men...”

That's what all these 'religions' do. 'Oh, how great you are; how great this one, the right 'reverend' this, the left 'reverend' that, the cardinal, the bishop, the archbishop, the father' and so forth.]

“...but I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves” (vs 39-42). That's very strong!

These people were very 'religious' and the Pharisees were of the strictest sect; as Paul said, 'The very strictest.' What did God have to do? God had to bring the Apostle Paul flat on the ground. *God had to bring Paul to the point that he said, 'Everything that was gain to me in the flesh, a Pharisee of Pharisees, of the law blameless'—pure and undefiled religion before God—he said, 'I count it all but dung that I may win Christ.'* He had to repent of his 'religion.' I hope if there are any 'religious' people out there listening to this, I hope you repent of yours, because *God wants a personal relationship with you!* Maybe you ought to really study the Bible more and do like Christ says to 'search the Scriptures' and find out the Truth and really understand what is in it.

Let's find out about the Pharisees. Where did their 'religion' come from? When you really define it, there are only two ways:

1. God's way
2. Satan's way

—which is very broad and there are many out there, there are many 'religions.'

Who is the father of *all* the religions? Even the Christian professing 'religions' of Protestantism are going more and more away from God. When they did follow certain things concerning the

precepts of God, they were right in that, but they still had a 'religion.' People who are called into the Church of God need to repent of a 'religion,' *because God is calling you to a way of life.* Who inspires the 'religions' of this world? We are going to see who the author of the first 'religion' was.

'Religion' is that *you* are going to do something *for* God. You are going to come to God and you are going to bring something to God and God very well better accept it because *you* have put forth this whole effort.

John 8:41—Jesus said to them: “‘You are doing the works of your father.’ Then they said to Him, ‘We have not been born of fornication. We have one Father, *and that is* God.’ Therefore, Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father... [which He wasn't] ...you would love Me... [which they didn't] ...because I proceeded forth and came from God. For I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why don't you understand My speech? Because you cannot *bear* to hear My words... [because you've got *your* 'religion' all blocked in your mind] ...You are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father you desire to practice. He was a murderer from *the* beginning, and has not stood in the Truth because there is no Truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, and the father of it'” (vs 41-44).

Every 'religion' has lies. Catholics do, Protestants do—*every* 'religion.' They come to God with their beads, with their crosses, with their crucifixes, with their idols to show God how 'good' they are and what they are going to do. ***That is not the way of God!***

(go to the next track)

Let's see what Jesus told them. Matt. 23 is an excoriation against 'religion,' where they go out and make proselytes, travel over land and sea and when they've made a proselyte they make him to be a worst hypocrite than their own. Here is what God says concerning 'religion':

Matthew 23:13: “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and as a pretext you offer prayers of great length. Because of this, you shall receive *the* greater judgment. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven before men; for neither do you yourselves enter, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel the sea and the land to make one proselyte, and when he has become one, you make him twofold more a son of Gehenna than yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever shall swear by the temple, it is not binding; but whoever

shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is obligated *to fulfill his oath*” (vs 13-16).

So, you get all nit-picky, with all these little things, little rules, little regulations. That’s all ‘religion.’ That is all defined by men; men critically judging other men and setting up little rules: ‘Well, I don’t like that rule, so let’s make another rule. This rule isn’t right, let’s make another rule.’

Christ says, v 17: “*You* fools and blind!... [that’s what ‘religious’ people are] ...For which is greater, the gold, or the temple, which sanctifies the gold? And *you say*, “Whoever shall swear by the altar, it is not binding; but whoever shall swear by the gift that *is* upon it, he is obligated *to fulfill his oath.*” *You* fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift, or the altar, which sanctifies the gift? Therefore, the one who swears by the altar swears by it, and by all things that *are* upon it. And the one who swears by the temple swears by it, and by Him Who dwells in it. And the one who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God, and by Him Who sits upon it” (vs 17-22). They are missing the whole point. They’ve left God out of the whole thing.

When you start with the smallest thing to build your own little tiny weensy little ‘religion’ and build up all your laws and fences and prohibitions and dos and don’ts, what do you have? *Just exactly what Christ described here!*

Verse 23: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, but you have abandoned the more important *matters* of the law—judgment, and mercy and faith....” There’s no judgment in maligned statements like that. To malign Bob Hunnicutt and me and say we must be Masons! Or we must be Illuminists! Do you understand the difference there? There’s no judgment! There’s no mercy! There’s no faith!

“...These *you* were obligated to do, and not to leave the others undone. Blind guides, who filter out a gnat, but swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of extortion and excess. Blind Pharisees! First cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish, so that the outside may also become clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful *on the outside*, but within are full of the bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness.... [What a description of St. Peter’s Basilica, if you want a real, world-class ‘religion’!] ...Likewise, you also outwardly appear to men *to be* righteous, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (vs 23-28).

One thing you need to understand: Matthew was a Levite as well as a tax collector, so he knew what he was writing about. He knew what Jesus

said. Let’s see what Jesus says that He does not want. *He does not want you worshipping Him in a ‘religious’ form.* What do I mean by that? Exactly what Jesus says here:

Matthew 6:1: “Beware *that* you do not bestow your alms in the sight of men in order to be seen by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father Who *is* in heaven. Therefore, when you give *your* alms, do not sound the trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have glory from men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward” (vs 1-2).

They did the *outward* ‘religious’ form. They threw the money into the treasury, they had their friend blow the trumpet, they had on their phylacteries, how great they are—and guess what? ***They had their reward!***

- Nothing from God!
- God did not notice!
- God did not care!
- God had no part in it!

Verse 3: “But *when* you give your alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall Himself reward you openly. And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, in order *that* they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathen *do...* [in ***their*** ‘religion’] ...for they think that by multiplying their words they shall be heard. Now then, do not be like them; for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him” (vs 3-8).

Then He gives the outline of how to pray. He talks about fasting, v 16: “And when you fast, do not be as the hypocrites, dejected in countenance; for they disfigure their faces in order that they may appear to men to fast. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But *when* you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, So that you may not appear to men to fast, but to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly” (vs 16-18). ***That is Christ’s opinion of ‘religion’!***

There’s a whole lot more that God has to say about ‘religion.’ Bob Hunnicutt said that, ‘religion undid Israel.’ It sure did, because when the ten tribes of Israel were taken away and given into the hand of Jeroboam, what happened? *He set up two golden*

calves; one in Dan and one in Bethel! They worshipped them. They had a ‘religion.’ As a matter of fact, Jeroboam was the head of the ‘religion.’ Jeroboam the son Nebat is the epitome of leading people into sin. Every time there was a bad king in Israel or Judah it says they followed the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made the children of Israel to sin. What did he do? *He created his own feast! Created his own ‘religion’! Created his own temple and it was all good works outside!* Oh, yes, everyone thought it was wonderful. There’s a whole lot more to it than meets the eye.

Let’s see the origin of men’s religion.’ It was started by Cain. You will find that if you go back to the book of Jude, Jude denounces the way of Cain and the way of Balaam. Balaam was the son of Beor in Pethor—*Peter*. Balaam was the equivalent to the pope that we have today. Let’s see what ‘religion’ does.

Genesis 4:4: “And Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock *and* of the fat of it. And the LORD had regard unto Abel and his offering.” Why? *Because Abel was not being ‘religious’!* Abel was doing as God had commanded. That’s why God had it.

Verse 3: “...that Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground.”

Verse 5: “But He did not have regard unto Cain and his offering....” Why? *Because Cain was saying, ‘Well, I’m going to give this to God and God is going to have to accept it!’* Listen! God doesn’t have to accept any ‘religion’ and He doesn’t accept any religion.’ *None!* If you come to God, you come to God on *God’s* terms. No one comes to God on *his* own terms.

- you must repent
- you must be baptized
- you must receive the Spirit of God
- you must worship Him in Spirit and Truth
- you must love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and being

That’s not a religion! That is a *way of God, a way of life!* Cain got mad:

“...And Cain was extremely angry and his countenance fell. And the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you so angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, shall you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it!’” (vs 5-7).

What happened then? *Cain got jealous! Cain killed his brother!* So, ‘religion’ does lead to killing; it is true. Almost every single war in the history of the world has been a ‘religious’ war, one way or the other; one religion’ against another, people against people. That’s why God hates ‘religion.’

Let’s look at a man who had a *perfect* religion.’ Even God said from the outside, *pure and undefiled religion*, Job had it. But was Job accepted of God spiritually? *No, he wasn’t!*

Job 1:6: “Now, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD. And Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.’ And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil?’” (vs 6-8). There is *pure and undefiled* ‘religion’ and keeping yourself unspotted from religion—without a doubt.

You know the story. Satan said, ‘Well, let me afflict him.’ God said, ‘All right.’ Satan afflicted Job and came back and God said, ‘See, he didn’t curse Me.’ Satan said to God, ‘Skin for skin, let me afflict him.’ And God said, ‘All right.’ Job was afflicted with boils from the top of his head to the sole of his feet and his wife said, ‘Oh Job, get it over with. Curse God and die!’ Job sat there and scraped all the pus and threw ashes on himself to get rid of the pain; flies came around. After a few days, his friends came over and they sat down and just looked at him for seven days; sat there and stared at him for seven days, didn’t say a word!

Here’s what ‘religion’ does: It thinks it’s good before God, because it has a work that it’s going to do. Job was as *pure and undefiled* as could be, but it had nothing to do with salvation. That’s what we need to understand. It was all *exterior*. He listed everything that he did.

Job 9:32: “For *He is* not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, *that* we should come together in court... [job is willing to meet God on a *man-to-man* basis] ... there is no umpire between us, *who* might lay his hand upon us both. Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear make me afraid; *then* would I speak and not fear Him; but *it is* not so with me” (vs 32-35). He was arguing all the way back and forth. If you want a really instructive lesson, read the whole book of Job.

Job 23:2: “Even today *is* my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh, that I knew *where* I might find Him, *that* I might come even to His seat! I would lay *my* cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments” (vs 2-4). ‘I would run up to God and tell Him, just exactly how good I am! What I’ve done! And I’ve got *my religion.*’ Of course, God never accepted it—did He?

Verse 5: “I would know the words, *which* He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me. Will He contend against me with *His* great power? No, surely He would give heed to me. There the righteous might reason with Him; and I would be acquitted from my Judge forever. Behold, I go forward, but He is not *there*; and backward, but I cannot see Him” (vs 5-8). The day had come when God came down and talked to you.

Verse 9: “On the left hand, where He works, but I cannot behold Him. He turns to the right, but I cannot see *Him*. But He knows the way that I take; *when* He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (vs 9-10). How wonderful I am! That’s what ‘religionist’ do. They look down and they thumb up their nose and their hands at people.

Job 27:2: “As God lives, He has denied me justice; and the Almighty has made my soul bitter. As long as my breath *is* in me, and the breath of God *is* in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit... [‘I’m going to do it right.’] ...Far be it from me that I should declare you to be right... [you miserable friends out there, who don’t know anything] ...until I die I will not retract my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness, and I will not let it go; my heart shall not shame me so long as I live” (vs 2-6).

Let’s see how God looks at all of that. When you understand it, in the final analysis God was very kind and merciful to Job. This tells us about man and *his* ‘religion’ and how great and marvelous it is.

Psalms 39:5: “Behold, You have made my days as a handbreadth, and the span of my days is as nothing before You. Surely every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.” All ‘religion’—even unspotted and undefiled—*are vain, because they don’t change the heart*. Was all of Job’s behavior vain? though perfect in the letter? though undefiled and pure? *Yes, it was!* It wasn’t from the heart and it wasn’t worshipping God. It was *serving himself*, building up his reputation; so it’s vain.

Verse 6: “Surely every man walks about in a vain show! Surely they are in an uproar in vain....” That’s the way all men are.

Let’s see how this argument continues here, because I want you to know that with Job we are dealing with the purest, most undefiled man that had ever lived.

Job 31:35: “Oh that I had one to hear me!... [even his friends weren’t listening to him] ... Behold, my desire *is that* the Almighty would answer me, and the indictment *that* my adversary had written... [it was written and God did answer him] ...Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, *and* bind it *like* a crown *upon* my head.... [He would take

every accusation that anyone ever had] ...I would declare to Him the number of my steps; like a prince I would come before Him” (vs 35-37). He wasn’t coming to God repentant—was he? *No, he was coming as a prince!*

Job 34:1: “And Elihu answered and said... [v 35]: ‘...“Job has spoken without knowledge, and his words *were* without wisdom.”.... [he was all ‘religious’] ...My desire *is that* Job may be tried unto the end because *his* answers *are* like those of wicked men. For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps *his* hands among us, and multiplies his words against God” (vs 1, 35-37). Isn’t that what ‘religions’ do? *Yes!* They killed the prophets!. They killed Christ!

Job 35:1: “And Elihu answered and said, ‘Do you think this to *be* right, you *that* say, “My righteousness *is* more than God’s”?’” (vs 1-2). That is exactly what religionist do when they have their own rules. *They say their way is better than God’s!* Even a *pure and undefiled* ‘religion’ God does not accept for salvation.

- God wants your heart
- you are saved by grace
- God wants your love
- He wants to love you
- He wants that relationship

Can you imagine what a church would be like filled with Jobs from one end to the other? Can you imagine the strife, the nitpicking, the vanity, the fighting, the arguing and the abusing that would go on? Beating each other up with words and stupidity? *That’s what a ‘religious’ church does.* That’s what Bob Hunnicutt was talking about. People coming in with their own ‘religion’ and claiming that they are Godly. *Godliness* is another thing:

- Godliness is Christ *in* you
- Godliness is living by every Word of God, from the heart
- Godliness is worshipping God *in Spirit and in Truth*, not the outward form
- Godliness is doing as Jesus said: ‘When you pray, go into your closet, when you fast don’t appear to men to be fasting.’

When you do something that is right, you don’t brag about it. You don’t let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. You just do it! And let God bless you.

Verse 3: “For you say, ‘What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than *if* I had sinned?’ I will answer your words, and your companions with you. Look to the heavens, and see...” (vs 3-5). That’s a good place to start. That’s very humbling when you look up and see the greatness of what God has made. That’s a good

place to begin.

“...and behold the clouds; they are higher than you. If you sin, what do you do against Him? Or *if* your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him? Or what does He receive from your hand? Your wickedness *may hurt* a man like yourself; and your righteousness *may profit* the son of man” (vs 5-8). In the flesh temporarily, that’s what he is talking about.

Verse 9: “By reason of the multitude of oppressions they cry out; they cry out because of the *powerful* arm of the mighty.” That’s what ‘religion’ and politics have done: *oppressed*.

Verse 10: “But none says, ‘Where *is* God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night; Who teaches us more than the animals of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?’ There they cry, but He gives no answer, because of the pride of evildoers. Surely God will not hear vanity...” (vs 10-13). ***Man at his very best state is altogether vanity!***

“...neither will the Almighty regard it. How *much less* when you say you do not see Him! The cause *is* before Him; you must wait for Him.... [not yourself, Job] ...And now because it is not so, He has visited in anger yet he does not understand even his great extremity. Therefore, does Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplies *his* words without knowledge” (vs 13-16). The purest, most undefiled ‘religious’ man on the face of the earth—there’s his sin: ***vain!*** He opens his mouth without knowledge and multiplies words against God.

Let’s see where God says He hates it; He can’t stand it, even though it originally was something that God commanded with all of the rituals and all of the sacrifices. It is all vain, because:

- they made a ‘religion’ out of it
- they became hypocritical in it
- they cast God out of it

When you have ***a way*** that casts God out of it, every time you get a ‘religion’ sooner or later God is cast out. There’s just no way around it.

Isaiah 1:10: “Hear the Word of the LORD, rulers of Sodom; give ear to the Law of our God, people of Gomorrah. ‘To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?’.... [What is it?] ...says the LORD. ‘I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I do not delight in *the blood of* bulls, or of lambs, or of he-goats.... [God commanded it. Why?] ...When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts?’” (vs 10-12). You’re coming in with ***your way*** and ***your religion***.

Verse 13: “Bring no more vain sacrifices;

incense is an abomination to Me—new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure...” Isn’t that what happened? When you get ‘religious’ you have so many activities in the Church, that you are doing this on Monday and you are doing that on Tuesday and you’re doing something else on Wednesday and Thursday and then you have Friday night Bible Study and then you have two Sabbath services on the Sabbath. ***It all gets to be a political thing in praising men.*** We’ve lived through that—haven’t we? What happened? ***God destroyed it, just like He destroyed Jerusalem!*** And it’s going to be further destroyed even more.

“...iniquity along with the solemn assembly! Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates...” (vs 13-14). You can even have them on the right day, but if you make it yours, by ‘religion,’ they don’t belong to God. We need to understand that.

Let’s see what God told the Levites, Malachi 2:1: “And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, and if you will not lay *it* to heart to give glory to My name,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘then I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yea, I have indeed cursed them *already* because you do not lay *it* to heart” (vs 1-2).

They had nothing in their heart for God. They had a ‘religion’ out here, and theirs certainly wasn’t pure and undefiled like Job’s was, but even Job’s wasn’t accepted of God, because Job had to repent.

God says He’s going to corrupt it, v 3: “Behold, I will rebuke your seed; and I will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your appointed feasts....” All your ‘religious’ *flu-flaw*, whatever it is, He’s going to just put it like so much dung, just spewed out upon their faces. And we’ve seen that in the ministry—haven’t we? We’ve seen that happen, *no question about it!*

“...And one shall carry you away with it.... [they are all caught up in their own dung] ...And you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, so that My covenant might be with Levi,’ says the LORD of hosts.... [we apply that to the ministry today] ‘My covenant with him was *one* of life and peace, and I gave them to him *for* fear; that he might fear Me, and he was in awe before My name. The Law of Truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips. He walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and turned away many from iniquity’” (vs 3-6). But what happened? They turned and brought in ‘religion’ and went the other way.

Verse 7: “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and *the people* should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of

hosts. But you have departed out of the way; you have caused many to stumble at the Law....” (vs 7-8). Why? *Because you have a ‘religion’ and you created a ‘religion’ that ignores God!*

“...You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘Therefore, I have also made you contemptible and base before all the people, just as you have not kept My ways but have been partial in the Law’” (vs 8-9). Then he talks about all the divorce and everything that is caused by it.

Verse 10: “Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously, each man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?”

This is what happens when you have a ‘religion’: *You begin to despise God’s way!* I can understand with some of the *false* ‘religion’ that came in and so forth, that’s true. They despise God’s way!

Ezekiel 22:25: “There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst, like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. Her priests have done violence to My Law ... [with *their* ‘religion’] ...and have profaned My Holy things... [with *their* ‘religion’] ...They have put no difference between the Holy and the profane, and have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them” (vs 25-26). It’s quite a thing!

Let’s see what God says about this kind of righteousness and what it is and what happens here, Isaiah 58:2 “Yet, they seek Me daily, and seem eager to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and one that did not forget the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they seem eager to draw near to God.... [they honor Me with their lips] ...*They say*, ‘Why have we fasted, and You do not see? Why have we afflicted our soul and You take no knowledge?’....” (vs 2-3).

They are trying to force God to do something for them, because of what they are doing and that’s the very essence of religion.’ That’s what Cain did. That’s what every ‘religion’ has done: *They have fenced everything around God’s way and they make God’s way a burden, an absolute burden!*

“...Behold, in the day of your fast you pursue your business and exploit all your workers. Behold, you fast for strife and debate, and to strike with the fist of wickedness; you cannot fast as *you do* this day, and expect to make your voice to be heard on high” (vs 3-

4).

God is going to answer you in a different way. God is going to answer you in a way that is going to be something! We need to understand exactly how this is.

Let’s see some more ‘religion,’ Isaiah 65:2: “I have spread out My hands all the day to a rebellious people who walk in the way that is not good, *even* after their own thoughts; a people who without ceasing provoke Me to My face; who sacrifice in gardens... [that’s like in the churches] ...and burn incense upon the bricks” (vs 2-3).

‘Oh, yes we have to have incense.’ If you watch the pope at high Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica—they’ve got these huge serpentine pillars rising up with a huge sunburst canopy at the top. They have this big altar and they have incense and they walk around and ring the bell. They’re all dressed in these long robes and *mumble and murmur*, ding goes the bell and whoosh goes the incense. It’s exactly what he’s talking about here.

Verse 4: “‘A *people* who sit among the graves, and spend the night in the tombs, who eat swine’s flesh, and broth of vile *things* in their vessels; who say, “Keep to yourself, do not come near me; for I am holier than you.” These *are* a smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day. Behold, *it is* written before Me; I will not be silent... [No, God will still answer it.] ...except I will repay; yea, I will repay into their bosom your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together,’ says the LORD...” (vs 4-7). *Their ‘religion’ has caused their iniquity!*

Here’s another ‘religious’ person, and we’ll compare this with what God really wants, Isaiah 66:3: “He who kills an ox *is as if* he killed a man; he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he broke a dog’s neck; he who offers a grain offering *is as if* he offered swine’s blood; he who burns incense *is as if* he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways... [it’s *their own* ‘religion’] ...and their soul delights in their abominations.”

‘Oh, it’s a wonderful thing! Look at that beautiful Christmas tree! Oh, this pork roast was so good on Easter—I can’t stand it!’ *All the abominations!*

Verse 4: “I also will choose their delusions, and I will bring their fears upon them because when I called, no one answered; when I spoke, they did not hear. But they did evil before My eyes and chose *that* in which I did not delight.”

What God wants, v 1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me?...’” That’s why God even told David—when

David wanted to build the temple—‘Look, I’ve lived in a Tabernacle all these years and not in a house,’ because God knew what would happen once it was built. And did it happen? Was Solomon destroyed with *the religion*’ of the other ‘religions’? *Yes, he was*, and yet, he built the House of God. Brethren, can we understand what God really wants? He says it here! He defines it!

“...And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,’ says the LORD...” (vs 1-2). Look, God can build temples, God can build buildings, God can build universes, but what does He want more than anything else?

“...‘But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word’” (v 2). That’s what God wants. **A converted attitude!** That’s what eventually happened to Job.

You can have zeal in ‘religion.’ You can be zealous! Yes, you can really do great things with ‘religion.’ You can organize, you can have drives, you can do many things. **But is God in it?**

Paul says of Israel, Romans 10:1: “Brethren, the earnest desire of my heart and my supplication to God for Israel is for salvation. For I testify of them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.... [No! They didn’t do it God’s way.] ...For they, being ignorant of the righteousness *that* comes from God, and seeking to establish **their own righteousness**...” (vs 1-3)—by creating their own ‘religion.’

That’s why nowhere in the Bible does it say, ‘God loves religion.’ Nowhere does it say, ‘Christian religion,’ because God doesn’t want you to be a ‘religious’ person. *God wants you to be converted*, with the kind of attitude we just read about there. When you go about to establish your own righteousness, what happens?

“...have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (v 3). So, that’s what they did.

Now let’s see what happened to Job once God exposed all of this that Job had done. Let’s see the extremes to what this comes to and the extremes to what ‘religion’ always ends up doing, *bar none!* God finally spoke to Job.; he had his wish.

Job 38:1: “Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ‘Who *is* this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?’” (vs 1-2). Who is this Job? Who God said at the beginning was perfect and upright? All of that which is in the flesh—*outward*—doesn’t count with God, because if your heart isn’t perfect before God it doesn’t matter. You can look righteous, you can have slogans, you can have banners, you can have

uniforms, you can have crosses, crucifixes or the lack thereof. ***If your heart isn’t right***, what good is it?

Verse 3: “Now gird up your loins like a man; for I will demand of you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?... [if you are so great] ...Declare it if you have understanding! Who has determined its measurements if you know?... [come on Job tell Me.] ...Or who has stretched the line upon it?... [If you’re so righteous, what did you do Job?] ...On what are the foundations fastened to?... [How does the earth hang in space? That’s what God asked him.] ...Or who laid its cornerstone” (vs 3-6). How was the world started when God created it? ***If you know, tell Me.***’

Verse 33—God said to Job: “Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set up their dominion on the earth? Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that floods of waters may cover you? Can you send lightning that they may go and say to you, ‘Here we *are*?’ Who has put wisdom in the inward parts?...” (vs 33-36). In other words, who gave you intelligence in the first place Job, to even come to this point that you could even ask these questions?

“...Or who has given understanding to the mind?” (v 36). ***God has!***

Job 40:1: “And the LORD answered Job and said, ‘Shall he who contends with the Almighty instruct *Him*?... [Are you, Job, really going to instruct Me?] ...He who reproves God, let him answer it.’” ***Let’s have your answer, Job.*** What are you going to say?

Verse 3: “And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘Behold, I am vile!...’” (vs 1-4). This is the beginning of his repentance. ***All the external things concerning ‘religion’ meant nothing.*** Job had to come to repentance.

Verse 4: “‘Behold, I am vile! What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.’... [In other words, ‘God, I’m going to shut up and listen.’] ...And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ‘Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand of you, and you declare unto Me. Will you even annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous?’” (vs 4-8).

That’s what all religions do! They disannul the judgment of God concerning *His* Sabbath and *His* Holy Days. They disannul the judgment of God in the New Testament: ‘by grace you are saved.’ They’ve got to have all their little works and all their little flags and banners and dos and don’ts so that

they may be ‘righteous.’ Those who keep Sunday disannul the judgment of God concerning the Sabbath and condemn Him for giving it. Condemn Him and say that He gave the Sabbath as an evil thing to mark the Jews, therefore, none of us should keep the Sabbath, because the Jews keep the Sabbath. *Ridiculous!* But that’s what Job was doing. That’s what ‘religions’ do. ***They disannul God’s judgment and they condemn God, that they may be righteous!***

You can try that on any ‘religion’ and you can see that that is true. Islam does it very nicely with Jesus, by saying, ‘Well, we accept Jesus as a prophet like Mohammed, but not the Son of God.’ So, they condemn God that *they* may be righteous. The Catholics say, ‘We have the traditions of the fathers and we have our own version of the commandments. We keep the first day of the week holy,’ but nowhere does the Bible say the first day of the week is Holy.

Verse 9: “And *have* you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His? Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency...” (vs 9-10). Let’s see you, Job, sitting there with all of your boils and all of your ashes that you’ve spewed on you, all the flies that are there and the maggots that are crawling in all of this pus in your flesh. I haven’t let you die, but let’s see now, Job, let’s see you change.

Verse 10: “Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you” (vs 10-14).

So, for those who are ‘religious,’ if they can do that, then they can save themselves with their ‘religion.’ But *no* ‘religion’ *is going to save any man!* ***Jesus Christ alone is going to do that!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Zechariah 4:6
- 2) James 1:26, 26-27
- 3) John 4:23-24
- 4) Matthew 15:9
- 5) Mark 7:1-9
- 6) John 5:36-42
- 7) John 8:41-44
- 8) Matthew 23:13-28
- 9) Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18
- 10) Genesis 4:4, 3, 5-7
- 11) Job 1:6-8
- 12) Job 9:32-35
- 13) Job 23:2-10
- 14) Job 27:2-6
- 15) Psalm 39:5-6
- 16) Job 31:35-37
- 17) Job 34:1, 35-37
- 18) Job 35:1-16
- 19) Isaiah 1:10-14
- 20) Malachi 2:1-10
- 21) Ezekiel 22:25-26
- 22) Isaiah 58:2-4
- 23) Isaiah 65:2-7
- 24) Isaiah 66:3-4, 1-2
- 25) Romans 10:1-3
- 26) Job 38:1-6, 33-36
- 27) Job 40:1-14

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- Matthew 7:21-23
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Why God Hates Religion II

(See “the Way” with the “Eyes of Your Mind”)
Fred R. Coulter

Let’s understand something that is very important for us to realize. Let’s review James 1:26-27, where it talks about religion.’

Let’s understand that God has not called us to a ‘religion.’ **God has called us to a way of life!** God has not called us so we can be ‘good’ in this world, because He has called sinners—harlots and publicans—to repentance so that they can be in the Kingdom of God. Those who were ‘good’ in the world—like the Pharisees and Sadducees and scribes—looked upon Christ, at what He was doing, and they asked the disciples: ‘Why does your Master eat and drink with the harlots and publicans?’ They even called Him a ‘wine bibber.’ Jesus gave the answer and said that, ‘God came to call sinners to repentance and not the righteous.’ They thought *they* were righteous. So, you can have an *outward* form of ‘religion’ and that is what this word means.

James 1:26: “If anyone among you considers himself to be **religious**, and does not control his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is vain..”

We saw how that applied to Job. Even though he was perfect in the *letter of the Law*, that had nothing to do with salvation. You can find people who are ‘good’ in the world, but they are not righteous before God, because God wants to impute the righteousness of Christ to us. That is not a ‘religious’ thing. That is by the grace of God. That’s what this is; it’s the opposite of that. This is to have an *outward* form of ‘religion.’

Verse 27: “Pure and undefiled **religion** before God and *the* Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

Job was unspotted from the world. He was perfect, sincere and righteous, but that was not for salvation. God has not called you unto a ‘religion.’ **He has called you unto salvation!**

The Greek word here in both cases—vs 26-27—is ‘threskeia’—which means *religious observance, the outward ceremonial service of religion, the external form*. You cannot call what we do with the Passover as an outward form of worship. **The Passover is a covenant renewal**, which has nothing to do with the religious observance at all. You renew the covenant with foot-washing, with eating the broken bread and drinking the blood of Christ. He said, ‘This is the blood of the New Covenant.’ He was talking about His own blood.

When you pray you’re not to have an outward form of prayer. You are to go to your closet and pray to your Father Who is in secret. When you do your alms, you’re not to have an outward appearance of doing alms in public. You’re to not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. When you do things such as fasting, you’re not to have it so that everyone knows you’re fasting. All of that is *exterior* ‘religion.’ We saw how that God says He hates the ‘religious’ aspect in Isa. 1, where they made God’s way a religion.’ This ‘threskeia’ is *the external form of worship*.

Now let’s go to another one that is very similar to it: an external form of ‘religion,’ which we find in Col. 2, the worship of angels. This is where all ‘religion’ ends up: worshipping *fallen* angels or demons.

Colossians 2:18: “Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize *by* doing *his* will in self-abasement... [that’s what ‘religion’ is: *voluntary humility*] ...and **the worship** of angels...” The word here is ‘threskeia’—meaning that it is *an outward worship*. That’s what people do in worshipping angels.] ...intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind.” It does lift you up. It does give you a sense of importance.

That’s why there are such things as the ‘inner circle,’ the Rosicrucians, seeking the spirits and things like this, because people get **all lifted up in their own vanity**. You have power; you have ability over other people. That’s what this is all about; when that happens, when you become ‘religious.’

Verse 19: “And not holding fast to the Head... [looking away from Christ] ...from Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with* the increase of God. Therefore, if you have died together *with* Christ from the elements of the world... [**That’s what religion is! The rudiments of the world!**] ...why are you subjecting yourselves to *the* decrees of men as if you were living in *the* world? *They* say, ‘You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!’” (vs 19-21). All ‘religions’ have *their own* laws.

Let’s tie this in to v 6: “Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him.” We’re going to see in a minute that Christ said that He was ‘the Way, the Truth and the Life.’ He didn’t say, ‘I am *the* religion.’ He didn’t come to establish a ‘religion.’ **He came to establish a way!**

He came to bring Godliness. He came so that we are to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. God is interested in our heart. He’s not interested in just the outward form and ceremony of a ‘religion.’

Verse 6: “Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him; **being rooted and built up in Him**... [not in a ‘religion’] ...and being confirmed in the faith...” (vs 6-7). There is a *false* faith, which you can have in a ‘religion.’ It does work for a while, but sooner or later it’s going to collapse, because it’s not built on the foundation of Christ.

“...exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Be on guard so that no one takes you captive...” (vs 7-8). The Greek there is *make a prey of you*. In other words, make you a victim of their philosophy, which is a ‘religion.’

“...through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ” (v 8).

We saw that all the worship that the Pharisees did in *their* ‘religion’ was *in vain*. They rejected the commandments of God so that they could keep their traditions. They even rejected Moses in whom they claim that they believed and they followed. Christ pointed out very clearly that with ‘your *religion* you did not have the love of God.’

In the material that was sent to me, the warning was given: ‘Well, let’s see where this love of God takes us’; indicating that because I preach and teach the love of God, being against ‘religion,’ therefore, whatever I’m doing and teaching is going to fall apart because we’re saying that God hates ‘religion.’ Well, let me tell you something very clearly: ***The love of God is the greatest thing that there is!*** There can never be enough preaching on the love of God and if you truly love God ‘with all your heart, mind, soul and being’ you’re not going to be ‘religious.’ If you want to be ‘religious’ you can have a form and we’ll look at this; notice what ‘religion’ allows:

2-Timothy 3:1: “Know this also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men will be lovers of self...” (vs 1-2). ‘Religion’ allows this. Whereas, God says that you love Him *first*, then you love your neighbor as yourself and you love the brethren as Christ has loved us—totally different.

“...lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers... [that’s what I’m going through right now] ... without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good” (vs 2-3). This ‘good’ is not the human good, but this good is the good that comes

from the righteousness of Christ.

Verse 5: “Having an outward appearance of Godliness... [the exterior form] ...but denying the power of *true* Godliness. But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these.” So, we are told to get away from ‘religious’ people like this. We’re not to go ahead and embrace what they have done.

Now let’s go back and finish the story with Job. Let’s see what Job had to do. Job had to *repent*. of his ‘religion’ just like Saul had to repent of his before he became the Apostle Paul. Job had to go through a very similar experience in a different way; a different method to come to the point of *real* conversion. Let’s see the whole experience that Job went through after God cornered him and talked to him. God didn’t come down and crush Job and attack him. He just said, ‘Job where were you? I want to tell you something.’

Job 40:8: “Will you even annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous? And *have* you an arm like God?...” (vs 8-9). God didn’t come down and squash him. He said, ‘Job, I want you to think on this. I want you to really search your heart and mind if you can do this.’

“...Or can you thunder with a voice like His? Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you” (vs 9-14).

Salvation has to come from God! God pointed to His creation and what He made so that Job could see that he was missing and lacking in understanding of God. Now let’s see how Job repented:

- Job repented!
- Saul repented!
- Many other people repented!
- ***God wants you to repent of your ‘religion’***

—and not bring it into the Church of God and make a ‘religion’ out of the Church of God.

Why do you think God is destroying many of the Churches of God today? *Because a* ‘religion’ was made out of it! When they made a ‘religion’ out of it, what did they do? *They said*, ‘Well, look, let’s go to the world’s ‘religions’—called Christianity—and let’s see how they worship their god and we’ll do the same thing.’ So, lo and behold, once they became ‘religious,’ they gave up on everything concerning God. You see what happens in the

extreme as these things come along. They didn't repent like Job did.

Job 42:1: “And Job answered the LORD, and said, ‘I know that You can do all things... [Job is beginning to see himself for what he really is] ...and *that* no thought can be withheld from You’” (vs 1-2). You're not dealing with a ‘religion’; ***you are dealing with God and a relationship with Him!***

Job said v 3: “*You [God] asked, ‘Who is he that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore, I [Job] have spoken that which I did not understand...’*” Job said, ‘I was just a blithering idiot. I was out there babbling and going on and on about how good I was and how righteous I was, and how foolish and stupid of me to do it.’

“...*things* too wonderful for me; yea, which I did not know. Hear, I beseech You, and I will speak; *You said*, “I will ask of you, and you will declare to Me.” I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear... [that's what ‘religious’ people do, ***they hear***] ...but now my eye sees You” (vs 3-5). This is the ***eye of your mind!*** You comprehend God! That is not a ‘religious’ concept. *That is a spiritual experience with the Spirit of God and Christ in you;* that you now *see* and *comprehend* God.

Verse 6: “Therefore, I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.” He came to repentance. He *saw* God, God blessed him, replaced everything double, and replaced his family and gave him the most beautiful daughters in all the world. So, the blessings came at the end. God doesn't want us to be ‘religious.’

Eph. 1 is one of my favorites, about having your eyes opened. I hope that you do to. I hope, brethren, that the ***eyes of your mind*** are open:

- to *understand* God's way
- to *see* the calling of God
- to see the love of God
- to *see* what God holds out for us
- to enter into His kingdom as spirit glorified sons and daughters of God

That's not a ‘religion,’ brethren. That is *a reality of our calling!*

Paul said, Ephesians 1:16: “Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him. ***And may the eyes of your mind*** be enlightened...” (vs 16-18). The only way that is going to happen is if you get rid of your ‘religion.’ God hates ‘religion’; it has caused all strife.

There are those that we've seen in some of these reports who say that they want to do away with

all ‘religion.’ That doesn't make us party to them at all.

- Do you think that God, when Christ returns, is going to have Christ save part of:
 - ✓the Catholic Church
 - ✓the Protestant Church
 - ✓the Islamic Church,
 - ✓Buddhism
 - ✓Confucianism
 - ✓Deism
 - ✓animal worship?
- Do you think God is going to save a little bit of that because it's ‘good’? ***No! That is the good from the Tree of the knowledge Good and Evil!***

Understand this: ***not all good comes from God; only the good that comes through His Holy Spirit!*** There's a counterfeit good, which is in ‘religion,’ which comes from the Tree of the knowledge Good and Evil. God is going to ***destroy all religions!*** You need to think on that!

That's why when you read in the book of Revelation when the Churches began to get involved in the way of the Nicolaitans, ***that's religious hierarchy and in the way of Balaam:***

- eating things sacrificed to idols
- committing fornication with Jezebel the prophetess
- going into the depths of Satan

They were going into the ‘religions’ of this world. ***God corrected them!*** God said even to the Church at Pergamos that if they didn't repent of the deeds of the Nicolaitans and the doctrine of Balaam that He was going to come and fight against them with the ‘sword of His mouth.’

We have seen that happen with the Worldwide Church of God. God fought against it with ***the ‘sword of His mouth’*** and it is no longer a Church of God. They didn't repent! They didn't heed! They wanted ‘religion’ so God let them have it. Now they have it and ***they don't have God!*** We need to understand that. That's why my prayer for you is the same as Paul's:

That “...the ***eyes of your mind*** be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling... [not a ‘religion’] ...and what *are* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power” (vs 18-19). That's what God wants us *to know*, and *to know* the power of His love and have the understanding that surpasses knowledge.

Let's begin to see that ***God's way is a way that leads to Godliness.*** True Godliness comes from

worshipping God in *Spirit and in Truth*, but we have to understand something very, very important: ***The way of Christ is not a ‘religion’!***

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him [Thomas] ‘I am **the Way**... [He did not say, ‘I am the religion.] ...and **the Truth**... [He didn’t say, ‘the way to good,’ because all Truth exposes good and evil] ...and **the Life**; **no one comes to the Father except through Me.**” That is through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father. It isn’t going to be any other way.

Verse 15: **“If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.”**

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.’” So, you have God the Father and Jesus Christ together. It’s really a tremendous and wonderful thing that God has called you to. Let’s hope that you **hear** the hope of His calling and **see** the greatness of God in it.

Let’s see what Jesus says about religionists and hirelings, John 10:1 “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who does not enter the sheepfold through the door, but climbs up **some other way**...” Different than Christ who is **the Way**. Making a ‘religion’ out of ‘God’s way’ is *another way* and God does not want it. If you climb up some other way, what are you? *You are a thief and a robber, because you are ‘religious’!* Isn’t that what He said of the scribes and Pharisees? *No question about it!*

“...that one is a thief and a robber. But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he brings the sheep out, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger for they will flee from him because they do not know the voice of strangers” (vs 1-5). Why don’t they know the voice of strangers? *Because they are not ‘religious’!*

- they are converted
- they have the Spirit of God
- they are yielded to God
- they follow Christ wherever He goes

Verse 7: “Therefore, Jesus again said to them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.’” You have to go through Christ. And that verifies what Christ said:

John 14:6 “...‘I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.’” ***It can’t be any other way!*** He makes it very clear.

John 10:8: “All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers...” Of whom were the ‘religious’ leaders of Judaism, the ‘religious’ leaders of the other religions of the world, claiming to give salvation—***thieves and robbers!***

“...but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy...” (vs 8-10). That’s why God hates ‘religion.’ That’s what the ‘religious’ people have done.

“...I have come so that they may have life, and may have *it* more abundantly. I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. But the one who is a hireling, and who is not *the* shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming ... [other religionists] ... and leaves the sheep, and flees. And the wolf seizes the sheep and scatters them. Now, the hireling flees because he is a hireling and has no concern for the sheep” (vs 10-13).

Christ on the other hand is entirely different. Christ wants a relationship with you. He doesn’t want you to have a ‘religion’ called *Christianity*. He wants you to be a Christian, with Christ in you, *the hope of glory*.

Verse 14: “I am the good Shepherd, and I know those who *are* Mine, and am known of those who *are* Mine” That tells you what Christ thinks about others who are ‘religious’ people.

Let’s understand some more about ‘religious’ people and what Christ thinks about them. What’s going to happen to some of them in the Day of Judgment? Sure enough

- they’re ‘religious’
- they’re prophets
- they may even use some of the Words of God
- they use the name of Jesus Christ

You can have a very strict ‘religion.’ You can be just like Saul was before he was called to be the Apostle Paul, of the strictest sect of the Pharisees. You can beat the flesh, but you’re still not going to be in the Kingdom of God, because that’s all *exterior*. Or you can have one of the many other ‘religions,’ which is *the broad way* to go.

Jesus said, Matthew 7:13: “Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it... [‘religion’ is also *a way*, but ***not God’s way***] ...for narrow *is* the gate and difficult

is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it” (vs 13-14).

Then He gives a warning. Why does He give this warning at this place? *Because there will be many coming along with ‘religions,’ trying to tell people how to be saved;* do this, receive the Lord in your heart and so forth.

Verse 15: “But **beware** of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing, for within they are ravening wolves.” You can’t convert the nature of ‘religion.’ You can’t convert the nature of ‘religious’ people if they want to stay ‘religious.’ You must repent of being ‘religious,’ just like Job did, just like Saul did.

Verse 16: “You shall know them by their fruits. They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit” (vs 16-17). If it is from God; the good from God

Verse 18: “A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit.” You can’t take the corrupt way of ‘religion’ and make it good enough to be accepted by God. ***There’s no way! It’s an impossibility!*** That’s why Christ died, so that we can repent and go *His* way.

Verse 19: “Every tree *that is* not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire. Therefore, **you shall assuredly know them by their fruits**” (vs 16-20).

What he says next is very profound and you need to understand this to the very depths of your being in order to understand ***why God hates ‘religion’*** and what He’s going to do to ‘religious’ people.

Verse 21: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven...” It’s not because you can be ‘religious.’ It’s not because you can say the name *Lord* or even say *Lord, Lord*.

Here’s what’s going to get you into the Kingdom of Heaven: **...but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who is in heaven**” (v 21). *Doing* means to be practicing as ***a way of life***; you are doing the will of the Father in heaven.

What about those who are ‘religious’? Verse 22: “Many will say to Me in that day...” ***In the day of judgment!*** You can just name off whomever you want to name off. You can turn on the television station—if you have Trinity Broadcasting in your area—and you can just go right down the line of all the ‘religionists’; put their name in there. Oh, they are doing good works. Oh, they’re doing wonderful things. They are supposedly healing people,

supposedly casting out demons and all of that sort of thing. But ***that doesn’t mean that they are from God!***

Verse 22: “Many will say to Me in that day ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name?....’”

- Didn’t I give many inspiring sermons in Your name, Lord?
- Didn’t I foretell events to happen in Your name, Lord?
- I was doing Your work, Lord!
- I was a very ‘religious’ person!
- I had the Bible!

“...And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name?....” (v 22).

- We’ve cast out thousands of demons!
- We had rallies and campaigns everywhere!
- They came by the hundreds, by the thousands, they fell over on their backs and they spoke in tongues!

“...And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?” (v 22).

- Lord, we built hospitals and we had clinics and we helped the poor and we helped the sick!
- We did all these things!
- Lord, we had a *pure and undefiled* ‘religion’—just like Job!

Verse 23: “And then I [Jesus] will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.’” What is the greatest iniquity that can be worked, brethren? ***To make a ‘religion’ out of the way of God!*** You think on that. Maybe you might think that’s a strong statement, but that’s just the way it is.

Verse 24: “Therefore... [He tells how you do it rightly] ...everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock... [that Rock was Christ] ...and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not practice them...(vs 24-26).

You may take part of them and make a ‘religion’ out of it. You may even use the name of the Lord, but ***you are not built upon Christ***. Many will appropriate the name of Christ. Many will say they have a ‘Christian religion,’ but that doesn’t make them Christians in deed before God.

“...shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand” (v 26).

When we had the rains in 1998 in California, we had 230% the normal rain. We have some of these riverbeds where they hardly have any water running in them most of the year. Only when we get some rain in the winter do they have any water in them. These rivers became raging torrents. Right out about three miles from our place, there is a bridge that crosses over the river, and just down from the bridge the river came in a bend. There was 800-feet of land, which was sand, and they built a house right on the sand. The floods came and the wind blew and it beat upon the bank of the river. It took away all 800-feet of sand and a brand new house, without escrow not having closed yet, fell and collapsed. It was a good house, a wonderful house, brand new, not even lived in. But it wasn't built in the right place.

If you are not built on Christ, it's going to fall! Christ says, "...and great was the fall of it" (v 27). He's saying these great self-important men, who applied themselves to a 'religion' called *Christian*, are going to fall. They are not going to be in the Kingdom of God.

Now let's look and see something here that's important for us to understand concerning *God's way*. We've seen this is *man's way*. It says in Proverbs that 'there is a way which seems right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.' We need to understand that in relationship to what we are doing. There is on the other hand *the way of God*. The way of man is very broad in the way it's doing, where it's going and how it's headed in all of its various forms of 'religion' and government, *but it's all coming to an end*. We're living in the end-time when it is going to collapse.

(go to the next track)

Now, let's look and see that God's way is called *a way*. Let's understand that:

- God's way is *perfect*
- God's way is *righteous*
- God's way is not a 'religion'
- God's way is a *way of life*

Psalm 18:30: "As for God, His way is perfect..." If Christ is *the Way* and He is perfect, and if He is *the Truth* and *the Life*, which He is, and *God's way* is perfect; why would you want to pollute it and make it a 'religion'? ***Think on that!***

"...the Word of the LORD is tried. He is a shield to all those who take refuge in Him, for who is God besides the LORD? Or, who is a Rock except our God?" (vs 30-31). We are talking about the same thing in Matt. 7.

Now, Psalm 25:8 talks about God and *His way*: "Good and upright is the LORD; therefore, will He teach sinners in ***the way***."

Verse 4: "Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me ***Your*** paths. Lead me in ***Your*** Truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You do I wait all the day long" (vs 4-5) You see how totally different this is.

- He's going to *teach* us
- He's going to *lead* us
- He's going to *bring* us in ***the way*** that is right

Let's see some Proverbs and then we'll see in the New Testament how it is called ***the way***—the way we are to live and conduct our lives. Notice what the Holy Spirit does here:

Proverbs 8:20: "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice." It says that 'as many as are led by the Spirit of God ***they*** are the children of God.' And if any have not the Spirit of Christ, 'he is not none of His' (Rom. 8). That's what happens with a lot of these 'religious' people. They look good, they sound good, but they don't have the Spirit of Christ; they are 'religious.' We need to let the Holy Spirit lead us in the way of righteousness. Let God, *through His grace and love*, impute His righteousness to us. That way we're not going to be having a 'religion.'

Proverbs 9:6 about the *way of God*: "Forsake the foolish and live; and go in the ***way of understanding***." God's way is a *way of life*; it is a *way of understanding*.

Proverbs 10:17: "He who keeps instruction is in ***the way*** of life... [There it is again. It is ***the way***.] ...but he that refuses reproof goes astray." You can take what I have to say anyway you want, but if it is the Truth and the Word of God, well, that's the way it is.

Nowhere do you find the words together: 'Christian religion.' ***Nowhere*** do you find that God loves 'religion.' What you find is that *God's way* is a ***way of life; a way to live!***

Acts 16:17: "She followed Paul and us *and* cried out, saying, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, and are preaching to us *the way* of salvation.'" Not a religion, but ***a way***. It's called ***the way of salvation***.

Acts 18:24: "Now, a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man who was skilled in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. He had been instructed in ***the way of the Lord***... [not in 'religion'] ...and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John" (vs 24-

25). You know the rest of the story, they came and taught him even more perfectly.

Verse 26: “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. And after hearing him, Aquila and Priscilla took him and expounded the way of God to him more perfectly. So, it is *a way*.”

Acts 19:8: “Then he [Paul] entered into the synagogue *and* spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God.” He went right into the midst of the lion’s den as it were, right into the synagogue where they had all their ‘religious’ folderol and things that they followed. A ‘religion’ has everything prescribed: you must do this and do that and do the other thing. Paul was in there speaking concerning the things of the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ.

Verse 9: “But when some were hardened and refused to believe, speaking evil of the way before the multitude, he departed from them *and* separated the disciples; *and* he disputed *these things* daily in the school of a certain Tyrannus.

What Paul did is he got away from the ‘religious’ people. He came and witnessed to them so that they would have some understanding of what they needed to do and where they needed to go. But he separated from them. Why stick around for all the ‘religious’ argument and everything that goes on that they have and what they do?

It’s the same way with the Church of God. God doesn’t want to have all kinds of ‘religious’ folderol and fighting and bickering and so forth. There’s one man that is a self-appointed teacher and he said, ‘Well, if you pray and ask God for something and He doesn’t answer, and you pray the second time and He doesn’t answer, then God’s answer is *no*. So you don’t pray anymore.’ Well, Christ gave the parable of the widow woman, that you keep coming to God and you keep asking and you keep coming to God. To say that you are limited to pray twice for something, spare me!

Christ is praying for us everyday. He is there as our Intercessor. He is there to help us and to uplift us. What if Christ only prayed for us twice in our entire lifetime and then gave up on us? You see where that kind of thing goes. This man does have a ‘religion’ and he does sound very convincing, but he is not sent from God, because he is not teaching the true *way of God*.

Verse 23: “And at that time it came to pass *that there* was no small tumult about **the way**”—*the way of God!* We’ll go through and see that *God’s way* is *the way*.”

This is where Paul is explaining about how

he was called, Acts 22:1: “‘Men, brethren and fathers, hear now my defense to you.’ And when they heard him speak to them in the Hebrew language, they kept the more silent; and he said, ‘I am a man *who is* indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel...’ (vs 1-3). He was very ‘religious’ and Gamaliel was one of the leading ‘religious’ teachers of the time.

“...having been instructed according to *the* exactness of the law of our fathers, being a zealot for God, even as you all are this day; *and* I persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering up to prisons both men and women, as also the high priest and all the elderhood bear witness to me; from whom I received letters to the brethren, *and* went to Damascus to bring bound to Jerusalem those who were there also, in order that they might be punished” (vs 1-5).

Of course, he’s implying of the way that he was persecuting them. That’s what Paul was doing, persecuting *the way*.

Let’s see what God has called us to do. Let’s see that God has called us to Godliness. This is not a ‘religious experience,’ but this is truly something based upon living by every Word of God. This is what God wants with *His way*:

- God wants a *converted heart!*
- God wants a *converted mind!*
- God wants His Spirit, His love, His faith, His hope *to grow in you!*
- God wants you to *grow in grace and knowledge!*

This is what God will do, Hebrews 10:16: “This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,’ says *the* Lord: ‘I will give My laws **into their hearts**, and **I will inscribe them in their minds.**” That is anything but *exterior*; **that is deep into your very being!** That’s why God hates ‘religion,’ because ‘religion’ stops this from coming into being a deep conversion.

Verse 17: “And their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again.” That means no more, *forever*. That’s what God wants. He wants this coupled with worshipping Him in Spirit and in Truth. Then you develop the correct Godliness as being led by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let’s see how this works. In the book of 1-Timothy Paul talks an awful lot about Godliness, because that’s what he wanted Timothy to do and to teach; **not ‘a religion.’** This word *Godliness* means *the inward kind of worshipping in Spirit and in Truth*.

1-Timothy 2:1: “I exhort, therefore, first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men; for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all Godliness and respectability” (vs 1-2).

Godliness means that *you begin taking on the character of God*. You have the inner worship of God in Spirit and Truth. Whereas, ‘religion’ is:

- the *outward* form
- a *ritual*
- a *tradition*
- a standard set *by men*

—which they think is good and will then cause God to bless you because of your ‘religious goodness.’ **NO!** That’s not what God wants. That is not Godliness! Godliness is entirely different.

1-Timothy 3:16: “And undeniably, great is the mystery of Godliness...” The *mystery religion* of Babylon is a *mystery* ‘religion,’ but the mystery of Godliness is that *you can become the son or daughter of God!* He explains it:

“...God was manifested in *the flesh*...” (v 16). That has to do with the Godliness that Christ was able to bring when He came; that God actually came and became a human being so that He could be the perfect sacrifice for all those that He calls. God personally imputes that to you.

“...was justified in *the Spirit*, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among *the Gentiles*, was believed on in *the world*, was received up in glory” (v 16).

Let’s see what Paul’s admonition to Timothy was, what he should do. 1-Timothy 4:6: “If you are teaching these things... [all the teachings that he has through all the writings here] ...to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, being nourished by the words of the faith and of the good doctrines that you have closely followed”—a ‘good religion.’ **NO!** It’s not there! ‘Religion’ does not enter into it.

Verse 7: “But refuse profane and old wives’ fables; rather, exercise yourself unto **Godliness**.” Developing the character and the mind of Christ.

Verse 8: “For physical exercise is profitable for a short time; but Godliness is profitable for everything, having *the* promise of life—of the *life* that now *is*, and of the *life* that *is* coming.” He was telling Timothy—writing and instructing him—to develop the kind of *inward* Godliness, which *reflects the character of God* in his life.

1-Timothy 6:3: “If anyone teaches any different doctrine, and does not adhere to sound

words, *even those* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine *that is* according to **Godliness**... [here’s the ‘religious’ person]: ...he is proud and knows nothing. Rather, he has a morbid attraction to questions and disputes over words, from which come envy, arguments, blasphemy, wicked suspicions, vain reasonings of men who have been corrupted in *their* minds and *are* destitute of the Truth—*men* who believe that gain is Godliness... [and it’s not] ...From such withdraw *yourself*. But Godliness with contentment is great gain” (vs 3-6).

That’s what Paul was teaching here, the true *inward* Godliness. Here’s the charge that he gave Timothy. Again, all the way through 1-Timothy, he is talking about *Godliness*.

Verse 11: “But you, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, endurance *and* meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith! Take hold of eternal life to which you were also called, and did profess a good profession in the presence of many witnesses” (vs 11-12). That’s what he told him to do; not to develop a ‘religion,’ not to have *a form* of Godliness, but to truly have deep down Godliness *inside*.

Let’s see that the Apostle Peter wrote about this, too, concerning the kind of Godliness that we need to have, which comes from God through the Holy Spirit of God. You can’t create this with a ‘religion.’ You can’t do it with a standard that men set up. Any organization that does may prosper for a while, it may last quite a while, but sooner or later is going to come to an end.

Let’s see what God has called us to, 2-Peter 1:2: “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His Divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life an **Godliness**...” (vs 2-3).

Notice that ‘religion’ is absent in every one of these things. James wrote to the 12 tribes of Israel, wrote to carnal unconverted people. Yes, he called them *brethren*, but that doesn’t mean that they were brethren in the sense that they were brethren in the Church. That is just brethren in the sense that Jews call all Jews *brethren*—that’s all.

It’s Godliness, not ‘religion.’ You can’t take those two verses and say, ‘Yes, let’s have *pure and undefiled* ‘religion’ before God.’ What if you became just like Job in the letter? You would still have to repent sooner or later, *because* ‘religion’ *didn’t* save Job. ‘Religion’ isn’t going to save anyone. As a matter of fact, that’s why **God hates ‘religion,’** because it takes the name of God and creates its own version of what God wants and that’s not what God intended.

Verse 3: “According as His Divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and

Godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue.” Then he gives all the steps whereby you may grow in all the characteristics of Godliness:

Verse 4: “Through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises, that through these you may become partakers of the Divine nature...” We are not talking about a ‘religion’ so you can be a better person today. We’re talking about that *you receive of the nature of God, and you receive of the mind of Christ*. That is tremendous that we receive of the Divine nature!

“...having escaped the corruption *that is in the world through lust*” (v 4).

Then he shows what we are to be diligently doing. The Apostle Peter wrote this just before he was ready to die. He was urgent with the brethren that they understood what they needed to do. Because, who would know what they would do after he dies. Paul said, ***‘I know that after I die that many men are going to rise up and tear apart the Church of God, and many wolves will enter in and others will rise up taking disciples after themselves.’*** Brethren, if that is not the state of the Church today, I don’t know what is. We have all of this with ‘religion’ going on.

This is what we are to do, v 5: “And for this very reason also, having applied **all** diligence besides ... [you put your whole life to this, not **a** ‘religion,’ but *your whole life!*] ...add to your faith, virtue... [Godly character] ...and to virtue, knowledge.” When you have Godly character and you study the Word of God and you grow in the grace and knowledge of God then the Word of God becomes living. The Word of God really opens up to you for understanding. ***It leads you and guides you and is written in your heart and in your mind.*** That’s what God wants to happen.

“And to knowledge, self-control...” (v 6)—temperance.

- self-control comes from the Holy Spirit
- self-control comes from knowledge
- self-control comes from understanding

“...and to self-control, endurance...” (v 6)—patience—that you ‘hope all things, you endure all things and love never fails.’

“...and to endurance, **Godliness**” (v 6). These things must be built. The character of Christ must be ***built in you***. You are to have the Spirit of God in you; that Christ has created in you.

Verse 7: “And to Godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the **love of God**.” Finally, ***the love of God!*** That’s the whole progression of how things are and how God wants it to be.

Let’s see how God is ***creating Christ in us***. That’s the whole purpose of why God has called us. He has called us to be converted.

Ephesians 4:22: “That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts.” Did Paul have to do that? ***Yes, he did!*** He had to put out Judaism. He had to put out his ‘religion.’ He had to forsake everything. He didn’t come back and try to recreate it again. ***No! He forsook it!***

Verse 23: “And that you be renewed **in the spirit of your mind**; and that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth” (vs 23-24). ***True Holiness***; Holiness is like Godliness, created in true Holiness. Then it tells you what to do with this.

It’s very important for us to understand that by grace we are saved, Ephesians 2:8: “For by grace you have been saved through faith... [not ‘religion’—***faith!*** Not a *false* faith—***true faith!***] ...and this *especially* is not of your own selves...” It doesn’t come from within your being up to God. That’s what ‘religion’ is: ***from the self outward***.

Verse 9: “Not of works, so that no one may boast. For **we are His workmanship**...” (vs 9-10). God is ***creating in you*** that you can be a son or daughter of God.

“...created in Christ Jesus unto the good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v 10). Which is ***the Way!*** ‘I am ***the Way, the Truth, and the Life.***’ God’s way is **a way**. It is not just something that is a ‘religion.’ Let’s hope we understand that.

Let’s see what Paul did with *his* ‘religion.’ Let’s see what we need to do with *our* ‘religion’ and what we need to replace it with.

Philippians 3:4: “Though I might also have *reason* to trust in *the flesh*. If any other thinks he has *cause* to trust in *the flesh*, I *have* much more: Circumcised on *the eighth day*; of *the race* of Israel, from *the tribe* of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; with respect to law, a Pharisee; with respect to zeal, persecuting the Church; with respect to righteousness that *is in law*, blameless” (vs 4-6). ***Pure and undefiled*** ‘religion’—that’s what Paul had—***blameless!***

Verse 7: “Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as loss* for the sake of Christ. But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is*... [religion] ... *derived* from

law, but that *righteousness* which is by *the* faith of Christ, the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith; that I may know Him...” (vs 7-10).

This is the whole purpose of our being called, ***that we might know Jesus Christ and God the Father.***

Verse 10: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection...” Just think what that’s going to be like when Christ calls us out of the grave and we are raised from ignominy to glory; we are raised from dust to spirit and given a glorious spirit body and mind, having the very character and nature of God ***for all eternity.*** This is what we are dealing with. We’re not dealing with a ‘religion,’ with the *outside* ritual—NO!

“...and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving, so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this* one thing *I do*—forgetting the things that are behind...” (vs 10-13).

Forgetting the ‘religion,’ and forgetting all those things that Paul did, which were contrary to God; count them but dung, put them behind me.

“...and reaching forth to the things that are ahead, I press toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. So then, let as many as *be* perfect be of this mind...” (vs 13-15). Again, it’s Godliness *in the mind.* It is not perfection in a ‘religion,’ pure and undefiled exteriorly.

“...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (v 15).

Philippians 1:27—the ultimate that God wants us to be: “Only conduct yourselves worthily of the Gospel of Christ... [He didn’t say ‘your religion.’ ***Your conduct!***] ...so that whether I come and see you, or am absent, I may hear the reports about you; that ***you are standing fast in one spirit,*** striving together with one soul for the faith of the Gospel.”

This is where all the brethren in the Church of God need to start focusing. We need to come above all of the stupid doctrinal things and every ‘wind of doctrine’ coming along with the slight and cunning of men.

Listen, brethren, I want to tell you something: ***If you really don’t begin to know and understand your Bible,*** you need to ask yourself: ***Will you be in the resurrection?*** You can learn as much as you can. If you have life in you and you are learning and growing and overcoming, that’s what

counts. God will add to you knowledge, but you need to be applying yourself to *know* the Word of God.

- that you can *think* with the Word of God
- you can *understand* the Word of God
- you can *live* with the Word of God

That’s what God wants!

Can we all start coming with one spirit and one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, the true faith of Christ. Not be fighting over whether we are a ‘religion’ or not. Of course, we are *not* a ‘religion!’ The world can look at us and they can claim that we’re ‘religious,’ but ***who cares what the world thinks about us!*** Sooner or later they are going to take their ‘religion’ and kill us anyway.

Are we seeking to please men or seeking to please God? *If we are seeking to please God and Christ is in us, then we will be in the Kingdom of God,* no question about it.

Verse 28: “and not being intimidated in any way by those who oppose *the Gospel*; which to them is a demonstration of destruction, but to you of salvation, and this from God; because it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His name’s sake” (vs 28-29). There are things we’re going to have to suffer and go through and that’s just the way it is.

Verse 30: “Experiencing the same conflict that you saw in me, and now hear of concerning me.”

Here was the Apostle Paul, one of the most prolific writers of God: 14 epistles in the New Testament. Brethren, that’s over half of all the books in the New Testament. Do you understand that? There are 27 books in the New Testament and Paul wrote a little over half of them. That has to tell you something about the Apostle Paul:

- what he suffered
- what he went through
- what he did
- how dedicated he was

—this is our example. That’s why God inspired these epistles to be here, to encourage us in really growing in grace and knowledge and faith and love and Truth. That’s what God wants us to be.

Philippians 2:1: “Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the Spirit*, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions.” In other words, he’s saying, ‘If there’s going to be any end result of what we are doing here, in the *way of God* and what I am teaching you.’

Verse 2: “Fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind...” (vs 1-2). How can we be like-minded? *Not fighting and striving and bickering and sending out inflammatory papers here and there!*

I kind of feel foolish doing this whole thing, having to stand up and defend myself and Bob Hunnicutt. But if you can’t take the Truth, if you can’t take the heat, either learn to live in the kitchen and take the heat with the Word of God, or as the old saying goes: ‘if you can’t take the heat, get out of the kitchen.’

That’s not to try and drive people away. That’s not trying to say that God doesn’t want you, but you have to come to God on **His terms, not yours! No one is going to tell God or Christ what to do or how to do it!** We go to God and **He tells us** what to do and how to do it and when to do it. And we say, ‘Yes Lord, with all our heart, we will.’ That’s what God wants us to do. That’s what Paul is talking about here.

“...having the same love... [the very love of Christ, the very love of God] ...being joined together in soul...” (v 2). **One mind!** This means *minding the one thing!* What is the one thing that God wants us to mind? *It is the Kingdom of God!*

“...minding the one thing. *Let nothing be done through contention or vainglory...*” (vs 2-3). That’s where ‘religion’ leads to. Always! **Always!**

“...but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself... [because God has called each one of the saints] ...Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus**” (vs 3-5). That, brethren, is not a ‘religion.’ **That is deep and profound conversion:**

- with the love of God
- with the Truth of God
- with Christ in you, the hope of glory

This is what we need to come to.

Verse 6: “Who, although He existed in the form of God... [that’s what *being* means] ...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, *and* was made in the likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant” (vs 6-7).

Christ did not come to establish a ‘religion.’ **Christ came to establish the way of God the Father.** Christ did not come so we could build church buildings and have fancy clothes and look ‘religious’ and do little rituals on the outside.

- **He came because He wants your heart!**

- **He came because He wants you to be totally dedicated to Him, to love Him!**

He’s totally dedicated to you—isn’t He?

- that He did these things
- that He emptied Himself of being God to come down here

Verse 8: “And being found in the manner of man, He humbled Himself...” The great God Who created everything that there is, humbled Himself to be born of the virgin Mary and to live a life. Yes, *the ‘religious’ hypocrites* of His time killed Him. That’s why God hates ‘religion’; they killed His Son.

“...and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name, which *is* above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord to the glory of God the Father. So then, my beloved...” (vs 8-12).

That’s what it needs to be with the brethren, that we all love one another. We’re all beloved to God the Father and Jesus Christ and each other.

“...even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only... [because that’s what ‘religion’ is, an *outward* show] ...but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who works in you both to will... [to give you the desire] ...and **to do...** [to practice] ...according to *His* good pleasure. Do all things without complaints and disputes; so that you may be blameless and without offense, innocent children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life...” (vs 12-16).

The *Way of God, the Truth of God!* Always remember that Jesus said, ‘I am **the Way, the Truth and the Life.**’ and ‘Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus.’

“...that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, nor labored in vain” (v 16).

Brethren, **let’s not have ‘religion.’** Let’s not try and make a ‘religious’ thing out of what God has given us. **He’s called us with the greatest calling ever. God has given us a great and marvelous thing, and that’s why God hates ‘religion.’**

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 1:26-27
- 2) Colossians 2:18-21, 6-8
- 3) 2 Timothy 3:1-3, 5
- 4) Job 40:8-14
- 5) Job 42:1-6
- 6) Ephesians 1:16-19
- 7) John 14:6, 15, 23
- 8) John 10:1-5, 7
- 9) John 14:6
- 10) John 10:8-14
- 11) Matthew 7:13-27
- 12) Psalm 18:30-31
- 13) Psalm 25:8, 4-5
- 14) Proverbs 8:20
- 15) Proverbs 9:6
- 16) Proverbs 10:17
- 17) Acts 16:17
- 18) Acts 18:24-26
- 19) Acts 19:8-9, 23
- 20) Acts 22:1-5
- 21) Hebrews 10:16-17
- 22) 1 Timothy 2:1-2
- 23) 1 Timothy 3:16
- 24) 1 Timothy 4:6-8
- 25) 1 Timothy 6:3-6, 11-12
- 26) 2 Peter 1:2-7
- 27) Ephesians 4:22-24
- 28) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 29) Philippians 3:4-15
- 30) Philippians 1:27-30
- 31) Philippians 2:1-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 1
- Romans 8

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Why God Hates Religion III

(Who Started *Religion*?)

Fred R. Coulter

- What is ‘religion’ *really* in the first place?
- How did it get started?
- How is it that God does not want a ‘religion,’ yet, most people believe that God wants a ‘religion’?

Today you can turn on the television, and they have all of the so-called ‘religious’ programs all on one channel. What they’ve effectively done with that is set ‘religion’ outside of living, completely censored it. On all the other television shows and movies, religionists are made—especially the Protestants—to be silly, Bible-thumping, fire-breathing, sweating, adulterating preachers. People are turned off at ‘religion.’

There is a good reason why you ought to be turned off at ‘religion.’ When you really understand who started it then you’ll understand why God *hates* ‘religion.’

- Where and when did ‘religion’ start?
- Who started it?
- On what basis was it started?
- How did it begin?
- Why is it perpetuated today to where most of the ‘religions’ today are so similar that they are all planning to get together now in a united ‘religion’?

united ‘religions’ of the world

- How did it get started?

Let’s look at it this way—I’ll tell you what ‘religion’ is: **a substitute for God’s way!** In almost all cases it has a substitute god, and it began with Satan the devil.

- he was the one who invented ‘religion’
- he is the one who designed ‘religion’ in his rebellion
- he wasn’t satisfied with being close to God, being the covering cherub
- he wasn’t satisfied with walking up and down in the stones of fire that depicts God’s throne
- he wasn’t satisfied with being the covering cherub, created in beauty and splendor

No! Satan wanted to *be* God.

Ezekiel 28:12: “Son of man, lift up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “You seal up the measure of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty... [we know that this is not talking about any man, because]: ...You have been in Eden the garden of God...”’” (vs 12-13).

When you read the account in Gen. 3, what do you find? *You find God, Adam, Eve, and the serpent* who was already Satan the devil at that point. No other person ever got into the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve sinned. They were expelled from the Garden of Eden, because God put cherubim there with flaming swords to turn the way so no one could go into the garden. We know that where it says, ‘You have been in Eden the Garden of God,’ this is talking about the serpent. It could be no other one. This is also telling us that Satan is the one who is behind the prince of Tyre.

Verse 2 says: “Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre...” How did he graduate from being a prince to king? *The king of Tyre was Satan the devil who was the power behind the prince of Tyre!* That’s how that came to be.

Verse 13: “...in you in the day that you were created. You *were* the anointed cherub that covers, and I set you so; you were upon the Holy mountain of God...” (vs 13-14). That means right there where God has His throne. And as the covering cherub he would cover the throne of God.

“...you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. You *were* perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, **until iniquity was found in you**” (vs 14-15).

This tells us that ‘religion’ was started *because of iniquity or sin*. We’ll show you every time that Israel apostatized from God, they got into ‘religion’ and *it was sin—every single time!* “...until iniquity was found in you.” It can’t be said of men, that we are perfect. The only one it was ever said of was Job, and it was found out that he was only perfect in the letter. *He was not perfect in the spirit!*

Verse 16: “By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled your midst *with* violence, and you have sinned...” That is a key of every ‘religion’ today. They merchandize and they kill. When we read about Babylon the Great, God lays the death of all human beings right on her. So, we need to understand what the whole situation is with ‘religion.’

“...Therefore, I will cast you as profane from the mountain of God...” (v 16). ‘Religion’ is really profane, but they try and make it appear Holy. And being a substitute for God, what it is, it is a substitute for *God’s way* so that people can ‘feel good’ and ‘holy’ about what they are doing. But it isn’t Holy with God, because it’s already a *rejection*

of God to begin with, because the author of 'religion' has rejected God; that is Satan the devil.

"...and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from among the stones of fire.... [get him out] ...Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness. I will cast you to the ground; I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you" (vs 16-17). God's ultimate judgment on Satan the devil is going to happen. We cover that on the Day of Atonement, so be sure and get any sermon on the Day of Atonement.

Verse 18: "By the multitude of your iniquities, by the unrighteousness of your trade, you have profaned your **sanctuaries**..." How was it that there were sanctuaries and they were corrupted? They had sanctuaries before they were corrupted, so in other words, there was some kind of worship of God with the angels where there were sanctuaries.

They became corrupted because Satan was merchandizing. I don't know what he told the angels that fell with him, but Rev. 12 says 'a third of the angels fell' with him.

- I don't know what Satan offered them
- I don't know what he promised them
- I don't know what he did to deceive them

But I do know that the first thing that he did was to *get their eyes off of the fact that God was God*.

When you get your eyes and mind off the facts and you get yourself into feelings and you get yourself into suppositions, then you get yourself into *self-deceiving*. That's exactly what happened with Satan. He thought he was as good as God and was going to be like God. Isa. 14 tells us of how he wanted to exalt himself and how he fell. Jesus said, 'I saw Satan fall from heaven.' That had to be before the creation of Adam and Eve and before the recreation of the Earth as we know it (Gen. 1).

Isaiah 14:12: "How you are fallen from the heavens, O shining star, son of the morning!...." His mission originally was to be a 'light bringer' for the angels of God, maybe even for the creation of human beings. But now instead of being a light bringer with the light of God, he's a light bringer *bringing darkness*. Jesus said, 'If the light in you is darkness, behold how great the darkness.' Why? *Because you are all cut off from God!*

Verse 13: "For you have said in your heart... [God knows the heart, so it wasn't just a slip up. It wasn't just a misunderstanding or something like that. **He said in his heart**]: ...'I will ascend *into* the heavens... [showing that the angels were originally on the earth] ...I will exalt my throne above the stars of God..." (vs 12-13). The stars of

God are the angels—to exalt himself above the angels—and he got one third to follow him in that exaltation.

"...I will also sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north.... [but he was cast out] ...I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High" (vs 13-14).

Stop and think for a minute: if there is God, which there is, and if He is the Most High, which He is, then ***no one else, no other being can be like the Most High!*** It's an impossibility! If it is not an impossibility, then the Most High God is not the Most High God. *That's why Satan was cast down!*

Verse 15: "Yet, you shall be brought down to the grave, to the sides of the pit." That's how 'religion' got started.

Now let's see what Satan wanted to do with the same thing that he did with the angels. Let's look here a little bit about Satan's thinking and his reasoning. We will see that he always appeals to emotions. *Emotions* are used to divert you from the facts. Satan always does that. *Religion* diverts you from the facts. Let me give you an example:

You walk up to a Protestant minister and you tell him, 'Look, I keep the Sabbath and it's the seventh day of the week and there's nowhere in the Bible that authorizes Sunday.' He will give you every reason, *no facts*:

- I think
- I feel
- we do
- we practice
- it is tradition

That way, if you get into that discussion with Satan, then you start finding out where you ***agree***. Or better still, where your carnal mind *disagrees with God*, because 'religion' ***is a substitute for God's way*** and ***Satan is a substitute for God!***

Genesis 3:1: "Now the serpent was more cunning than any creature of the field, which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Is it true that God has said... [he starts out with a lie] ..."You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?"'.... [sometimes you get trapped like Eve; she wanted to correct him] ...And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may freely eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the middle of the garden, God has *indeed* said, "You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die"'" (vs 1-3). She either added a little bit more to the instruction or she was instructed and *knew* not to take it, not to touch it, not to eat it. ***That was the fact!*** Satan comes along and gets you *away from the facts*, to get you into 'religion.'

Verse 4: “And the serpent said to the woman, ‘In dying, you shall not surely die!... [now there’s a conflict] ... For God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding good and evil’” (vs 4-5). Well, you know the rest of the story:

They ate of the fruit, their eyes were opened and that’s when their nature was changed; they had a sinful nature. Then God judged them, gave the sentence of death, so that’s how the *law of sin and death* entered into human life. It entered in because they believed in ‘religion’ rather than God. What did God have to do? *God had to remove them out of the Garden of Eden*. So, there you have it!

Let’s see who carried it on, because it’s talked about in Jude 6: “And the angels who did not keep their own original domain, but deserted their habitation, He [Christ] is holding in eternal bonds under darkness unto the judgment of *the Great Day*. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah... (vs 6-7), what happened to them and all the things that they did. They are an example of suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Verse 8: “In the same way also, these dreamers of *filthy dreams* are defiling *the flesh*...” That is the ‘religionists’ who crept in. Certain men have crept in unawares. Ungodly men ordained to this condemnation of old. How old is it? *It goes back to Satan the devil!*

“...and are declaring as invalid *the lordship of God*, and are blaspheming *the Divine powers*. But Michael the archangel, when he was personally taking issue with the devil, disputing about the body of Moses, did not presume to pronounce a reviling judgment against *him*, but said, ‘*The Lord Himself rebuke you!*’ As for these, whatever things they do not understand, they blaspheme... [that’s what Satan always does] ... but whatever things they understand by instinct, as irrational brute beasts, they are corrupting themselves in these things” (vs 8-10).

That’s what happens always in every ‘religion’; they end up corrupting themselves.

Verse 11: “Woe to them! For they have walked in the way of Cain; and for gain, they have wholly given themselves up to Balaam’s delusion, and have perished in the rebellion of Korah.” In his rebellion, what did Korah want to do? *He wanted to set up his own priesthood!* Every one of these things talk about ‘religion’ that takes you away from God.

The *way of Cain* is very profound. I want you to make sure that you get this book called *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop. This proves that papal worship is the worship of Nimrod, Semiramis, Horus and Satan. It all began with Cain. He is the

one who began it. He was not satisfied with coming to worship God *as God commanded*. Abel brought an offering and God accepted it; he brought it according to the command. But let’s see what Cain did with his offering. He brought something from the ground. If you bring something from the ground *according to the command of God*, He’ll accept it, but Cain didn’t bring it according to the command of God, so it wasn’t accepted.

Genesis 4:5: “But He did not have regard unto Cain and his offering. And Cain was extremely angry and **his countenance fell**.” Tyndale translates that ‘loured’; you could just see him *louring*. What was Cain trying to do with this? We need to think about it. If Abel was accepted because he obeyed God and he was a ‘preacher of righteousness,’ then Cain tried to worship God in a way that *God did not accept because it was sin*. Anytime you go against the commands of God it is sin. That’s what God said.

Verse 6: “And the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you so angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, shall you not be accepted?....’” (vs 6-7). ‘Religion’ is a substitute so that people can *think* they can be accepted by God in a way different than God has commanded. That’s exactly what ‘religion’ is. That’s why nearly every ‘religion’ has

- *their own rules*
- *their own regulations*
- *their own laws*
- *their own traditions*
- *their own festivals*

And how many of them go to the Bible to say, ‘Let’s find out what the Word of God says and we’ll do that.’ Oh no, they go to the Bible and use this part and they go to the Bible and use that part, but they won’t take the thing as a whole. That’s exactly what Cain was doing here.

“...But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. Its desire *is* for you... [the wages of sin is death] ...but you must rule over it!” (v 7). In other words, you can overcome sin.

What happened? *Cain killed Abel because Cain was jealous and he was angry* and he probably went around and said, ‘Why doesn’t God accept me? I did the best that I could.’ That’s just the way that ‘religion’ is. He was jealous and killed Abel. Then God decided not to execute the death penalty upon Cain, but sent him off into *the land of wandering*, or Nod, after He put a mark on him.

No one knows what the *mark of Cain* is. There have been many speculations. Some speculate that it was even a cross on his forehead. That may be

somewhat true, but we won't say that that's just a speculation. But:

- Do you think that Cain would admit that he was wrong? *No!*
- Do you think that he would admit that he was wrong in killing his brother? *No!*

He was justified in doing it, because God accepted 'him and not me!'

Man is justified in every thought of his own mind that what he's doing is right. Cain went out and he started his own civilization. What did that civilization lead to? *It led to the corruption of the earth*; so corrupt that God had to bring the Flood! Right after the Flood we have this event. We're going to find the one that carried on the *way of Cain* after the Flood is Nimrod and his wife Semiramis.

Genesis 10:8: "And Cush begat Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one in the earth." One of the stories is that he was so mighty—he was a giant—and was so strong and powerful that he went out and wrestled a bull to the ground, just twisted it's neck, took the head off and placed it on top of him, to show his power and his prowess. We'll see what that has to do with the golden calf later on. That is a symbol of the 'religions' of this world, a symbol of Nimrod.

Verse 9: "He was a mighty hunter against the LORD...." That doesn't mean that he was a mighty hunter with God's blessing. He was a mighty hunter *in place of God*, or placing himself between the people and God. That's what he did. He's the founder of the *way of Cain* on this side of the Flood.

"...He began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter against the LORD. Therefore, it is said, 'Like Nimrod—the mighty hunter against the LORD.' And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel..." (vs 8-10). Let's see what happened at Babel. Let's look at the rebellion of Nimrod. I know we can go back to these things and in these chapters we can pick out many different aspects of learning and understanding the Scriptures and so forth, but let's look and see in the aspect of 'religion' in its rebellion.

Genesis 11:1: "And the whole earth was of one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they traveled from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar. And they settled there. And they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar" (vs 1-3).

This slime was actually asbestos. Right there in the area of Mesopotamia they had oil and tar oozing out of the ground. They actually made asbestos out of it so that they could make it

waterproof. They wanted to build this tower not only to make a name for themselves, but they didn't want to go to the places of their inheritance that God had designated that they should go to. They didn't want to be scattered. Well, God eventually scattered them by confounding their languages. In building this tower *they were in rebellion* against God. What do we have?

- *religion*
- *civil government*
- *rebellion against God*

And *religion and civil government* have been bedfellows from day one, and they are going to be again at the end.

You know the rest of the story: God went down and confounded their languages and scattered them into all the earth, then the three names of Nimrod, Semiramis and Horus were all changed. But all the names of the gods of the various pagan gods in all the nations of the world come right back to Nimrod, Semiramis and Horus (also known as Tamuz). This is one of the greatest books that has ever been done to document the history {*The Two Babylons*}, that that's how 'religion' got started this side of the Flood, right in Babylon.

- all the fables
- all of the lies
- all of the stories
- all of the false worship
- all of the control
- all of the merchandizing
- all of the fornication
- all of the murders
- all of the wars

lie right there. Satan the devil is the one who has inspired it. That's where 'religion' started.

Let's see what happens. When you have a 'religion' and you have a society based upon human philosophy, inspired by Satan the devil:

- that hates God
- that doesn't want God's rule
- that doesn't want God's Law
- that doesn't want the Spirit of God
- that doesn't want people to be in the Kingdom of God

Satan wants to kill and destroy and maim and make sure that everyone can't be there because he was kicked out.

Here's what happened, Romans 1:18: "Indeed, *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the Truth in unrighteousness.*" That's what they do.

Let me just say: *Any of you who keep Sunday, you are holding the Truth of God in unrighteousness and you need to repent*, because you are following a ‘religion.’ You’re following a *substitute for God’s Way and His Law and for God*. You think you’re worshipping God, but you’re not worshipping God. There are many that are going to say, ‘Lord, Lord, haven’t we done wonderful works? We cast out demons. Didn’t we do things in Your name? Didn’t we prophesy in Your name?’ And Christ is going to say, ‘*I never knew you, depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.*’ Because that’s exactly what it is, “...who suppress the Truth in unrighteousness.”

- Do you believe the Bible?
- Do you believe every Word of God?
- Are you willing to live by every Word of God?

Because that’s the way of God!

Whereas ‘religion’ says, ‘We’ll pick and choose. I don’t like that harsh one concerning the Sabbath. I think Sunday is just fine, because all of us good folks are sincere and how can you turn down all these good people. Let’s come to church on Sunday *or* I worship God every day.’ Well, you ought to, but when do you work if every day is holy to you?

(go to the next track)

You can’t make anything Holy! That’s exactly what ‘religion’ has done; put on collars upside down and backward and command to not marry. You read everything that the Catholics have there: confession, penance, rosary, idols, statues, and every ‘religion’ has those. Even the Muslims have their beads they do laps around. *All ‘religion’ all a substitute for God!*

Verse 19: “Because that which may be known of God is manifest among them... [or to them; God left them with no excuse] ...for God has manifested *it* to them.... [God showed *His* Truth] ...for the invisible things of Him are perceived from the creation of *the* world, being understood by the things that were made—both His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse...” (vs 19-20).

- that means the pope
- that means the Dalai Lama
- that means Billy Graham
- that means Oral Roberts

and all of those of that ilk. They have the Bible, but:

- they won’t believe Him
- they won’t believe God
- they won’t keep the Word of God

No! *They’re without excuse!*

Verse 21: “Because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful; but they became vain in their own reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

So, they came up with myths to explain their gods. People say, ‘Ohhhh!’ But what it does, it appeals to carnal nature, because it will let you do the sin and let you not have to repent to God. You come and do some

- our fathers or hail Marys
- do laps around the beads
- pray to Allah five times a day
- sit and meditate yourself into oblivion as the Buddhists

Verse 22: “While professing themselves to be *the* wise ones... [Oh, yes, we have philosophy.] ...they became fools.” That’s what God thinks of every ‘religious’ leader in this world, because they’re all going the way of Cain, the way of Babylon the Great, following the mother of harlots and all the governments of the earth are with them. They are fools!

Verse 23: “And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into *the* likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed creatures, and creeping things. For this cause, God also abandoned them to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to disgrace their own bodies between themselves... [that’s where it always ends up, right there!] ...Who exchanged the Truth of God for the lie; and they worshiped and served the created thing more than the One Who is Creator, Who is blessed into the ages. Amen” (vs 23-25).

I remember talking to a man and he told me, ‘Oh, you just got to go to the Sistine Chapel and see it. When I went there, I was just overwhelmed and tears came to my eyes.’ Well, I didn’t say anything to him because of the situation with other people around there, but if I had been alone, I’d have said, ‘That’s plain idolatry.’ If I went in there, I’d want to take a bazooka and start shooting down all these idols and start bombing out all of these paintings and things like that. All they do is glorify men and all they’re setting it up for is a great united ‘religion’ to come, *and it’s going to come!*

We find something very important here in Exo. 20. You may take this for granted; ‘Oh, there he goes to the Ten Commandments. We know the Ten Commandments.’ Well, I should hope you do. Do you know them by heart? Let’s read the first commandment, because this is profound.

Exodus 20:2: “*I am* the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the

house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me” (vs 2-3). You have to read the whole thing, not just “...You shall have no other gods before Me,” because it points you to the *right* God. What did He do? *He brought them out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage and all the ‘religion’ of Egypt*, which is the ‘religion’ of Nimrod, Semiramis, and Horus called Osiris and Isis. Then they had other names like Ra and so forth.

“...out of the house of bondage.... [their bondage was literally physical, but it was also spiritual] ...**You shall have no other gods before Me**” (vs 2-3). But you have to have that first part *first*, so that you know what God took us out of. Then He says not to make any graven image of any likeness of anything and so forth. After God got done speaking all these words, the people said, ‘Oh no, Moses, you talk to us; don’t let God speak to us lest we die!’

What is the first thing that the children of Israel wanted to do when they didn’t know where Moses was? *They wanted a substitute for God!* Even in the very presence of God they wanted a substitute.

Exodus 32:1: “And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, then the people gathered themselves to Aaron...” It’s a thing everyone agreed to. Probably had feelings, ‘Well, I don’t know where he is. I have a suspicion. Did he fall in a volcanic hole up there? Maybe one of the gods got him.’

“...they said to him, ‘Up! Make us gods which shall go before us, for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him’” (v 1) This is the way that a politician does; he goes along with the people. Aaron should have said, ‘Look, God is up there, Moses is up there, have some faith. Now, you all get out of here and go home and pray.’ No, he didn’t. He said, ‘Bring your earrings and we’ll make the golden calf.’ So, they brought them.

Verse 4: “And he took *them* from their hand, and fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molten calf. And they said, ‘These *are* your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.’ And when Aaron saw *the calf*, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, ‘Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD’” (vs 4-5).

The one who was supposed to be the high priest, to bring the *way of God* to the people, was right there part and parcel in bringing the substitute ‘religion’ of the golden calves. That was the symbol of Nimrod with this bull’s head after he had ripped it off the bull and stuck it on top of his head to show his mighty power. So, they’re worshipping men; they’re worshipping idols. You know what happened there; you know the rest of the story. If it wasn’t for

Moses pleading to God to save the people, God would have exterminated them.

What God had to do is He removed Himself *outside* the camp. When they first started God was central to the camp, with the pillar of the cloud in the day and the pillar of fire at night; He was central. After that, the pillar of fire and cloud moved *outside* the camp and Moses set up the tent of the meeting out there for God to go to and all of the people had to rise up and stand and watch Moses go out and meet God. So, the moral of this story, and the lesson, is: ***If you want your ‘religion,’ God will let you have it!*** You’re going to chase Him away. God didn’t remove Himself totally away; He was still nearby.

Let’s see some of the commands that God gave the children of Israel, then we’ll see what they did. Why is it that people always want ‘religion’? *Because it makes them feel good!* They don’t want the commandments of God, which are the facts and the Truth to lead them. They want to go their own way and feel good about it, regardless. If God doesn’t come down and exterminate them immediately, they think, ‘Oh my, well this is fine. Let’s make this Holy. Oh, this statue is so beautiful. Look at how wonderful and it weeps.’ They are dumb idols!

Leviticus 18:1: “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, “I *am* the LORD your God. As they do in the land of Egypt where you dwelt, you shall not do.... [everything, their ‘religion,’ their society, their dress] ...And you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Neither shall you walk in their ordinances’” (vs 1-3).

Why? *Because they’re all substitutes for God!* That is *their own* ‘religion’ worshipping Satan. What did Jesus tell the ‘religious’ leaders of Judaism in His day? *You are of your father the devil, and the deeds of your father you will do!* The devil was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the Truth. When he speaks a lie, he is a liar, for he is the father of it. They sought to kill Him because He condemned them for their actions and their wrong ‘religion,’ rather than falling down and repenting and say, ‘Ah, this is the Son of God. Forgive us.’ ***No!***

Verse 4: “You shall do My judgments and keep My ordinances, and walk in them. I *am* the LORD your God.” If you want an interesting study, go back and find out how many times God says, “...I am the LORD your God.” They didn’t believe it. They didn’t want to follow God. They wanted to follow their own way, their own ‘religion.’ Oh, they wanted God’s blessings, but they didn’t want to do it *God’s way*.

Verse 5: “And you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live in them. I *am* the LORD.” Then he gives all of the intimate sex laws that were violations that God said were gross abominable sins, which were done in Egypt, which were done in the land of Canaan and which are being brought back part and parcel into this society again today; because we have ‘religion’ and we don’t have the *way of God*—that’s why.

Verse 24: “Do not defile yourselves in any of these things, for in all these the nations, which I cast out before you, are defiled.... [that’s why they were going out, because of their sins] ...And the land is defiled. Therefore, I visit its wickedness against it, and the land itself vomits out those who live in it. You shall, therefore, keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations, *neither* the native, nor any stranger that lives among you; for the men of the land who *were* before you have done all these abominations, and the land is defiled. *You shall not do these* so that the land may not spew you out also when you defile it, as it spewed out the nations that *were* before you” (vs 24-28). They didn’t learn the lesson though, did they?

Deuteronomy 18:9, here’s what God said through Moses: “When you come to the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations.”

Deuteronomy 12:29: “When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and you take their place and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself... [Watch out! Be on guard! It’s so easy to do.] ...that you do not become ensnared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods that I may also do likewise?’” (vs 29-30).

A specific command not to, but no, people have to have their ‘religion’—don’t they? And it’s even happened in the Church of God. Do you know why the Worldwide Church of God has been destroyed? *Because of:*

- religion
- people not wanting to follow God
- not wanting to keep His commandments
- not wanting to love and serve God from their hearts

Verse 31: “You shall not do so to the LORD your God, for every abomination to the LORD, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. Whatsoever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You

shall not add to it, nor take away from it” (vs 31-32). ***That is very clear!***

Deuteronomy 18:10 “There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire... [even the kings of Israel did that] ...or that uses divination, or an observer of times...” There’s a command not to observe Christmas, right there!

God inspired Jeremiah to write: ‘Learn not the way of the heathen.’ Then explains about how they go out and cut a tree out of the forest and make a Christmas tree. And yet, thousands who were in the Church of God have gone back, just like the children of Israel, to ‘religion.’ They keep Christmas, Sunday, Easter and all of these holidays of the world, and say, ‘Oh my, isn’t this nice.’

If you’re one of them, *you better wake up! You better repent!* There are going to be those who won’t repent of their ‘religion’ and they’re going into the Lake of Fire, because they are idolaters.

Let’s talk about something concerning idols, *idols you make in your mind*. Every idea, every thought that is against God is an *idol in your mind*. Every practice and every deed that you do that is against God is an *idol in your hands*. You need to understand.

“...or a fortuneteller, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or one who seeks oracles from the dead. For all that do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD...” (vs 10-12). Walt Disney thinks they are just fine to teach all of our little children. Cartoons that kids watch are abominations.

- Do you want to feed your children’s minds on abominations?
- Do you want to teach them about witchcraft?
 - ✓through Disney?
 - ✓through tarot cards?
 - ✓through Ouija boards?
 - ✓through all of those games designed to destroy the mind of your children and make them commit idolatry?

They are not old enough to discern between good and evil. Think about it! Everything that God says is an abomination is a delight to Walt Disney.

“...And because of these abominations, the LORD your God drives them out from before you” (v 12). That’s why this nation is going to go down and go out, because we are turning into this same stupidity that they did.

They went into the ‘promised land.’ They finally conquered it, but they didn’t drive out all the people as they should have. We come over here to

the book of Judges and we find exactly what the children did. The first thing they did was **find a substitute for God**. They found it in the Nimrod ‘religion’ of Baal and Ashteroth, because Baal is Nimrod and Ashteroth is Semiramis, Astarte or Isis, whichever name you want to put on it.

Judges 2:10: “And also all that generation were gathered to their fathers...” We are in a generational point here in the United States exactly the same way. We’re in a generational point in the Church in exactly the same way. They have done exactly the same thing as the children of Israel did here.

“...And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD...” (v 10). They weren’t keeping His commandments. They forgot God. They had all the blessings of God and they just let everything all slide together and it was so nice and it was so quaint, and God in His mercy didn’t come and destroy them right away so they thought everything was fine.

“...nor even the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim. And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, Who brought them out of the land of Egypt. And they followed other gods, even the gods of the people who were around them, and bowed themselves to them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD and served Baal and Ashteroth. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel...” (vs 10-14). *Yes, indeed!*

- God *is* God
- He *is* Creator
- He *is* Almighty
- He *is* Most High

‘What are people doing down there giving My honor and glory to idols, to dumb stupid things’

- that can’t talk
- that can’t see
- that have no knowledge
- that can’t think

Brethren, you need to understand this thing of ‘religion’ is profound. They never, ever learned the lesson—did they? *No!*

When the tribes of Israel split, the ten northern tribes, what was the first thing that was instituted? *The ‘religion’ of Egypt!* Solomon corrupted God’s way (1-Kings 11). He had all these wives and concubines and made churches and incense altars for them and filled Jerusalem with the abominable temples of the false gods, and Jerusalem was the place where God put His name. Isn’t that what always happens? Where God puts His name someone comes in:

- to pollute it
- to destroy it
- to twist it
- to turn it
- to corrupt it

And now you know what’s wrong with the Church of God today.

People get all upset, because God condemns ‘religion’ and they blame me for condemning ‘religion.’ They blame me for condemning Job. Look, I didn’t write the Bible! I didn’t put it there. And because I read the words of God that condemn it, and I get hot behind the collar sometimes because I see all of this stupidity going on, and all of this in the name of God, and all this mealy mouth mush-mush, huggy-huggy, get-together; because of carnal men trying to do the ways of their own and force it upon God, ***you take it to God!*** If you have a problem with that, ***go repent to God*** or go start your own ‘religion’ and church, and then when God comes to judge you, ***then you tell Him!***

1-Kings 12:25: “And Jeroboam built Shechem on Mount Ephraim and lived on it, and went from there and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, ‘Now, the kingdom may well return to the house of David! If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me and return again to Rehoboam king of Judah.’” (vs 25-27).

Jeroboam didn’t believe God. God said, ‘If you’ll obey Me, keep My commandments; follow Me, I will give you a dynasty just like I promised David.’ He didn’t believe God; He was afraid. That’s what ‘religion’ says. ***If you believe in ‘religion’ you do not believe in God!*** You may believe in ***a god***, but you don’t ***believe God!***

Verse 28: “Then the king took counsel, and made...” They always do it by counsel. That’s why God raises up one prophet, because if he loves God and serves Him and is independent from men, then he’s not going to be corrupted. But a counsel will corrupt you nine times out of ten.

“...and made two calves of gold and said to them, ‘It is too much for you...’” (v 28). Appealing to feelings. ‘*We’re considering you*. We’re going to make it easy for you.’

“...to go up to Jerusalem. Behold your gods, O, Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’ And he set the one in Bethel... [house of God] ...and he put the other in Dan” (vs 28-29). That was easy to do because it was already the idolatrous renegade Levites up there who had their

own Catholic ‘religion’ going in Dan. That was simple to do; they welcomed that.

Verse 30: “And this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one, even to Dan. And he made houses *of worship* on the high places and made priests of the lowest of the people, who were not the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordered a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast that *is* in Judah. And he offered upon the altar. So, he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places, which he had made. And he offered upon the altar, which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month, which he had devised out of his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel. And he offered upon the altar and burned incense.” (vs 30-33).

Jeroboam was the epitome of sin and every king that followed him was said that they went in the *way of Jeroboam*, the son of Nebat, who caused the children of Israel to sin. Let’s see what God had to do with them. God will only tolerate these things so long, and then He’s got to do some spewing, which He did with Israel.

2-Kings 17:7: “Now, it came to pass because the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt...” Notice how it always says, ‘*brought them up out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of Egypt*’, over and over again.

Verse 8: “And walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which the nations had made. Now, the children of Israel secretly did things that *were* not right against the LORD their God. And they built high places in all their cities for themselves from the Watch Tower to the fortified city. And they set up images and groves for themselves in every high hill, and under every green tree” (vs 8-10)—where they could have fornication and priestess prostitution and all of that.

It says there in the book of Isaiah *eating of mice*, all of these things were sanctified to the gods, which originated with Nimrod, Semiramis and Horus—every one of these! That’s what’s going on today. That’s what’s happening in the Church of God today!

Verse 11: “And they burned incense in all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had removed from before them, and they practiced evil things to provoke the LORD to anger, for they served the idols of which the LORD had said to them, ‘You shall not do this thing.’ And the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all the prophets, *by* all the seers, saying, ‘**Turn from your**

evil ways...’” (vs 11-13).

I plead with you the same way today. If you believe in ‘religion’—if you have been in the Worldwide Church of God and you’ve swallowed this Sunday malarkey and you’ve swallowed Christmas and Easter and all of this satanic stuff, ***I plead with you, turn from your way and repent!*** It may be too late if you think about it in the future.

“...and keep My commandments *and* My statutes, according to all the law, which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.’ Nevertheless, they would not hear... [they did worse, rejected His statutes and covenants] ...but hardened their necks, like the neck of their fathers who did not believe in the LORD their God” (vs 13-14).

I’m here to tell you that ***if you don’t keep God’s way, you don’t believe in Him.*** You may mouth His name; you may hold the Bible up, but ***you don’t believe in Him!*** You may be skilled in going through Scriptures to prove your little point, but ***you don’t believe in Him!***

Verse 15: “And *they* rejected His statutes and His covenant, which He made with their fathers, and His warnings that He testified against them. And they went after vanity, and became vain...” That’s exactly what has happened. Brethren, don’t you see that? *Those leaders who have led you down this path are vanity and have become vain!* They’ve done everything that it says here, rejected all of God’s ways.

“...and went after the nations around them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them not to do like them. And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God and made molten images, two calves for themselves. And they made a grove, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire. And they used divination and sorceries, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. So, the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of His sight; not one was left, only the tribe of Judah by itself” (vs 15-18).

Judah didn’t learn from that, and Judah went on and had to be sent off into captivity. The Church of God has not learned it even to this day. Do we have to be sent off into captivity like they did? Let’s keep our senses about us. Let us understand some things here. Let’s realize some very important things.

There is coming the greatest deception that’s going to come on the world. If you’ve already rejected the commandments of God and are not going to repent of that, you’re going to be deceived;

because if you reject the commandments of God, ***you do not love the Truth.*** All of His commandments are true and His Word is Truth.

That's why it's coming upon this world and it's going to come and it's going to be awesome. It's going to feel good and it's going to be magnificent and there will be miracles, undeniable false miracles will take place. It's going to be awesome. It's going to make Nimrod look like a piker, but he will be Nimrod's successor. This was already happening in Paul's day. Even then, the people couldn't stand to have the Truth. *No!*

2-Thessalonians 2:7 "For the mystery of lawlessness is already working; only *there is* One Who is restraining at the present *time* until it arises out of *the* midst.... [it's held for the time that God is going to let it happen] ...And then the lawless one will be revealed..." (vs 7-8). ***God is going to reveal it!***

The *lawless one* is going to be the ***son of perdition***, the ***man of sin***. He's going to go sit in the temple of God and say that *he* is God.

- all the world are going to go after him
- all the world is going to worship him
- all the world is going to worship Satan the devil

Satan will have completed his plan to where he will have the whole world deceived and away from God. That's when Christ is going to intervene and destroy the whole system. This thing about 'religion' is no small matter.

"...(whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of His coming); *even* the one whose coming is according to *the* inner working of Satan..." (vs 8-9). Satan and all of his glory, all of his power and all of every deceivableness that can be.

"...with all power and signs and lying wonders... [it is going to be awesome] ...and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the Truth, so that they might be saved" (vs 8-10). ***If you don't love the Truth you will not be saved!***

- Do you grasp that?
- Do you understand that?
- Do you realize that?

We need to really think on that, brethren. And for those of us who are still mealy mouthing around with 'religion,' we need to repent of it and ask God to give us

- His way
- His grace

- His mercy
- His Spirit
- His Truth
- the love of His Truth
- the love of Him
- the love of Jesus Christ
- the love of brethren
- and the love of doing the things that God wants us to do

God is going to hold us accountable. Do you think God is going to open any door to do anything for this world if we're going to mealy mouth around and compromise with 'religion' and His way? ***I tell you NO!***

A man just recently wrote me a letter and said, 'I've heard you say that you believe that we've been Laodiceans from the beginning.' He says, 'I believe that also.' And he says if you look at the scattering and you compare it by doing this: If you take a cup of coffee and you put it in your mouth and you spew it out, what happens? ***Droplets everywhere!*** And he said, 'It's just like the scattering of the Church.' Brethren, that is what has happened! ***They are blind and they are naked and they think that they are just fine! They are not!***

Verse 11: "And for this cause God..." I want you to tie that in with Rom. 1; I want you to understand something profound. ***God means business!*** When something happens, *God* is the One Who causes it. If you sin and you love sin, He will let you go have more sin. That's what He did here. They didn't honor God!

Romans 1:20: "...they are without excuse; because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful; but they became vain in their own reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened. While professing themselves to be *the* wise ones, they became fools" (vs 20-22).

Verse 24, after their idolatry: "For this cause, God also abandoned them to uncleanness..."

Verse 26: "For this cause, God abandoned them to disgraceful passions... [God is the One Who has done it]"

Verse 28: "And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge, God abandoned them..." ***So, God is the One!***

2-Thessalonians 2:11: "And for this cause..."—because they didn't love the Truth! They went after the idols, they looked at this *man of sin*, the *son of perdition* as the savior.

"...God will send upon them a **powerful deception that will cause them to believe the lie**" (v 11). That's what 'religion' is. ***It is a lie!*** All

'religions' are lies! They may have some Truths in them, which they have borrowed from God, but since it is *not the Truth of God, it is still a lie!*

Verse 12: "So that all may be judged who did not believe the Truth... [you have to love the Truth and you have to *believe* it] ...but who took pleasure in unrighteousness." That's what all 'religion' is, *all 'religion' is unrighteousness!*

Let's see what else the Apostle Paul said. You can't weld together 'religion' and the *way of God*. You cannot do it!

1-Corinthians 10:18: "Consider Israel according to *the* flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What then am I saying? That an idol is anything, or that which is sacrificed to an idol is anything?" (vs 18-19). In other words, an idol is nothing. It is absolutely nothing!

Verse 20: "But that which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not wish you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink *the* cup of *the* Lord, and *the* cup of demons. You cannot partake of *the* table of *the* Lord, and *the* table of demons. Now do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" (vs 20-22) Think about that before you go do those things. No, there is no mixing of it—absolutely not!

2-Corinthians 6:14: "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers...." An unbeliever is one who believes in 'religion.' He may name the name of God. He may have certain set formulas of his 'religion.' It may sound all nice and sweet and lovely, because he uses the name of Christ and all of that, but he is an *unbeliever if*

- they don't believe in the commandments of God
- they don't believe in the Sabbath of God
- they don't believe in the Truth of God
- they don't love God with all their heart, mind, soul and being

"...For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness?... [None! Impossible! Can't be!] ...And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: 'I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people'" (vs 15-16).

That's why *God's way* is not a 'religion.' *Christ in you is the hope of glory*, not the *external* things that you do. What you have to do is make the

tree good then the fruit will be good. If the tree is not good, you can't make the fruit good. Do you understand that? That's why you've got to make the tree good. The only way that is, is *Christ in you*, that *you're the temple of God*.

"... 'God said: 'I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from the midst of them... [Who are *them*? *The 'religious' people* with their idolatry and their statutes and their judgments and their ways!] ...and be separate,' says *the* Lord..." (vs 16-17).

Not go join them, not have ecumenical councils, not figure out what is the thing we have in common. What you better have in common *first* is:

- the *right* God—the Lord God and Jesus Christ
 - with the right understanding
 - with the right laws
 - with everything that's correct out of the Bible
- otherwise there's no agreement.

Verse 17: "'Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,' says *the* Lord, 'and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; and I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says *the* Lord Almighty.'" (vs 17-18).

Paul was fighting this from the very day that he started. He was fighting 'religion,' Judaism on one hand, and all the heathen 'religions' on the other hand. He was cast out of the synagogue. He was cast out of cities. They came to worship him and Barnabas as Jupiter and Mercury. It was all they could do to keep them from offering sacrifices to him and Barnabas when they healed this man. He was fighting 'religion' every place he went.

Here's what he tells us to do, Ephesians 5:1: "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children... [not as rebellious, seeking your own way] ...and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" (vs 1-2). Christ has done it for you, but that doesn't mean He is keeping the commandments for you. *You are to keep the commandments. Christ in you!*

Verse 3: "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, do not permit it even to be named among you, as is fitting for saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking or jesting, which are not becoming; but instead, thanksgiving. For this you know, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous *person*, who is an idolater..." (vs 3-5). To say nothing of those who commit idolatry straight out

"...has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.... [won't be there] ...Do not let

anyone deceive you with vain words... [which are the myths of the pagan religions of this world] ...for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be joint partakers with them” (vs 5-7).

That’s strong language, brethren. It’s nice to read all the sweet and loving and kind and smooth things, but life just isn’t that way. Sometimes these things that are hard need to be said and they need to be said in such a way that it will be heard; need to be said in such a way that people will understand and begin to look at their lives and begin to repent and begin to return to God.

Verse 8: “For you were once darkness... [Why go back?] ...but now *you are* light in *the* Lord. Walk as children of light, (because the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and Truth); proving what is well pleasing to the Lord; and **have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them**” (vs 8-11).

They are—that’s why this book—the Bible—Is so good, it exposes that darkness.

Verse 12: “For it is shameful even to mention the things being done by them in secret. But all of these things being exposed by the light are openly revealed. Therefore, He says, ‘*You* who are sleeping—wake up, and arise from the dead! And Christ shall shine upon you.’ So then, take heed that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as those who are wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. For this reason, do not be foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*” (vs 8-18). That’s what God wants.

1-John 5:21: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”

2-John 1: “The elder to *the* chosen lady and her children, whom I love in Truth...” I want you to listen to these words and let them sink in, let them be profound.

“...and not I alone, but also all those who have known the Truth; for *the* sake of the Truth that is **dwelling in us**, and shall be with us forever” (vs 1-2). That’s Christ, His Word, His commandments and His way.

Verse 3: “Grace, mercy, *and* peace shall be with us from God *the* Father, and from *the* Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I rejoiced exceedingly that I have found among your children those who are walking in Truth... [God’s way is the *way of Truth* and you have to walk in it] ...exactly as we received commandment **from the Father**” (vs 3-4).

Why? *Because all the words here come from*

God the Father! As Jesus said, ‘I don’t speak anything of My own self, but what the Father has given Me commandment, that’s what I speak.’ That’s why we need to learn the Word of God and understand the Truth of God. That’s why it needs to be preached and taught. The ideas of men and philosophies of men are nowhere.

And speaking of philosophies of men, remember the first thing that happened to begin to lead people away from God in the Worldwide Church of God? What did they do? *They turned Stavriniades loose on them and flooded them with all the pagan philosophies!* That was planned! That was done deliberately to confuse! To take away *your* Truth through vain talking and jangling to deceive you! Remember, the Word of God is the commandment from the Father.

Verse 5: “And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I am writing a new commandment to you, but that which we have *observed* from *the* beginning, that we love one another. And this is the love *of God*: that we **walk according to His commandments....**” (vs 5-6). If you have a ‘religion,’ you’re not walking in His commandments.

“...This is the commandment, exactly as you heard from *the* beginning, that you might walk in it, because many deceivers have entered into the world; those who do not confess *that* Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.... [that’s the first thing that Stavriniades did] ...This is *the spirit of* the deceiver and the antichrist” (vs 5-7). Regardless of who he is, what his name is, anyone who does that is an antichrist.

Verse 8: “Watch out for yourselves in order that we may not lose the things we have accomplished...” Because there are men going around seeking to take your crown. They’re not going to come in and say, ‘Look at me, whoopee everybody, I’m a crown stealer.’ They aren’t going to do that. They’re going to come and say, ‘Have you ever thought of this?’ And you *bite*, and you’ve taken the first step.

“...but *that* we may receive a full reward. Anyone who transgresses and does not continue in the doctrine of Christ **does not have God.** *But* the one who continues in the doctrine of Christ **has both the Father and the Son.** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not say to him, ‘Welcome!’ For anyone who says, ‘Welcome!’ to him is partaking in his evil works” (vs 8-11).

That’s what’s happened in the Church of God, brethren. They brought in ‘religion.’ They did the same thing as Israel. They went after the gods of

this world, saying, 'How did they worship their gods, even so we will do likewise. Please tell us about the trinity,' instead of saying, 'There is the door, get out of here.' No, they went and joined them.

Let this be us, brethren, Revelation 3:8: "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength, and have kept My Word, and have not denied My name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie. Behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you" (vs 8-9).

- If you love God the Father, *Christ loves you!*
- If you love Christ, *God the Father loves you!*
- If you love God, *you'll keep His commandments and you'll patiently keep His Word!*

Those of the synagogue of Satan, which are organizing now in the greatest thrust ever to bring all 'religion' together; and to bring it all under the hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church and to bring it directly under Satan the devil. God is going to make them come and worship before our feet when they are resurrected for their reward.

Verse 10: "...Because you have kept the word of My patience... [or patiently kept My Word] ...I also will keep you from the time of temptation, which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly; hold fast that which you have so that **no one may take away your crown**" (vs 10-11).

Satan is the one who is doing it, but he sends his messengers and they are men who want to get you involved in 'religion,' away from the *way of God, to steal your crown. Brethren, don't let anyone do that! Now you know why God hates 'religion.'*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order—A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ezekiel 28:12-13, 2, 13-18
- 2) Isaiah 14:12-15
- 3) Genesis 3:1-5
- 4) Jude 6-11
- 5) Genesis 4:5-7
- 6) Genesis 10:8-9, 8-10
- 7) Genesis 11:1-3
- 8) Romans 1:18-25
- 9) Exodus 20:2-3
- 10) Exodus 32:1, 4-5
- 11) Leviticus 18:1-5, 24-28
- 12) Deuteronomy 18:9
- 13) Deuteronomy 12:29-32
- 14) Deuteronomy 18:10-12
- 15) Judges 2:10-14
- 16) 1 Kings 12:25-33
- 17) 2 Kings 17:7-18
- 18) 2 Thessalonians 2:7-11
- 19) Romans 1:20-22, 24, 26, 28
- 20) 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12
- 21) 1 Corinthians 10:18-22
- 22) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- 23) Ephesians 5:1-18
- 24) 1 John 5:21
- 25) 2 John 1-11
- 26) Revelation 3:8-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 12
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- 1 Kings 11

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by Alexander Hislop

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Which *Religion* Will God Retain in the Millennium?

Fred R. Coulter

Greetings brethren! This series has stirred up kind of a storm. That was in reaction to those people who wanted to retain ‘religion’ and felt that I was really hard on James. I said some things in James, which was not quite exactly right on dead center mark. One man even said, ‘Well, Fred you are a Job basher.’ We need to address those things and see if that is so and see *about* ‘religion.’ I want you to think about *which* ‘religion’ will God retain when Christ returns and sets up the Millennium and the Kingdom of God? Let’s think about that for a minute.

- Will He retain witchcraft? *Absolutely not!*
That’s pure satanism. We can eliminate that. Witchcraft is a ‘religion’!
- Will God retain Masonry? *No!*
Masonry is a ‘religion’ and also worships the ‘religion’ of the ancient Baal worship!
- Will God keep Hinduism? *No!*
That is Baal and Ashteroth worship!
- Will God keep Buddhism? *No!*
It’s got all the idols and it’s all the self of man!
- Will God keep Catholicism? *No!*
- Will God keep Eastern Orthodox? *No!*
- Will God keep Armenian Christian? *No!*
- Will God keep Muslim? *No!*
- Will God keep Animist ‘religions’? *No!*
- Will God retain the Christian religion?

I want you to think about that before you answer, because the truth is that ***Christ is not going to retain*** what is normally called ***the ‘Christian religion’!*** We’ll see that in just a minute, but let’s first of all understand something of what ‘religion’ is in the world. ‘Religion’ in the world is defined as a *form* of faith, a *form* of worship, which entails ritual and works and so forth.

Let’s go to the book of James and let’s see what James was saying and to whom he was saying it. Let’s ask some questions about the places where it says *religion* and then we will examine ‘pure and undefiled religion.’ I think James 1 is a good place for us to start. Some people misunderstood when I said that James was writing to unconverted people. I should have said that a great majority of those to whom James was writing were unconverted people. However, within the scope of whom he was writing to, there were converted people.

James 1:1: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, which are in the dispersion: Greetings!” Are all of those in the

twelve tribes converted? We would have to conclude, *no!* It’s like saying today: Are all of those who are in the Protestant religion,’ the Catholic religion,’ the Jewish ‘religion’—who diligently attend church every week—converted? *No!* Within general parameters of how the world looks at the Christian religion,’ they don’t know where to place us, because we keep the Sabbath and we keep the Holy Days. They don’t know if we are Jewish or if we are Seventh Day Adventists. They certainly understand we’re not Protestants. They have a hard time defining, with the world’s definition of ‘religion,’ where we fit. First of all, we need to understand that those to whom James was writing, the greatest majority were probably not converted.

James 2:1: “My brethren, do not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.” He’s talking to brethren here who believe in Christ. But are all of those who believe in Christ *really converted*? In our lifetime, we’ve seen how many people *profess* belief in Jesus Christ, but really were not converted! We’re going to see a little bit later that even demons understand why Jesus came. We need to really take things in a broader perspective.

Verse 2: “Now then, if a man comes into your **synagogue** [assembly]...”—Greek is ‘sunagoge.’ Were all those in the synagogue believers in Jesus Christ? *No!* Here he is talking to brethren who believe in Christ; within the synagogue you actually had a small church. You had the church within the synagogue; the synagogue being the greater number of attendees and then those who were *called* and *believed* and were still attending at the synagogue at this time. He’s talking to them. We have this combination of whom James is writing to.

James 1:19: “For this reason, my beloved brethren...” You can check out in the book of Acts: *beloved brethren* can refer to brethren within the Church, but Jews talking to other Jews are also called *brethren*.

Acts 13:15—Paul stood up in a synagogue, his first time there: “And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue said to them, ‘Men, brethren, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, speak’” The Jews commonly refer to each other as *brethren*.

Acts 23:1^[transcriber’s correction]—We also find where Paul referred to the other Pharisees as *brethren*: “...Paul said, ‘Men *and* brethren...’” He used it not in the sense that they were converted, but

so he could turn the Pharisees against the Sadducees and upset their trial and accusations against him. Not exactly everywhere where it says *brethren* does it necessarily mean converted people with the Spirit of God.

James 1:19: "...let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger: Because man's wrath does not work out God's righteousness. Therefore, having rid yourselves of all filthiness and all *the* abounding of wickedness around you..." (vs 19-21)—all the works of the flesh. He's addressing those who, if they are converted, are just newly converted or those who are still practicing a 'religion' within Judaism. He's trying to reach both of them.

"...then in meekness accept for yourselves the implanted Word, which *is* able to save your lives" (v 21). That can be said to converted people and unconverted people. To the converted people so that they may grow in grace and knowledge; to the unconverted so that they may repent in meekness and accept Christ and go forward.

Verse 22: "Then be doers of *the* Word... [God requires *all* people to keep the commandments of God] ...and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves." He's talking to people who are *hearing* the Word, who weren't *doing* the Word and deceiving themselves. He's encouraging them to receive the Word and go forward with it and be doers of it.

Verse 23: "Because if anyone is a hearer of *the* Word and not a doer..." He's also speaking to those who are just hearers, those who are not converted or just newly converted or if we could say, marginally converted.

"...this one is like a man considering his natural face in a mirror. Who, after looking at himself, went away and immediately forgot what he was like. But the one who has looked into *the* perfect law of freedom, and has continued in *it*, this one himself has not become a forgetful hearer, but is a doer of *the* work. This one shall be blessed in his actions" (vs 23-25). We also have two forms of blessing with that:

1. the *letter of the law* blessing, which if the Jews would keep, they would be blessed
2. the *Spirit of the Law*—doing—which those who are converted are to do the Spirit of the Law

This can apply to either one. What you need to do is go back and read some of the Prophets, where God continually said that 'you didn't hear My voice, you didn't hearken to My words.' He was talking to unconverted people. As we can see there is a mix of converted and unconverted.

Verse 26: "If anyone among you considers himself to be religious... [here's one of the places where 'religion' is used] ... and does not control his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* vain." Even in the *letter of the Law* of 'religion.'

Most people—when they start coming to the knowledge of the Truth—are into a 'religious' type mode. When God first calls people, He calls some out of Catholicism, some out of Protestantism, some out of atheism, which is a 'religion.' When He calls them, the first thing that they do is begin looking for the right church, i.e. the right 'religion,' because they believe that 'religion' is the way that God wants it to be. That's where they start.

It would be fair to say that 'everyone who's a beginning Christian, begins as a 'religious' type person.'

- Is that all that God wants?
- Does God want us to remain 'religious'?

or

- Does He want us to grow to the full grace and knowledge and stature and measure of Jesus Christ?

I think the answer is obvious: ***He wants us to grow to the full measure and stature of Jesus Christ!***

Verse 27: "Pure and undefiled religion before God and *the* Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

When you're talking to a Jew, he can keep himself unspotted from the world if he would follow the things that he was taught in the *letter of the Law*, which could be called a 'religion.' But what we're going to see is that every time people stray from God, they get into 'religion' and are leaving God. What we're dealing with here is that James is talking about the 'religion,' which is the *outer works*.

A *religious person* in the Greek is called 'threskos.' *Religion* is 'threskeia'—*the outer works; that which someone else can see*. It has nothing to do with the inner worship of God. None of this has to do with prayer, study, growing in grace and knowledge or growing in Truth and understanding.

What he is talking about here with 'religion' is the ***outward works***, which is called 'religious.' It's better to be 'religious' in the world and carnally speaking than it is to be in the world and not believing in God and not doing any good at all whatsoever. However, does this bring you salvation? We'll answer that question a little later, but let's just keep that in mind.

Things that you do out here, that other people see, you may be doing ‘good’: visiting the fatherless and the widows and helping those in need and keeping yourself from going into the world to become worldly. Even Protestants talk about that. Don’t they talk about people and bring sermons of repentance for backsliding? *Yes!* This is what we are dealing with here, We are not dealing with a way of conversion, the outer works, the things that other people see. If people know us, they may have an understanding from *their* point of view that we are ‘religious.’ If the world wants to define us as ‘religious,’ that’s all right. But does God want us to be ‘religious’ or into ‘religion’?

Let’s look at a couple of other places where ‘religion’ is used. Acts 26 will also show you that Pharisaism was a ‘religion’ and Paul was ‘religious.’ As far as the *law of the Jews* is concerned, the Apostle Paul was nearly as perfect. Some may object to that, but part of being perfect in Judaism was also destroying the enemy. He was killing and persecuting the *true* Christians who actually should be called *true believers*, those who are the firstfruits of God, those who are going to be in the first resurrection and are going to be the bride of Christ.

Even though we are called Christian, even though we refer to ourselves as Christian, even though the Bible refers to us as Christian, our Christianity is different than from what the world understands. We’re going to see that our Christianity is *a way of life*, moving on from ‘religion,’ growing out of ‘religion,’ and *growing into the true relationship with God*.

Paul is saying to the Jews, Acts 26:4: “The manner of my life from childhood, which from *the* beginning was among my nation in Jerusalem, all the Jews know... [they’ve understood me since I was a little boy]: ...who knew me from the first, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I formerly lived *as a Pharisee*” (vs 4-5). **Pharisaism is a ‘religion’!** Paul was ‘religious’ before he was called. Let’s understand what Paul later said about this.

- How did Paul view his ‘religious’ past?
- How was that in relationship to Jesus Christ?
- How did he count that?

Galatians 1:13 “For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism... [the *Jews’* ‘religion’] ...how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it; and I was advancing in Judaism... [*profited in the Jews’* ‘religion’] ...*far* beyond many of my contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers” (vs 13-14). Do the

traditions of the fathers save? The traditions of the fathers constituted ‘religion’?

Let’s let Jesus answer that question. Let’s see what the Jews and the Pharisees did concerning Jesus Christ and the disciples. Here we are talking about the kind of worship that ‘religion’ has; the *outward show* of it.

Mark 7:1: “Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem came together to Him. And when they saw some of His disciples eating with defiled hands (that is, unwashed *hands*), they found fault” (vs 1-2). There’s one thing about ‘religious’ people: *they look at the physical things and find fault and judge*, because that’s what ‘religions’ are all about.

Verse 3: “For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly. Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves....” (vs 3-4).

When you go to the market and buy things at the market and you come home, would you consider your hands filthy? *No!* You could probably be at the market, and you’re buying apples and one of them looks really good to you, you reach down and you take it and you eat it. A ‘religious’ Jew could not do that, because he would have to first go home, wash his hands and wash all of the food and then he could eat, because that made him ‘right before God.’ Jesus said a little later on that *that did not* make them right before God.

“...And there are many other things that they have received to observe... [that’s what it means *to hold*] ...*such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables. For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, ‘Why don’t Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?’” (vs 4-5).

Let’s see what Jesus thought about ‘religion.’ I want you to understand something here. You can get out your concordance and you will not find the word *Christian* and the word *religion* together—you *won’t find it!* You will find *religion* and *tradition* and outward things such as the tradition of the Pharisees—they *were* ‘religious’! Paul said he was of the strictest sect of the ‘religion’ of the Jews, the Pharisees.

Notice how Jesus answered with Scripture, v 6: “And He answered *and* said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites...’” Hypocrite means *sanctimonious pretender* when it is referring to ‘religious’ leaders, because they *pretend* to be ‘religious’ but are not. They say one thing and do another thing. They are hypocrites before God

because they put *their* traditions and *their* laws and *their* rules and the enforcement of those above the laws and commandments of God.

“...hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors Me with their lips...’” (v 6). A ‘religious’ outward expression. Don’t a lot of people do that? *Yes!* They honor God *with their lips!*

It’s like this atheist: He was out fishing in Loch Ness and all of a sudden the Loch Ness Monster showed up and was coming full-bore to eat him and sink his boat. The Loch Ness Monster came, knocked him out of his boat and he was flying through the air. The atheist said, ‘Oh, God, help me.’ And God answered back, ‘I thought you didn’t believe in Me.’ He said, ‘I didn’t, and I didn’t believe in the Loch Ness Monster until now.’

Honoring God with your lips is only when *you think* you need God, or you are good enough to do something for God. They honor God with their lips. We’ll see a little bit more of that later on.

“...**but their hearts are far away from Me**” (v 6). Brethren, there is the whole key.

What is it that we have learned concerning the love of God, which is the basic foundation of true, Scriptural, New Testament Christianity, being firstfruits for the first resurrection and the bride of Christ? What did Jesus say? ‘*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself—on these two hang all the Law and the Prophets.*’ God did not give the Law and the Prophets to have a ‘religion.’ He gave them as **a way of life**, both Old Testament and New Testament.

What have men done with *their* traditions, which is *their religion*? *They have superimposed it upon God’s way!* In doing so, they reject God. Though they profess with their lips, their heart is far away. God is interested in the heart, because God is called ‘*the heart-knowing God*’ (Acts 15). That’s what it is in the Greek. It says there in the English, ‘And God Who knows the heart,’ But it really means, ‘*the heart-knowing God.*’ God is concerned with what goes on in your mind and your heart and your inward parts, because then the *outward* will be clean, as Jesus told the Pharisees concerning their religion.’

Verse 7: “But in vain do they worship Me... [outward worship] ...teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men.” Let’s understand something very clearly: All ‘religion’ basically is following man-made rules, even though James said, ‘pure and undefiled religion’ is an *outward* thing. That has nothing to do with the worship of God.

That has nothing to do with your heart before God. That is an *outward expression*, though it may be in agreement with part of the Word of God. To do that does not necessarily mean that you are converted.

Let’s look at those who are in the world for just a minute. Do they not every Thanksgiving and Christmas feed the poor? Give gifts to the children? Are they converted? Did they do something good in helping the widows and the fatherless? *Yes!* But are they on the road to salvation because they have done it? *No!* That’s the kind of ‘religion’ that is being spoken of here in the New Testament.

Verse 8: “For leaving the commandment of God, **you hold fast the tradition of men...**” All I have to do is refer you to any other ‘religion’ in the world and you will see that is absolutely true. As a matter of fact:

- the Catholic Church is based upon the *traditions* of the fathers.
- Muslims are based upon the *traditions* of Mohammed.
- Buddhism is based upon the *traditions* of Buddha.
- Hinduism is based upon the *traditions* of Vishnu and all of the thousands of gods that they have.

All of these are the *doctrines of men*, which reject the commandments of God.

We’re going to see that almost all ‘religion’ is **carnal or satanic**. You need to understand that. If I’m going a few oxen because you want to keep *your* ‘religion,’ and *you think* that you are truly Christian, *you think* that you are converted: well, let me encourage you to grow up out of ‘religion’ and **grow into a relationship with God, based upon the love of God!**

Verse 8: ““For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this.*’ Then He said to them, ‘Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition” (vs 8-9).

The Jews have done this with the Sabbath. They have *their own traditions* on how to keep the Sabbath and what to do, what to eat, when to come in, when to go out, what to wear, what not to wear, when to breathe, when not to breathe, when to hold the lamp, when not to hold the lamp. **They’ve destroyed the Sabbath!**

Catholics have their tradition of Sunday, which the Protestants follow right along, because they never finished the Reformation. What do they do? *They have their own traditions that they do on that day!* They lay aside the commandments of God

or they take some of the commandments of God and they do them in a carnal-minded way, which then is a 'religion.' We're going to see that God also hates that. We really need to understand and define this.

Verse 10: "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and 'The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man shall say to *his* father or mother, "Whatever benefit you might receive from me *is* corban" (that is, *set aside as a gift to God*)..." (vs 10-11).

That is a gift to the temple. Oh boy! How many 'religions' have said, 'If you give money, if you give it to this 'religious' cause, you're going to be blessed'?

"...he is not obligated to help his parents" (v 11). In other words, he doesn't have to honor his father and mother. He doesn't have to carry out his obligations to his mother and father, because now we have *a tradition* that supersedes the Word of God.

Verse 12: "And you excuse him from doing anything for his father or his mother, nullifying the authority of the Word of God by your tradition, which you have passed down; and you practice many *traditions such as this*" (vs 12-13). We're going to look at some of these "...such as this" things that they do. We're going to see how it is. ***It is vain! It is a vain 'religion'!***

Let's see what 'religion' does to a person internally when you have all of these dos and don'ts. You can memorize them and you can do them and you can say them. Judaism is the epitome of it, because there is something—a law, a tradition, a command—that you need to do every single minute of every day, from the instant you wake up until the instant you go to bed.

If you've never read the book *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried and Goldin, get one and read it and you'll understand what I mean. Then go to a Catholic store and buy a Catechism. What they need to do whenever they confess their sins to the priest—which is against the Word of God—and do *hail Marys* and *our fathers* and do so many laps around the beads. Isn't it interesting that all 'religions,' being carnal—even the Muslims have little beads that they use; Buddhists have little beads that they use; Catholics have the beads that they use; Orthodox have the beads that they use—***all physical things***.

What happens internally when you are a good, righteous and diligent 'religious' person? And this is what causes so much trouble in the Church. As Bob Hunnicutt said, '*Religious* people have caused problems in the Church.' We'll talk a little

bit more about 'religious' people in the Church. Have you ever been judged by someone unto condemnation? Someone in the Church? Someone who appeared righteous? Maybe even a deacon, an elder, a pastor or evangelist—condemn you and run you in the ground? Here's what happens to 'religious' people.

Luke 18:9: "And to some who trusted in themselves..." Who are we to trust in? *Jesus Christ!* When you have *traditions* you trust in yourselves; this is a Pharisee.

"...that they were righteous, and despised others..." (v 9). That is always what happens in 'religion.' The Catholics do; the Muslims do; the Eastern Orthodox do; the Protestants do; the Hindus, the Buddhists; they despise others, because *they consider themselves to be right*.

As a matter of fact, the Muslims consider themselves to be so right that if they kill someone who is an 'infidel' they give glory to God. Furthermore, there is a sect of the Muslims who believe that if one of their relatives does something against *their* 'religion' that they have the right to kill them—whether it be a mother, father, sister or brother—those who trust in themselves that they are righteous and despise others.

- What kind of righteousness are *we* to have?
- Are *we* to have the righteousness of the exterior things that we do?
- Are *we* to have righteousness because we keep the Sabbath?
- Are *we* to have righteousness because we keep the Holy Days?
- Are *we* to have righteousness because we tithe?
- Is that righteousness that God wants us to have?

These things are not wrong!

- What is the righteousness that God wants us to have?

God the Father imputes to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. That's the righteousness we are to grow to, not this self-righteousness:

Verse 9: "...He also spoke this parable: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray... [right before God] ...the one *was* a Pharisee and the other a tax collector'" (vs 9-10). A publican was a tax collector, the most hated person on earth. An IRS agent—you could name them today. You wouldn't want an IRS agent knocking on the door and saying, 'Hello.' No you wouldn't.

Verse 11: "The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself in this manner..." Why? *Because he*

trusted in himself! He wasn't trusting in God, but he used God's name.

- all 'religious' people use God's name
- all 'religious' people quote some kind of 'religious' thing, even quotes from the Bible
- 'religious' people are the ones who take the Scriptures and use them deceitfully

If you don't believe that, go to any Catholic service or any Protestant service some Sunday morning for an education and find out. They are trusting in themselves. "...and prayed with himself..." He really wasn't praying to God, because in his own mind who was his god? *Himself!* 'The elders of Israel have set up idols in their mind' (Ezek. 14) That's what this man was doing here. That's what this Pharisee was doing. He was idolizing himself, but praising God.

Verse 11: "The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself in this manner: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men...'" Comparing yourself among yourselves, and those who compare themselves among themselves Paul said *are not wise*.

The Pharisee goes on and enumerates some of the worst sins: "...—extortioners, unrighteous..." (v 11)—*unjust!* How can he be just if he despises others? *There's no justice in that!* But he himself *thinks* that he is righteous., but looks down on other people, 'they're unjust.'

"...adulterers—or even as this tax collector.... [notice all the good works, the 'religious' works, *exterior* works]: ...I fast twice in the week..." (vs 11-12). That's a lot of zeal and diligence—isn't it?

Go back and read in the book of Zechariah: He said, 'all these years when you fasted in the seventh month and the tenth month, fasting twice a week; were you fasting unto Me to repent of your sins?' *NO!* You were fasting *to do your own things*.

Verse 12: "'I fast twice in the week, and I give a tithe of everything that I gain.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner'" (vs 12-13). Here was an attitude that was going to *change the heart*.

The 'religious' attitude did not change the heart. The 'religious' attitude alienated him from other people; actually *alienated him from God*, because he was not praying to God but to himself and using the name of God. *That's what all 'religious' people do!* The publican *repented!* What is the key here? *God is interested in repentance!* He is not interested in 'religion.'

Jesus said, v 14: "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other...." *Justified* means *put in right standing with God*. So, the publican who repented was put in right standing with God, but the Pharisee—the other—was not justified though he had done all of these things. God required all those things to be done. We're going to see a little bit later that Jesus told the disciples, 'When you have done everything that you have been commanded to do, say we're unprofitable servants, because we have only done that which was commanded to be done.' *God is interested*

- in your heart
- with repentance
- with change
- with loving God

He's not interested in these *outward* things like the Pharisee had done here.

"...For everyone who exalts himself..." (v 14). That's what 'religion' does. The pope is very 'religious'! What does it gain him? *He has his reward!* Is he preaching *his* traditions? *Yes!* Is he preaching his ideas? *Yes!* Is he exalting himself? *Yes!*

Jesus said: "...**shall be humbled...**" (v 14).

Let's look at how Paul viewed his 'religious' life before he was converted and then after he was converted. Before he was converted he was exactly like the Pharisee.

"...For **everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled...**" (v 14). We're going to see that applied to the Apostle Paul in a very dynamic and profound way. Was he exalting himself when he was taking the orders from the high priest and going out and persecuting those who really believed in Jesus Christ, the true believers? Was he exalting himself in rising up in Judaism because of what he was doing? *Yes, he was!* Was he abased? *Instantly!* He was knocked off his donkey on the way to Damascus. You know the story about how God called him and converted him. He was abased.

"...and the one who humbles himself shall be exalted" (v 14). Just the opposite of what people think in 'religion.' 'Religion' *exalts* people!

(go to the next track)

Let's see how Paul thought of *his* 'religion' *before* he was converted and *after* he was converted. When people are called into the Church of God they may have come from an upstanding family, been 'religious,' gone to Sunday school, even read and studied the Bible. Their folks may have been very good. Their grandmother and grandfather may have been upstanding people. But let's understand something: *They weren't converted!* They may be

sincere. They may be *religious*, they may be good people in the world, but:

- human goodness *does not equal salvation*
- human goodness *does not equal repentance*
- human goodness *is not going to force God to bring salvation to anyone*

You need to realize that.

These people may very well, without a doubt, qualify for the second resurrection. But the first resurrection is *a calling*, regardless of your past life. All of the good things that *you thought* that you did, even the motivation behind it, from a carnal point of view was *for self* in many cases. When we get done here we're going to go back and we're going to look at Job. We want to look at it properly, *through the eyes of God*, so we can understand that all the goodness that we can do—even though in the *letter of the Law* God may require it—your own works will not bring you salvation—period! We do have good works here, which we are to do, but those are to be motivated from the Spirit of God *from within*; from the love of God to us *from within to without*—not that we do something good to make us better.

Every year when you see the news and they feed the poor on Thanksgiving and Christmas or do these things—they ask them: 'How did you feel in doing this?' *Oh, I felt wonderful! I felt good!* That is purely all human. When you come to repentance, you don't feel good at all, because you are viewing your life through eyes of Jesus Christ and your own sins. When you do the things that are good, you are not to 'let your right hand know what your left hand is doing.' In other words, motivated by the Spirit of God *from within* to do those things *without*.

Ephesians 2:2: "In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air..." Satan has his goodness that looks good. He appears as an 'angel of light' and so do his ministers. But ***that good comes from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil***. That is not the good that comes from God the Father and Jesus Christ.

"...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct..." (vs 2-3). Every single one of us—even though we may have been good upstanding people, even though we may have never committed any really heinous crimes—lived in the world controlled by Satan the devil and were part and parcel with him. If you kept Sunday, Christmas and Easter, you are worshipping God with the tools of the devil. You need to understand that. God does not accept that worship.

- Are people sincere in those things? *Yes!*
- Do they *feel good* when they do those things? *Yes!*
- Do they have the righteousness of Jesus Christ? *No!*
- Does this 'religious' endeavor of *being good* make them righteous before God? *No!*

As a matter of fact, *God won't even accept it!*

"...we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind..." (v 3). All of this has to do with:

- to develop the self
- to educate the self
- be better
- be good
- strive
- discipline

You don't even have to be religiously 'religious,' but you can have your own 'religion,' not believing in a god of any kind:

- but helping yourself to be better
- to have more power
- to have more personality
- to have more strength
- to have a better body
- to have a disciplined mind

—all of that is *a desire of the mind*. All of that is *carnal!* That is *carnal goodness*, which then must be repented of because it is *vanity*. We need to realize that.

This thing of the difference between 'religion' and the true way of God is a profound thing that God is granting us understanding to realize, because God loves us and God has called us and God has given us His grace and knowledge and understanding, brethren. Yea, He's given His Son Jesus Christ as ***that personal sacrifice for each one of us***, that our sins may be blotted out, that we can be in right standing before God, through the grace of God. This is what Paul is going to bring out here.

"...and were by nature *the children of wrath*, even as the rest of *the world*." (v 3).

That's why God is going to bring His vengeance even upon those so-called 'good and sincere' people, because they are 'good and sincere' *in their own eyes!* They are 'good and sincere' *in the carnal way* in the world. ***They are not repentant and converted before God!*** There is a vast difference! It's very hard for some people to tell the difference between those two, because they are still hung-up on 'religion' and they are still into 'religion' rather than into God and a relationship

with God the Father and Jesus Christ. {see sermons: *Created Relationships*}

Down through the years as God has granted us understanding and knowledge, we have grown in grace and knowledge—all of that goes to God—that's not saying that we are something special or that we discovered these things on our own. When we began to realize that God doesn't want a hierarchy, that God doesn't want an *Invisible Idol/Visible Man* {see sermons} with the control and authority of 'religion'; then we began to understand that **God created us to have a relationship**. That is defined as a **created relationship**.

This is what God wants us to do: Step across the threshold of 'religion' and leave that behind and **enter into a true, loving, spiritual relationship** with God the Father and Jesus Christ. **That's what God wants!** You're going to understand once you cross over that threshold and you leave the 'religion' behind, that you love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being and you have this relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ

- through prayer
- through study
- through God's Spirit within you
- through yielding to God
- desiring God's way
- loving God
- loving His way

Your whole life is going to change! To overcome in a 'religious' sense is to beat the flesh. **You** discipline your mind. **You** discipline your body. All of that is *carnal* and **you can't accomplish spiritual things with carnal means!** You must be led of the Spirit of God. You must grow in the grace and knowledge of God. This is what Paul is talking about here.

Verse 4: "But God, Who is rich in mercy... [God understands all these things that I've just related to you] ...because of His great love with which He loved us." You didn't come and find God because you were 'good.' You didn't come and find God because you attended the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Episcopalian, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Catholic, the Orthodox, the Muslim or whatever other 'religion.' **God called you because He loves you!** God has a special thing for you particularly and individually. He wants you to enter into that relationship that He has established by *grace*.

Verse 5: "Even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace)." {see sermon: *Salvation is Creation*} There are three steps to being saved:

1. you **have been saved** from Satan the devil in this world now

2. you **are being saved** if you continue in the Gospel
3. you **shall be saved** at the resurrection when Jesus returns

You need to understand that. This is not saying 'once saved, always saved.' But it does mean in the Greek: *having been saved* by the *gracious action of God in your life!*

Verse 6: "And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages that *are* coming ..." (vs 6-7).

That's when we are going to sit in the heavenly places; not now. The most heavenly thing that we have now is the Holy Spirit of God within us, which comes from heaven. That is true. That is a heavenly thing. We have the love of God and God's Word. Those are heavenly things that God has given us.

Verse 7: "So that in the ages that *are* coming He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness [graciousness] toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith..." (vs 7-8). The greatest thing you can do is believe in God and believe His Truth and believe His righteousness and believe in Christ; not all these *exterior* 'religious' works that people can do, even though on the surface it may even appear to be Christian as other people view it.

"...and this *especially* is not of your own selves..." (v 8). All 'religion' is **from self**, from within, motivated from the carnal mind. You need to have the Spirit of God come in, *circumcise the spirit of your mind*, and then let that motivation from within be the Spirit of God and not from self. We saw how the Pharisee was all motivated from self: prayed with himself, invoked the name of God. It didn't do him any good!

"...it is the gift of God" (v 8). Why is it that people think that the *exterior works* that they can do will bring them salvation when God has to give it? God gives it freely through Jesus Christ because you believe with all your heart, mind, soul and being. It's a whole different prospect. That's why God hates religion,' because people come along with all these *exterior works* and substitute for the true conversion within. You have an *exterior goodness*, but there is not an *interior goodness*. But the grace of God and the gift of God, which He can give, will bring that with the Spirit of God.

Verse 9: "Not of works, so that no one may boast." As I have mentioned concerning the Sabbath; what if there was a law which said: if you keep the Sabbath perfectly 1,000 Sabbaths in a row and you will earn salvation, but you have to do all 1,000 and

they all have to be in a row? What if you did that 999 times and you died before the next Sabbath came? You're resurrected and Christ looks at it and says, 'Well, you've got a pretty good record here. Your works show that you kept the Sabbath perfectly 999 times, but you died before you could do it 1,000 times. Therefore, you can't have eternal life, because the law said 1,000 times and you didn't do it.'

That's why *it's not of works*, "...that no one may boast." Think of the one who did it 1,010 times. If he were granted salvation and he would say, 'Right on Lord! I know how hard it is to do it 1,000 times and I did it 1,010 times.' That person is deserving to go in the Lake of Fire. That's why:

- it's not of *works*
- it's not of *self*
- it is not of *religion*

We are going to see how this applies to Job in just a little bit. Here is the key, v 10: "For we are **His workmanship**..."

- Is God the Father and Jesus Christ molding you?
- Working with you?
- Is Christ being formed in you?
- Are you developing the mind of Jesus Christ?

All of those things are not 'religious.' All of those things are *the work of the Spirit within you*. "...we are **His workmanship** created in Christ Jesus..." (v 10). Brethren, we have the Spirit of God; we are the children of God.

- Are you going to let God, with His Spirit within you, create Christ in you?
- Are you going to be the workmanship of God the Father and Jesus Christ?

or

- Are you going to have your own 'religious' works that you want to hold up to God and how good you are?

or

- Would you rather have the good works that God does to you and through you and being His workmanship?
- What is it that you want?

That's where the line is drawn, sharp and clear between 'religion' and *God's way*.

Verse 10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the good works*..." What are the true good works that we do? ***The true good works are those things that are motivated from love from within***, not a 'religious' work that is out here. We may do 'good' for people. That's fine, but

- we don't do it to exalt ourselves
- we don't do it to be thought of as good
- we don't do it because we feel good or to make us feel good

We do it because:

- we love God
- we see a person in need and have love and compassion upon that person
- to help and serve in whatever way

Totally different! Thinking nothing of what you're going to gain or nothing of what you're going to get, but to exalt that person before Christ. That's what true service is all about

Notice these good works: "...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (v 10). That is *faith and hope and love*. Those are the 'good works.' ***If*** you are loving God, everything else will flow in your life the way that it should.

Let's compare that to what Paul thought of his 'religion' before he was converted, Philippians 3:3: "For we are the circumcision..."—the true *spiritual* circumcision. Remember what Paul said: Even if you are a Jew and you don't do those things from the heart, 'your circumcision in the flesh is made uncircumcision,' because it is not the circumcision which is *outward*, but the circumcision which is *inward*—*the circumcision of Jesus Christ* to change our carnal minds. ***All 'religion' is carnal minded!*** That may come as a surprise to a lot of people, but it really is.

Verse 3: "For we are the circumcision, who serve God **in the spirit** and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in *the flesh*... [*no confidence* in 'religion'] ...Though I might also have *reason* to trust in *the flesh*. If any other thinks he has *cause* to trust in *the flesh*, I *have* much more" (vs 3-4).

He's going to say, 'Okay, if you want to look at the things in the flesh, let's look at it.' In Paul's own eyes before he was converted, his 'religion' was pure and undefiled—in *his own eyes*, but not before God.

Verse 5: "Circumcised on *the eighth day*; of *the race of Israel*, from *the tribe of Benjamin*, a Hebrew of Hebrews... [Boy! Look at my genealogy!] ...with respect to law, a Pharisee." The strictest sect of the Pharisees; 'we disciplined ourselves. We had rigor that we had in our schedule. We prayed and we fasted and we did things and we made broad our phylacteries,' which are like merit badges that they put along the borders of their garments.

Verse 6: "With respect to zeal, persecuting the Church..." How more zealous could you be than

actively destroying the ‘enemy of God,’ as he viewed it through his ‘religion’ being a Pharisee.

“...with respect to righteousness that *is* in law... [in the letter of the Law] ...blameless... [pure and undefiled, no blame] ...Yet, the things that were gain to me... [talking about his ‘religion’] ...these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ” (vs 6-7).

He had to repent of all of his ‘religion,’ all of his works, all of his ‘do-gooding.’ He even had to look at the fact that even though he was of Israel—of the tribe of Benjamin, all of those things—that unless he was converted and had the Spirit of God, that didn’t matter one wit. Remember what Jesus said to those Jews when they said, ‘We be Abraham’s seed.’ He let them know being Abraham’s seed is not going to save them.

Verse 7: “Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ. But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...” (vs 7-8).

- Do you count that a loss?
- Do you realize and understand that when you are baptized, you are actually conjoined into the death of Jesus Christ?
- Knit together in that death of Christ?
- In a covenant pledge unto your death?
- That you will love God and be faithful to the end, through the power of God’s Holy Spirit?
- Do you understand that?

We are not in a ‘religion.’ ***We are in a covenant relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ***—our fellowship is with Them. Paul came to understand that. He wanted to have the ‘excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord.’

“...for Whom I have suffered the loss of *all* things...” (v 8). Everything that was gain: power, prestige, name, wealth, reputation, all of my ‘religious’ buddies.

“...suffered the loss of all things... [How did he look at them?] ...and count *them* as dung...” (v 8). A pile of ‘skubalon’—stinking and smelling and fetid and filled with flies and maggots and vermin. That’s how he viewed all of his ‘goodness,’ all of the ‘goodness’ that he had ‘religiously’—a pile of dung!

“...that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him...” (vs 8-9). This is not a ‘religious’ thing. You are found in Him if you have the Spirit of Christ. If the Spirit that was in Christ dwell in you, He shall raise you from the dead. We’re to be *led* by the Spirit of Christ, be found in Him.

“...not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law... [all defined by tradition; even the letter of the Law is not going to save] ...but that *righteousness*, which *is by the* faith of Christ, the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith” (v 9)—imputed to you.

Brethren, let’s understand something very important that is a great and marvelous gift of grace that God gives you: ***that He imputes to you the righteousness of Jesus Christ!*** So that *spiritually* you can become perfect in Christ. What can you do with a ‘religious’ *outward* ‘good’ work that’s better than that? *Not a thing!*

Verse 10: “That I may know Him...” through that personal relationship. Do you *know* Jesus Christ? Do you *know* God the Father? ***or*** Are you like Job? That you’ve heard by the ‘hearing of the ear,’ but you really don’t know Them? You need to think about that! If you don’t, then you ask God:

- to help you grow in *love*
- to help you grow in *faith*
- to help you grow in *hope*

—so that ***you know*** Them! That means you ***will keep*** Their commandments. That means you ***will love*** Them. But commandment-keeping is not, in a ‘religious’ sense, in the *letter of the law*. Commandment-keeping is that ***you do it from the heart***, spiritually, because you love and desire God’s way and God has made it possible for you to do so.

Verse 10: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection...” Brethren, what good is it going to do to try and make God’s way a ‘religion’ and then lose out on the resurrection? Have we seen a lot of ‘religious’ people do that? *Yes, we have!*

“...and the fellowship of His sufferings...” (v 10). Paul personally—because he persecuted, killed, destroyed and imprisoned those true believers before he was converted^[transcriber’s correction]—now he understood the suffering of Jesus Christ, Who suffered so incredibly at the crucifixion. That he [Paul] is saying that he, in his life, needed to come to the understanding of the fellowship of His [Christ’s] suffering; so that he could realize and grasp what God the Father and Jesus Christ had done for him—and all of those that ***They call*** and all of those that ***They will call***.

Christ told Paul when he was *called* that he was going to suffer for the Word of God and that his life was going to be one of great difficulty. He came to understand that. He came to accept that. He came to say that he wanted to have the fellowship, the participation in the suffering of Jesus Christ. That’s how deeply converted that Paul was. That’s how far away he threw the ‘religion’ of the past.

Can we do the same thing? *or* Are we going to struggle along and try and make a ‘religion’ out of God’s way? Because the truth of the matter is, to answer the question that I began with: ***God isn’t going to bring any ‘religion’ on over into the Millennium—none!*** He’s going to show the world ***His way*** to live.

“...being conformed to His death... [that covenant pledge of death] ...If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (vs 10-11). That’s why we are here, brethren. We’re not here to be ‘religious.’ We’re here to love God, love our neighbors, love the brethren as Christ has loved us, to help and serve one another—no question about that! The whole goal is that we might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Verse 12: “Not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected...” No! Paul understood the attitude of the Pharisee: ‘I thank You I’m not as other men. I am perfect. I’m not an extortioner or unjust or even as this publican down here.’ No, he [the publican] didn’t consider himself perfect.

- perfection, brethren, comes day-by-day
- perfection comes through the Spirit of God
- perfection comes through the forgiveness of sin
- perfection comes with the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ

All of those are the acts and gifts of grace through Jesus Christ to each of us. It’s not an *exterior* ‘religious’ thing that we do.

Paul says: “...but I am striving, so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained ...” (vs 12-13). Brethren, it is true, we have not attained until we die in the faith or are changed in ‘a moment of the twinkling of an eye at the last trump’ when Christ returns, if we are still living when that happens. We have not attained. We have not apprehended.

“...but *this* one thing *I do*... [this is why if you do this, ‘religion’ cannot be a part of your way of living before God] ...forgetting the things that are behind...” (v 13). God has said, He forgives your sins and won’t remember them. You remember them and you try and figure out what good thing you can do to compensate for it. When you do that, you’re *rejecting the forgiveness and righteousness of Christ*. You are reminding God of your sins, which He wants to forget. Do you understand that? Do you see where that conflict of ‘religion’ comes?

“...forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth... [stretching out, forward] ...to the things that are ahead” (v 13). It has to be that way,

brethren, in all of our lives. What we did yesterday, last week, last month, last year, five years ago, ten years ago, twenty years ago, thirty years ago. Some of us have been in the Church 40 years now. Those things are all behind. Hopefully, they were all motivated by the Spirit of God and that is fine. But how about all the sins that we have done in the meantime? All of those are forgotten. Put those behind you. Let Christ put it away from you. He says that He removes our sins and iniquities from us ‘as far as the east is from the west’ (Psa. 103)

Why do you want to go be ‘religious’ and bring those back and do ‘good’ works so you can compensate for what you didn’t do? *You can’t do that!* That’s your own works! That’s of yourself! You love God and let Him work *through* you and *in* you, then these things will come the way that Paul is talking about here.

Verse 14: “I press toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” That’s what it needs to be. That is not a ‘religious’ statement. That is a whole *developing and continuous* relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ and the calling that has been given.

- there is no greater calling than *to be called to receive the Spirit of God*
- there is no greater calling than *to be in the first resurrection*
- there is no greater calling than *to be a son or daughter of God*
- there is no greater calling *to be the bride, as the first fruits of Christ*

You look at all the paltry things of ‘religious’ deeds that people do and you compare that with this *calling*. That’s why Paul said all of this was dung! It is! It’s outrageous when you really understand it.

Verse 15: “So then, let as many as *be* perfect...” You can be perfect spiritually with the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God in you. ***Be perfect! Be thus minded!*** You go forward. You live your life with the love and Spirit of God and you *be thus minded*. Then you are in perfect standing with God with the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ given to you. That doesn’t mean you can go sin by any stretch of the imagination, because then you are not in perfect righteousness with God.

“...be of this mind. And... [here’s a promise]: ...if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (v 15). For what purpose? ***That you may repent!*** That He may blot out your sins. That you may be able to then go forward as the Apostle Paul said.

Verse 16: “Nevertheless, *in regard* to that which we have attained, let us walk by the same

rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, be imitators together of me, and bear in mind those who walk in this way, as you have us *for an example*" (vs 16-17). This is what we need to do, brethren. **We need to walk in that way of God.** There it is right before us.

Let's understand the very basic foundation of what God wants us to realize in our relationship with Him, John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, **'I am the Way...'**" He didn't say that through Me you have 'religion' He is ***the Way***. As we are going to see before we're done, it is the *way of God*, the *way of the Lord*, the *way of Truth*.

"...and **the Truth**, and **the Life**; no one comes to the Father except through Me." Not by 'religion,' not by human works, not by good endeavors that you yourself may do, but through Jesus Christ.

Which 'religion' will God preserve and carry over into the Millennium? *I think we'll have a great understanding as to why God truly hates 'religion'!* ***There will not be one single 'religion' carried on over into the Millennium!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 1:1
- 2) James 2:1-2
- 3) James 1:19-27
- 4) Acts 13:15
- 5) Acts 23:1
- 6) James 1:19
- 7) Acts 26:4-5
- 8) Galatians 1:13-14
- 9) Mark 7:1-13
- 10) Luke 18:9-14
- 11) Ephesians 2:2-10
- 12) Philippians 3:3-17
- 13) John 14:6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 15
- Ezekiel 14
- Psalm 103

Also referenced:

Book: *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin

Sermons:

- *Created Relationships*
- *Invisible Idol/Visible Man*
- *Salvation is Creation*

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Can “Religion” Save?

(Lessons from Job)

Fred R. Coulter

Greetings brethren! We are going to ask the question: *Can ‘religion’ save?* Before we get into it, here’s a very interesting article:

San Francisco Chronicle, March 12, 1999: *Iranian Leader, Pope Find Common Ground in Rome*. (articles.sfgate.com)

Khatami... [leader of Iran] ...hails historic meeting as ‘promising day’. Vatican—In a landmark encounter of Christian and Islamic leaders, Pope John Paul II met yesterday with Mohammad Khatami, the moderate cleric who heads Iran’s theocratic government, and said their 25-minute discussion made for ‘an important, promising day.’ Khatami, a Shiite Muslim, told the Roman Catholic pontiff that he hopes the two monotheistic faiths could join to inspire a more equitable world order...

If you read the book *Keys of This Blood: Pope John Paul II vs Russia and the West for Control of the New World Order* by Malachi Martin about John Paul II’s plans for world domination; you’ll see that it falls right in line with it. A lot of people have been wondering when is it ever going to be that the Muslims and Catholics will get together. Well, here is one of the very first steps.

“The hope is for the victory of monotheism, of ethics, of morals together with peace and reconciliation...”

This sounds just almost exactly like what the Catholics are saying and what the ecumenical Protestants are saying. The truth is, once you leave God then you still want some kind of morals. You want some kind of ‘religion,’ but you don’t want the commandments of God, which says ‘Thou shalt’ or ‘Thou shalt not.’

“...ethics, morals, live together in peace and reconciliation,” the Iranian president said. “May God protect you.”

The papal audience was an endorsement of Khatami’s campaign for a “dialogue of civilizations” that would break Iran’s twenty-year isolation.

At the end of their talks, conducted through interpreters, one of the three clerics accompanying Khatami asked the pope in English, “May I do something?” Surprising everyone in the room, he kissed the pope on both cheeks.

I wonder what inspiration he had to do that? Makes you wonder—doesn’t it?

Khatami, 56, wore a gray clerical robe, a black cloak and the black turban signifying that he descends from the prophet Mohammed, founder of the faith that rivals Catholicism for the world’s biggest flock. Each religion claims just over 1-billion faithful.

The tall Iranian cleric and his stooped, white-robed host... [John Paul II] ...have much in common. Both studied philosophy, and both preach about the need for economic justice...

And, of course, John Paul’s economic justice is just one step away from communism.

...revival of spiritual values and tolerance among faiths. Speaking to European scholars Wednesday night, Khatami said, “All the divine religions are not quintessentially different.”

What he’s actually saying is that all the ‘religions’ are the same.

...Khatami’s visit had landmark significance for two reasons. One is Iran’s influence in the Islamic world, enhanced by the fact that Khatami is now president of the 55-nation Islamic Conference...

They are all coming home to Rome; all roads lead to Rome. That fits in very nicely, because ‘religion’ is going to unite all the ‘religions’ of the world on their common ground—the things that they do together—so that they can try and find world peace and that they can bring all men together. What’s going to happen? Is all of this ‘religious’ movement going to save them? *No! It’s going to destroy them!*

Will *or* can ‘religion’ save? I know that a lot of people are still wondering why I am attacking ‘religion.’ I’m not attacking ‘religion.’ I’m just pointing out the Truth of what’s in God’s Word.

In the world there are many ‘religious’ people, of many different faiths. Many of them in the societies and the countries where they live are upstanding citizens, law abiding. They do ‘good works’; they do many different things. The world recognizes those kinds of things as ‘good,’ a good influence. ‘Religion’ is a way where people can come together on their terms of what they believe, so

that they can worship God in the manner that they choose. That's what 'religion' is.

Let me read a definition of 'religion.' Someone sent this to me. As I read it, I want you to understand something that's very important. The English word *religion*—as we find in James 1—does not have the same meaning in the Greek that this *Webster's Exhaustive Dictionary* definition has. So, as people view us, they will say, 'You are *religious*,' because anyone who believes in God has got to be 'religious,' as opposed to being an atheist or an agnostic. if you let people know you believe in God and Jesus Christ: What 'religion' do you belong to?

Webster's Exhaustive Dictionary:

1. A personal commitment to and serving of God or a god with worshipful devotion, conduct in accord with divine commands, especially as found in accepted sacred writings and declared by authoritative teachers.

A personal commitment is something that the person does. *God's way* is more than a personal commitment. *It is a calling.*

2. It is a way of life...

Well, at least they have that part right, but the way of life that we follow is not *a way* of life, but the way that Jesus has laid down as *the Way*. He is *the Truth!* You see the subtle differences here. You could read this and think, 'Boy! Yes, we are a 'religion.' But as I have pointed out, you cannot find the word *Christian* and *religion* together in the New Testament, it just isn't there.

- Judaism is a 'religion'
- Catholicism is a 'religion'
- Protestantism is a 'religion'
- Mohammadism is a 'religion'

All those who have *their own* "faith" are 'religions,' but these 'religions' *will not* and *cannot save!* We'll show you that. That's the whole point I'm trying to make.

When God first calls us we automatically think in terms of 'religion.' Or if we have been in one church and God calls us out of that because we want to know the Truth of God, it isn't that you just change churches. It's not like going from the Lutheran to the Baptist or the Baptist to the Mormon or the Mormon to the Reorganized Mormon or leave that and go to the Buddhists, that's just changing 'religions.' And as he said, 'quintessentially all 'religions' are not different'—they are the same.

...Recognized as a way of life, recognized on incumbents as incumbent upon true believers...

they've got that one fairly close

...and typically the relating of oneself to an organized body of believers.

There is the social club! Pick out the church of your choice. Billy Graham says, 'Come to the Lord and then you go back home and you pick out a church that you'll be comfortable going to.' That is 'religion.' So, while they have one sentence in here that comes very close to the Truth, not one of them says the true believer in Jesus Christ, Who declared that He *is the Way, the Truth and the Life*—is there?

3. The state of a religious person... [it says nuns here] ...The state of a religious—the nun died in her 13th year of her vows or whatever.
4. One of the systems of faith and worship. A religious faith, monotheistic or tolerant of all religions. Forbidding discrimination because of race, color, or religion. The body of institutionalized expressions of sacred beliefs...

In other words, *the traditions!* This is all manmade. So, out of the whole thing we have found one sentence that gets kind of close in the definition of 'religion.'

5. The observances and social practices found in a given culture in context for example, the religion of this primitive people... [they give] ...The profession or practice of religious beliefs, religious observances. "The colonel is of his practical belief was that it was respectable" and beneficial to one's business... [That's where most of it comes—merchandising.] ...to be seen going to services.

So all of these things define 'religion.' There are some other things here concerning 'religion.' Let me continue with some of the definitions here. They are very interesting.

6. A personal awareness or conviction of the existence of a supreme being...

Many people believe that. That makes many people 'religious.'

...or of supernatural powers or influences controlling one's own humanity or all natures destiny... [Isn't that something?] ...The access of such an awareness or conviction accompanied by or arousing reverence, gratitude, humility, the will to obey and serve.

7. Religious experience or insight: A cause, principle, system of tenets, held with ardor, devotion in

conscientiousness and faith. A value held to be of supreme importance.

That could be almost anything. You could make 'religion' almost anything.

8. A quality, condition, custom or thing inspiring zealous devotion. Conscientious maintenance and cherishing of the religion.
9. Synonyms include: faith, church, creed, communion, denomination, sect, cult, persuasion. Religion is a general term, especially applicable to the great religions and the larger subdivisions; among their believers the Christian religion, Roman Catholic, Methodist religion. Faith is applicable to any formulated and established major religious group. It may or may not suggest ardent, complete acceptance such as you could have the Mohammedan faith, the Mormon faith, men of all faiths; churches likely to stress existence of a formed organization and procedure. It may suggest a Christian rather than non-Christian context. Creeds differ from faith in more strongly suggested formal doctrinal expressions of what is believed...

That broad definition has no meaning or relevance to James 1. Let's just review that. I think it's important for us to understand that James was writing, as I have said several times, to a combination of those who are converted, newly converted, unconverted, those who were just in synagogue.

James 2:20: "But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"

Verse 19: "Do you believe that God is one? You do well to believe this. Even the demons believe and tremble in fear." He's really not talking to too many converted people here in this case, because if they were converted they would already know that.

He says over here in the first part of James 2 that if you break one of the commandments, you have broken them all. Well, if you are truly converted you understand that. What James was dealing with is the Zealots. Of course, a lot of the Zealots, though they profess Jesus, later turned away in the rebellion against Rome and were killed and destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem. So they weren't converted.

Concerning *religion*, James 1:26: "If anyone among you considers himself to be religious... ['threskos']—in this sense a 'religious' person is a

['threskos'] ...and does not control his tongue, but deceived his own heart, this one's religion is vain.... [that's clear] ...Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (vs 26-27).

There are a lot of people out in the world who consider themselves 'keeping themselves unspotted from the world' in drinking and carousing and all of those things. People can do that who are not converted, but too many of the problems and difficulties that we've all had in the Church is that it was made into a 'religion' rather than into what God really wanted. That's why God had to deal with the Church just as He dealt with Job. There are some very important and profound things that we need to learn from the book of Job. That's a long, long book with many, many lessons in it.

Can a 'religion' save? *No!* God alone can save and Jesus Christ is Savior.

Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves..." It doesn't come from yourself. It's not from a personal commitment, though you must have a personal *covenant pledge* to God. That is greater than a personal commitment. Your personal commitment to God as a true Christian runs far deeper than a personal commitment. It is a *covenant pledge*.

"...it is the gift of God" (v 8). If it is the gift of God then it cannot be earned. All 'religions' have an *earning works* formula:

- if you do *good* you will go to heaven
- if you do *bad* you will go to purgatory or hell
- if you do not take the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church, you do not have salvation
- if you do not do the *hail Marys* and *our fathers* and attend Christmas and Easter and all of that sort of thing with *their* 'religion,' you have no salvation
- if you don't come to church on Sunday you don't have salvation

The thing is; all of those are *human mechanisms designed to control people*, to keep them in the organized group, to keep them in the organized 'religion' for the sake of power and control. That's what the pope is doing in the world in everything he can get his hands on, and all of his agents.

- they're very *religious*
- they're very *devout*
- they're very *pious*
- they're very *zealous*

They know what they are doing. They’re out to *destroy the true faith* of Jesus Christ and that means that they’re out to destroy what you really truly believe. I think it’s about time that we go to God and we ask God for some:

- faith
- zeal
- energy
- drive
- dedication to God

—and quit all of our silly little bickering over ‘religions.’ We just need to do that. The time has come that it’s got to stop!

“...*it is* the gift of God... [You are not going to be saved by ‘religion.’ **God alone gives it to you as a gift!**] ...not of works, so that no one may boast” (vs 8-9).

So, it’s not of any works that you can do. There is no such thing as an account chart with your name on it in heaven, where your name is there and listed over here on this side the good deeds, listed over here on this side are the bad deeds. If you have more good deeds than bad deeds, you’re going to make it. *Not so!* You have to have a complete covenant relationship with God. If you do then you have the righteousness of Christ imputed to you so that everything is the *works of Christ*.

Verse 10: “For we are **His workmanship**... [God is working with us] ...created in Christ Jesus...” **Salvation is creation.** God doesn’t want us to be just good sincere people in the world. He wants us to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and being and to live *His way* and to love Jesus Christ, with His Spirit, let Him put the mind of Christ in us. That’s very important for us to understand that.

“...created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works... [these are the **true good works** of love, faith and hope] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them.” Of course, that has to do with commandment-keeping, no question about it. But commandment-keeping is not where it ends; commandment-keeping is where it **begins**, because God has called us to this covenant relationship.

Let’s go to John 6 so that we understand this covenant relationship. You have to be called of God. It is a special, Divine, individual act by God the Father **to you as a person**. The calling of God comes from the greatest Supreme Being in the universe—God the Father. He’s not calling you to a ‘religion.’ He’s calling you to a relationship with Him and to be in the **Family of God**, but that is going to take a **covenant commitment**.

John 6:44: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise

him up at the last day.” The Father has got to draw you. The **Father works in your life and in your mind to call you**. Then it’s up to you to respond and repent.

Verse 45: “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’...” Whose doing the teaching then? *God is!* I can read the words, you can read the words, but it’s *God’s Spirit in your mind* that does the teaching and gives you understanding. That’s what’s really happening.

“...Therefore, everyone who has heard... [you have to hear and answer] ...from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me” (v 45).

John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am **the Way**, and **the Truth**, and **the Life**; no one comes to the Father except through Me.’” So, no one can get to Jesus except through the Father and no one can come to the Father except through Jesus and that is *very clear*. This is not a ‘religious’ endeavor that takes place. He brings us to the point that we repent of our sins and we are baptized.

Let’s understand what our dedication to God is. It is a **covenant death**. That’s important. You have to completely die to Christ.

Romans 6:3: “Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were **baptized into His death?**” You’re conjoined with His death. You have pledged to God, by the very act of baptism and being conjoined to the death of Jesus Christ, that you will follow Jesus Christ and God the Father. **That is not a religion!** This is a covenant between you and God. Moreover, in being joined to His death, Jesus Christ—to make it possible—died for your sins and eventually the sins of the whole world. So, you die to sin when you are buried in the watery grave of baptism.

Verse 4: “Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection” (vs 4-5).

Brethren, that is a great calling. That is a marvelous thing to realize and understand. That’s why God has not called you to a ‘religion.’ And ‘religion’ **can’t save**. Even the very best, most pure, most undefiled ‘religion’ **cannot save**. It may look good to the world. It may look to other people. You may be counted a very ‘righteous’ person in the eyes of some people, but it **cannot save**; only Jesus Christ can.

Verse 6: “Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him*...”

- Do you figure that you have been crucified?
- Do you?
- Do you consider yourself that dead; that you were crucified with Christ, the old person before baptism?

That's what it's all about. Those who really do not understand that are 'religious' people, and they may even be amongst some of the brethren of God in whatever Church of God it may be. The sins of the Churches in Rev. 2 & 3 were sins where they went away from God *to* 'religion.' Did Christ not have a lot of very stern things to say to them because of their sins? *No doubt about it.*

"...in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin" (v 6). Sin originates in the mind! ***We're to be converted and have the mind of Christ!*** And the *exterior* things of 'religion' ('threskeia') *cannot*, with these outward works, ***cleanse the inside.*** Matt. 23 shows how 'religion' leads to destruction. We're going to see who the founder of 'religion' is, and it ***is not God!*** It just is not.

Let's see what God has ***called us to.*** He has called us to a family relationship: ***He is our Father! We are His children!*** We are not Christians in a 'religion.' We are only Christian in identifying that we are following Christ, that's all. We are actually the Church of the Firstborn, the harvest of the firstfruits. Therefore, all of the 'religious' connotation that people bring in because that's all they're used to, if you were brought up in the Baptist Church or the Methodist Church or Presbyterian or Catholic, you had certain things that you did. You even read from the Bible. You even studied the Bible in many cases. But all of that, being as it is, *isn't going to save* unless you believe, are called, are converted and receive the Spirit of Christ. That's what's so important.

Romans 8:9: "...But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

- Do you believe that?
- Do you understand that?
- To whom does God give His Holy Spirit?
- *To those that obey Him (Acts 5:32)!*
- *To those that love Him!*

The only way that you are going to truly have a relationship with God and fellowship with God is if you truly love Him, because you know that Christ died for you. You have joined in this covenant death with Christ for the marvelous opportunity to be the very sons and daughters of God.

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us..." He gave it to us. The very fact that we love God, brethren, comes from God's Holy Spirit, that we can do it. Of and by ourselves we do not have the love that is necessary to love God spiritually, but God gives that to us.

"...that we should be called the children of God!..." In this case, the children of God—the 'teknon'—His own begotten offspring. Do you realize that? That God the Father Himself has begotten you in the spirit of your mind for a great and a marvelous purpose that no 'religion' of this world can possibly understand? They only selectively choose some of the things that *they want to do or they take the Scriptures and cleverly twist and turn them to fit their own traditions and their own* pagan philosophies and whatever.

"...For this very reason, the world does not know us..." (v 1). That's important to understand. Most of the 'religions' in the world are coming together in a whole united religious movement that is taking place. They don't know God! Satan is going to be right there and perform many, many miracles and ***all*** the 'religious' people—all of those who do not have the Spirit of God and actively use the Spirit of God to grow in grace and knowledge—are going to be deceived because they ***don't love the Truth.*** That day is coming!

If you think that going through trials and difficulties *now* are difficult, I don't think we have a clue as to what is going to happen down the road and how bad and serious it's going to be. We may in fact have to really give our lives. That's why with a covenant pledge of baptism, conjoined into the death of Jesus Christ, we have already committed ourselves to death. That's something we need to realize.

Verse 2: "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is." That's something, brethren! We need to realize that.

God has called us to a greater, *greater*, ***greater*** thing than just keeping the commandments and keeping the Holy Days! Those are all fundamental and required. Please don't let anyone misunderstand, and please don't think I'm trying to put those down. Please don't think that I'm trying to say, because you have religiously kept these for years and did a lot of good works during the Feast or whatever that now I'm putting you down. I'm not! I'm just saying that it isn't going to work in saving you.

Let’s look at the commitment that we are to make. This is what God wants us to do. This is how the pledge—it’s not just a personal commitment—that you have laid your life down to death—that’s what you have done—to *live to God!* Jesus makes this very clear. We will see this when we get to the book of Job.

Luke 14:26: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he **cannot** be My disciple.” The Greek there is ‘ou adunatai’—*the impossibility* of any power of making you a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Verse 27: “And whoever does not carry his cross... [because you have been crucified with Christ or whatever difficulty that comes along] ...and come after Me **cannot** be My disciple”—‘ou adunatai.’ We’re going to see that’s what Job had to learn. Job did not understand that; Job did not realize that. Job was very ‘religious’!

Let’s look here at another ‘religious’ man. Luke 18:18: “And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, ‘Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good except One—God. You know the commandments: “You shall not commit adultery. You shall not commit murder. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother.” And he said, ‘I have kept all these *commandments* from my youth.’ And after hearing these things, Jesus said to him, ‘You still lack one thing; sell everything that you have, and distribute to *the* poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come *and* follow Me” (vs 18-22).

He wasn’t willing to really give up. He wasn’t really willing to die that covenant death with Christ.

Verse 23: “But when he heard these things, he became very sorrowful; for he was quite rich. Now, when Jesus saw him become so sorrowful, He said, ‘How difficult *it is* for those who have riches to enter into the Kingdom of God! For it is easier *for* a camel to go through an eye of a needle than *for* a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.’ And those who heard *this* said, ‘Who then is able to be saved?’ But He said, ‘The things *that are* impossible with men are possible with God” (vs 23-27).

Here is something to understand in commandment-keeping: Remember that the certain ruler said, ‘Lord, I’ve done this all my life.’ He did all of those things. They are required for salvation, no doubt about it! But he was not willing to totally let himself die in Christ.

Luke 17:5: “Then the apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith.’ But the Lord said, ‘If you had faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you might say to this sycamine tree, “Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,” and it would obey you. But which of you having a servant plowing or shepherding will immediately say *to him* when he comes in from the field, “Come and sit down *and eat*”? Rather, will he not say to him, “Prepare what I may eat, and gird yourself, *and* serve me while I eat and drink; and afterwards you may eat and drink”? Is he thankful to that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? **I think not**” (vs 5-9).

Here is a statement that so very few people can really understand.

Verse 10: “Likewise **you** also, when you have done **all the things that are commanded you**, say, “We are unprofitable servants, because we have done that which we were obligated to do.””

‘Religion’ has taken all of the things that are a duty to do and they’ve wrapped it up in *their ‘religious’ things* and *their traditions* and so forth, and that cuts them off from progressing. Even ‘pure and undefiled religion’ **cannot save you**.

(go to the next track)

Let’s go back to Job and let’s understand something that’s very important for us to realize. People have wondered why the book of Job—42 chapters long—has some of the most incredible arguments *based upon all of the philosophical reasonings of the world*. **All** the major world’s ‘religious’ philosophies are contained in here and spoken by Job and the three friends that came to him.

Job *in the letter* was perfect; even God said so. But there’s one thing that’s very important to understand: **God is interested in the heart!** A person might ask: Why did God have all these things done to Job? Why do it to someone who is perfect? *Well, the truth is, in heart Job was not perfect!* Something happens when people become ‘religious’ and do ‘good’ works. **They get self-righteous!** The hardest, **hardest, hardest** thing to repent of are all the self-righteous ‘do-gooding’ that a person has done, because you have done good to help someone and that did do some good. Did it save? **No!** Job did not understand that.

Job 1:1: “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. And that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and turned aside from evil.”

- Do you think in today’s world you can’t get any better than that?
- Does that save?

- Will it save?

Verse 2: “And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters. And his possessions also were seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred female donkeys, and a very great household, so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east” (vs 2-3).

That’s something to understand—isn’t it? As I’m reading all of this I want you to remember what we just read in Luke 14. ‘If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother and brother and sister and lands and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.’

In all of this, God is going to bring Job to a Luke 14:26 situation *where he really sees himself*, because Job figured he was pretty perfect. The one sin that Satan can never understand is the sin of self-righteousness, because he himself is self-righteous. Satan is a ‘stealth’ god. That’s going to be something for all of us to learn.

Verse 4: “And his sons went and feasted in their houses, each one on his day....” We don’t know exactly what this means. We don’t know if these were feasts to the *true* God or whether these were birthday parties or these were feasts to other gods. We don’t know, it doesn’t say.

“...And they sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And when the days of feasting were concluded, Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings *according to* the number of them all. For Job said, ‘It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ Thus Job continually did so” (vs 4-5).

That’s generally indicating something here that they weren’t doing right. Apparently they were doing something that wasn’t right. Maybe they were worshipping other gods, so he’s trying to atone for them. Here’s a lesson: **You can’t atone for someone else!** You can pray for them, but they have to be responsible for their own lives, and that’s what Job did.

Verse 6: “Now, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD. And Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro in the earth...’” (vs 6-7). He’s as a roaring lion going to and fro in the earth, seeking whom he may devour, as the Apostle Peter wrote.

“...and from walking up and down in it.’ And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the

earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil?... [just the kind that Satan’s looking for] ...And Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’” (vs 6-9).

Satan’s got benefits! He only does it because he’s getting something out of it! And most ‘religions’ try and offer you something—don’t they? *You get a benefit! God wants to give you more than benefits; He wants to give you eternal life!*

Verse 10: “‘Have You not made a hedge around him, and around his house, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.’”

All true statements. God never denied it. This shows that for ‘religious’ people who do things and ‘pure and undefiled religion’, there are certain blessings that come. **Does it save? No!**

Verse 11: “But put forth Your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse You to Your face.” Job had some deep lessons to learn here. God knew what *He* was doing. God knew that the time had come that Job had to graduate from being one who was *pure and undefiled* in ‘religion’ to becoming someone who has a relationship with God. All of his goodness and all the things that he did, he never came to that. God said, ‘All right, Satan I’m going to *use you* for that.’

Verse 12: “And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has *is* in your power. Only do not lay your hand upon him.’ And Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. Now, there was a day when his sons and his daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house. And there came a messenger to Job and said, ‘The oxen were plowing, and the donkeys feeding beside them. And the Sabeans fell *upon them*, and took them away. Yea, they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword. And I only have escaped alone to tell you’ While he *was* still speaking, there also came *another* and said, ‘The fire of God has fallen from the heavens and has burned up the sheep and the servants, and destroyed them. And I only have escaped alone to tell you.’ While he *was* still speaking, there also came *another* and said, ‘The Chaldeans formed three bands and swooped down upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and have killed the servants with the edge of the sword. And I only have escaped alone to tell you.’ While he *was* still speaking...” (vs 12-18).

Here’s trial after trial—BAM! BAM! BAM!—taking everything that he had, because he was looking to those things.

Verse 18: “While he *was* still speaking,

there also came another and said, ‘Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house. And, behold, a great wind came from the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead. And I only have escaped alone to tell you.’ And Job arose, and tore his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshiped. And he said, ‘Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away. Blessed *be* the name of the LORD.’ In all this Job did not sin, nor charge God foolishly” (vs 18-22).

He didn’t know it was just starting. That was quite a thing! ‘Religious’ people can do things like that—can’t they? There was something he did to show his grief, to show what he was willing to do.

Job 2:1: “And again it came to pass on a day that the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD. And Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ And Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.’ And the LORD said unto Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil? And still he is holding fast to his integrity... [it is not God’s integrity, but *Job’s*.] ...although you moved Me against him to destroy him without cause” (vs 1-3). *That is on the surface!*

Verse 4: “And Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘Skin for skin, yea, all that a man has he will give for his life... [that’s the motto of the AMA; you can believe that] ...But indeed put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse You to Your face.’ And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, he *is* in your hand, but spare his life.’ And Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the top of his head. And he took a broken piece of pottery to scrape himself with. And he sat down among the ashes” (vs 4-8).

That was so bad the only way to deal with it was just to take a potsherd, that’s like a cut glass, and just scrape and cut the top of these boils off and let the pus ooze out, and in all the pain, just squeeze it and let the pus drip. He had it all from his head to his feet. I don’t know of anyone that I’ve ever met who has had anything close to that kind of pain. Sore boils, maybe like carbuncles all over, you know those deep things that really hurt.

He *sat down among the ashes!* The reason is when you put ashes all over you, that dries it up, because it pulls all the pus out. Here is Job—I don’t

imagine his hair had grown out very much since he shaved it the first time—now covered with boils from head to toe, sitting down, throwing ashes on himself and scraping himself, and just trying to ease himself of the pain.

Verse 9: “And his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold to your integrity?...’—you’re a hypocrite. You can just hear it. So much for Mrs. Job! That’s the first and last we heard of her! She probably ran off and hid and stayed away from it all.

But notice her advice: “...Curse God and die!’ ... [you’re better off dead] ...But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women speak. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips” (vs 9-10). Now it’s getting to his lips.

Verse 11: “Now when Job’s three friends heard *of* all this evil that had come upon him, and they each one came from his own place: Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had met together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and did not recognize him, they lifted up their voices and wept. And each one tore his robe, and *they* threw dust upon their heads toward heaven. And they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights. And no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that *his* grief was very great” (vs 11-13).

Seven days and seven nights just sitting there; scraping and ashes. You know what’s going to happen? Guess what attracts flies? *Pus and blood!* There were flies coming around. I imagine he was waving to chase away the flies. Later on he says, ‘Though worms destroy this body...’ What was he referring to? *Maggots in his flesh!* His friends were really not very much of a comfort.

Job 3:1: “After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth*.”

Verse 25: “For the thing which I greatly feared has come upon me... [At least he’s being honest here. In all of his righteousness he still had fear—didn’t he? *Perfect love casts out fear!* Did Job have perfect love? *No!*] ...and that which I was afraid of has come to me.”

Now then, three friends started giving him advice. All kinds of advice back and forth, ‘Job, come on admit it, you’re a sinner. You’re a wicked man.’ *No, I’m not.* ‘Yes, you are.’

Job 9:1: “And Job answered and said, ‘Truly I know *it is so*, but how can man be just with God? If he desired to argue with Him, he cannot answer Him one time out of a thousand *times*. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength. Who has hardened

himself against Him and has prospered” (vs 1-4). So, he started out with wisdom—didn’t he? But later he even went against that.

He starts complaining to God, and this is one that really shows the problem, v 32: “For *He* is not a man, as I *am*, that I should answer Him, that we should come together in court; there is no umpire between us, *who* might lay his hand upon us both” (vs 32-33).

What happens when you have self-righteousness? *and* That self-righteousness is destroyed? *Well, you really don’t know what to do!* You don’t want to curse God, because you are righteous enough to know you ought not to do that, and Job didn’t do that. But you’re bitter enough about it that you wish there were someone there that could put his hand on God and on you and really work the matter out. What it really comes down to is that in the final analysis, in all of this, *self-righteousness is the hardest thing to see and to repent of*, because self-righteousness has been so ‘good.’

Job 13:15: “Though He slay me, I will trust in Him...” This sounds like Peter. ‘Lord, I’ll go to the death with you.’ Remember that? The Lord said, ‘No, you won’t. You’ll deny Me three times before this night is out.’

“...but I will maintain my own ways before Him [*I was right!*] ...He also *is* my salvation, for a hypocrite shall not come before Him” (vs 15-16). ‘Look, I’m not a hypocrite, all you guys with your arguments and telling me all this sort of thing. I haven’t sinned. I haven’t done wrong. I maintain my right.’

Verse 17: “Listen carefully to my words, and to my declarations with your ears. Behold now, I have set *my* cause in order; I know that I shall be justified. Can anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die. Only do not do two *things* to me; then I will not hide myself from You. Withdraw Your hand far from me, and let not Your dread terrify me. Then call, and I will answer; or let me speak, and You answer me” (vs 17-22). He’s kind of laying down the terms here to God—isn’t he? That won’t work that way. You can’t lay down terms to God.

Verse 23: “**How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sin.** Why do You hide Your face, and reckon me as Your enemy?” (vs 23-24). Those are pretty strong words against God. He’s challenging God to come and show him his sins.

What I want you to do is read all the way through the book of Job. You’re going to see that even some of the very arguments that the three

friends in Job used, *you have used*. And the reason being is that you haven’t quite yet graduated out of ‘religion’ into a relationship with God. Read the whole thing. When I first read it, I really thought God was wrong, because I was just newly baptized and just starting. I thought I would read the book of Job.

- Why would God do that to a perfect man?
- Why would He go through this?

Look at all the things that he did. I looked at my life and I had to admit my life was nothing like Job’s. How could Job be counted a sinner? Look at all the things that he did.

Job 29:1: “And Job continued speaking, and said, ‘Oh, that **I** were as *in* months past, as *in* the days when God watched over **me**; when His lamp shined upon **my** head; and when **I** walked *through* darkness by His light; as **I** was in the days of **my** youth, when the secret of God was upon **my** tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with **me**, and my children were around **me**; when **I** washed my steps with butter, and the rock pressed out rivers of oil for **me**; when **I** went out to the gate of the city; when **I** prepared **my** seat in the square! The young men saw **me** and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up. The rulers refrained from talking, and laid their hands on their mouths” (vs 1-9).

Here’s mighty Job walking in, the very important man! Everyone stopped in *hush* as the righteous, perfect Job passed by.

Verse 10: “. The noble’s voice was subdued, and their tongue clung to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard **me** then it blessed **me**.... [Oh, Job that was so good!] ...And when the eye saw **me** it gave witness to **me**.... [Right on Job!] ...For **I** delivered the poor who cried for help...” (vs 10-12).

Does this not relate to James 1, ‘pure and undefiled religion’? *Yes!* Job was the purest and most undefiled in his religion, but he didn’t have a relationship with God.

- he knew of God
- he feared God
- he kept His commandments

—but *he did not have a relationship with God!* He was trusting in his own goodness, even though they are the commandments of God. Do you understand? *No human being with the ‘law of sin and death’ within him or her is ever capable of being spiritually perfect.* Job was not spiritually perfect. He was *carnally perfect*. He was *religiously perfect*. Did it save him? *No!* What saved him? We’ll see when we get a little further on.

Verse 12: "For **I** delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who *had* none to help. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and **I** caused the widow's heart to sing for joy" (vs 12-13). He did James 1:26^[transcriber's correction] just as the best as can be! Better than James ever thought it could be done.

James 1:26: "If anyone among you considers himself to be religious, and does not control his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this ones religion is vain."

Job 29:14: "**I** put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice *was* like a robe and a diadem.... [that gave me authority and great stature] ...**I** was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. **I** was a father to the poor; and the cause which I did not know, **I** searched out" (vs 12-16). He was so righteous; he went out and searched out for things that were wrong so he could make them right. That's something!

Verse 17: "I broke the fangs of the wicked, and plucked the prey out of his teeth." Yes, as a reigning monarch—the greatest of anyone in the East country—he went out and he took care of the wicked people. 'Yes, I'm 'religious'; I got rid of them.'

Verse 18: "Then I said, 'I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply *my* days like the sand.'" In other words, he's going to just fix everything up really nice. When it comes time for him to die, he's going to die in his nest. It isn't going to be a tragedy. It isn't going to be anything wrong. It's going to be perfect because 'I'm going to make it perfect.'

Verse 19: "My root *was* spread out to the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory *was* fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand. They listened to me, and waited, and kept silent at my counsel.... [none could do better than Job] ...After my words they did not speak again; and my speech dropped on them. And they waited for me like the rain; and they opened their mouth wide *as* for the latter rain.... [Just 'Ahh!' Drinking it all in when they heard Job speak.] ...I smiled on them *when* they did not believe; and the light of my countenance they did not cast down. I chose out their way, and sat as chief; and I lived like a king in the army, as one *who* comforts the mourners'" (vs 12-25). I tell you what, **you talk about being 'righteous'!**

Job 31:5: "**If** I have walked with vanity..." He just spoke vanity! Just like the young man said, 'I've done all these things from my youth up.' Jesus said, 'All right, go sell everything that you have.' In this case Job didn't sell it, God took it—same thing.

"...or **if** my foot has hurried to deceit" (v 5). Here he is deceiving himself with his own goodness. That's what's so hard to see! **When you are 'good,' what do you have to repent of? The self and your evil nature!**

Verse 6: "Let me be weighed in an even balance..." Yes, because he thought of the good works/bad works thing, and all those good works will just pull it right up good.

"...so that God may know that I am blameless. If my step has turned out of the way, or my heart has walked after my eyes, and if any spot has cleaved to my hands; *then* let me sow, and let another eat; and let my harvests be rooted out. If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or I have laid wait at my neighbor's door, *then* let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down upon her. For that *would be* a heinous crime; yea, it *would be* an iniquity *to be punished by* the judges" (vs 6-11). On and on and on; I tell you it was something!

Here's Job's plea, v 35: "Oh, that I had one to hear me!... [you three friends out there, you're not listening to me] ...Behold, my desire is *that* the Almighty would answer me, and the indictment *that* my adversary had written." He got both! God did answer him and it's written in a book. Here it is.

Verse 36: "Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, *and* bind it *like* a crown *upon my head*. I would declare to Him the number of my steps..." (vs 36-37). I would show God what I did. 'Look God, I did this, and I did this and I did this, and, God, I am a perfect human being.' But you still have sinful nature and all the good that was done was done out of sheer pride and self-righteousness.

"...like a prince I would come before Him.... [I would walk right up to God] ...If my land cry against me, or its furrows weep together; if I have eaten its strength without paying for it, or have caused its owners to lose their life, let thorns come forth instead of wheat, and weeds instead of barley.' The words of Job are ended" (vs 37-40). After that, what can you say?

Job 32:1: "And these three men ceased to answer Job, because **he was righteous in his own eyes**.... [someone always let's you know the truth] ...Then was kindled the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram. His wrath burned against Job, because he had justified himself rather than God. Also his wrath was kindled against his three friends, because they had found no answer and *yet* had condemned Job" (vs 1-3). When you come to the end of it, when Job had to offer sacrifices for himself and his three friends, he didn't have to offer it for Elihu.

Verse 4: "Now Elihu had waited to speak to

Job, because they *were* older than he in days. When Elihu saw that there *was* no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled. And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, ‘I *am* young, and you *are* very old; therefore, I was afraid, and dared not show you my opinion. I said, “The aged should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom.” But *there is* a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding. Great men are not *always* wise... [Very profound!] ...neither do the aged understand justice. Therefore, I say, “Hearken to me. I also will declare my opinion.”’” (vs 4-10).

Verse 18: “For I am full of the matter; the spirit within me constrains me.”

Verse 21: “Let me not, I pray you, accept any man’s person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.”

Job 33:8: “Surely you have spoken in my ears, and I have heard the sound of *your* words, *saying*, ‘I *am* pure, without transgression; I *am* innocent, and *there is* no iniquity in me’” (vs 8-9). That’s what he heard Job say.

Verse 12: “Behold, *in* this you are not right; I will answer you, for God is greater than man. Why do you fight against Him? For He does not give account for *any* of His matters” (vs 12-13). That is, to any man.

Job 34:1: “And Elihu answered and said, ‘Hear my words, O you wise men; and give ear to me, you who have knowledge; for the ear tries words, *as* the palate tastes food. Let us choose for ourselves what is right; let us know among ourselves what *is* good. For Job has said, “I am righteous; but God has denied me justice; should I lie against my right? My wound cannot be cured; *I am* without transgression.” What man *is* like Job, *who* drinks up scolding like water; who goes in company with the workers of iniquity, and walks with wicked men? For he has said, “It profits a man nothing when he delights himself in God.” Therefore, hearken to me, O you men of understanding; far be it from God to commit iniquity; and from the Almighty, *that He should commit* iniquity. For the work of a man shall He render unto him, and cause every man to find according to *his* ways. Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment” (vs 1-12).

Verse 35, Elihu continues: “‘Job has spoken without knowledge, and his words *were* without wisdom.’ My desire *is that* Job may be tried unto the end because *his* answers *are* like those of wicked men. For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps *his* hands among us, and multiplies his words against God.’” (vs 35-37).

Job 35:1: “And Elihu answered and said, ‘Do you think this to *be* right, you *that* say, “My righteousness *is* more than God’s”? For you say, “What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than *if* I had sinned?” I will answer your words, and your companions with you. Look to the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds; they are higher than you. If you sin, what do you do against Him? Or *if* your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him? Or what does He receive from your hand?”’” (vs 1-7).

Verse 12: “There they cry, but He gives no answer, because of the pride of evildoers. Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it” (vs 12-13).

- What is he referring to?
- What is the vainest thing possible?
- *Religion that claims to save!*

That is vanity, and *self-righteousness is vanity*. Elihu kept going on. He went on for another whole two chapters, showing Job about his self-righteousness, and ***finally God answered.***

Job 38:1: “Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ‘Who *is* this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man; for I will demand of you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare it if you have understanding! Who has determined its measurements if you know? Or who has stretched the line upon it? On what are the foundations fastened to? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?’” (vs 1-7)—pointing to the creation.

Job 40:1: “And the LORD answered Job and said, ‘Shall he who contends with the Almighty instruct *Him*?... [Is anyone going to instruct the *heart-knowing* God?] ...He who reproves God, let him answer it’” (vs 1-2). *Come on Job, answer!*

Verse 3: “And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘Behold, I am vile! What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth.... [Job finally learned how to; ***time to shut up!***] ...Once I have spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.’” (vs 3-5). Here’s the whole core of everything to do with ‘religion’ and why ‘religious’ *works*—even the most pure and undefiled ‘religious’ works, the *exterior* ‘religious’ works that you do—cannot save.

Verse 6: “And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ‘Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand you, and you declare unto Me. Will you even annul My judgment?....’” (vs 6-

8). Every single ‘religion’ does it.

- they have *their* traditions
- they have *their* own commandments
- they have *their* own rules and regulations.
- they declare that the Sabbath is not right, but Sunday is
- they have disannulled the judgment of God

“...Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous?” (v 8). Isn’t that what religionists and theologians do? ‘*Well, God gave the Sabbath and His commandments because they were harsh and God just wanted to punish them. But we are righteous and sweet and good and have grace and love,*’ and all of this cloyed stickiness of self-righteousness.

Verse 9: “And *have* you an arm like God?....” In other words, if you are going to condemn Me, are you God? That’s what He’s saying.

“...Or can you thunder with a voice like His?” (v 9). Job, you think you are so good. There he is with all the pus and scabs and flies and ashes, everything all over him.

Verse 10: “Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you” (vs 10-14).

‘Religion’ *cannot save!* Your own self-righteousness *cannot save!* That is all required. When you have done everything that is commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants.’ God wants us to go above and beyond that by not pushing ourselves up, but by:

- yielding ourselves to God
- asking for His Spirit
- asking for His love
- entering into a relationship with God

because God alone can save us.

Are you willing to repent of your ‘religious’ self-righteousness? That’s the reason that this whole controversy got started over a sermonette that Bob Hunnicutt gave where he said that God hates religion. God does hate religion. Look at all the perfectness of Job.

- Did it save? *No!*
- Did it do some good out here? *Yes!*

- But how quickly can all that be taken away? *BAM! Just like that!*

God took it away. He had none of the physical things around that *he* could build himself up with and say, ‘Look, I did this and I did that’ and so forth.

Job 42:1: “And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘I know that You can do all things, and *that* no thought can be withheld from You. *You asked, ‘Who is he who hides counsel without knowledge?’... [Job is talking to himself, about himself] ...Therefore, I have spoken that which I did not understand...’*” (vs 1-3). He said, ‘I spoke with no understanding.’ If you want to retain a ‘religion’—though you may call it Christian—you do not have understanding. You need the understanding of God.

“...*things* too wonderful for me; yea, which I did not know. Hear, I beseech You, and I will speak; *You said, ‘I will ask of you, and you will declare to Me.’* I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear... [that’s what ‘religion’ is: you hear of God by the hearing of the Word] ...**but now my eye sees You**” (vs 3-5).

To see the true perspective, here is Job repenting, and he had to repent of all the good that he did. Was it hard? *Yes!* Men couldn’t convince him to repent, but when God dealt with him personally, God led him to repentance. And it’s the same thing with us. The graciousness of God leads us to repentance. Oh, you did good things in the past, that’s fine! That’s all expected.

- Do you love God?
- Have you totally repented to Him?
- Do you understand that the human heart is deceitful above all things, even in its own goodness?

Verse 6: “Therefore, I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.”

When that happened, Job was healed. God blessed him. He had to offer the offerings for those three friends, but not for Elihu. Of all of the people that were there with Job, only one man understood that God is so great, marvelous and supreme that our righteousness, as Isaiah has said, is just like ‘filthy rags.’ We stand before God and try and hold those up to Him. It’s the same as Job arguing with God and saying, ‘God, I have done so good, You just got to come down here and I’m going to convince You of what I have done. How good I am.’ So, he had to repent.

- Can you repent of your ‘religious’ things?
- Can you repent of making a ‘religion’ out of God’s way?

- Can you change and really see that there is ***the way of God*** that you have to follow with all your heart, mind, soul and being?

That’s what it’s all about, brethren. ***‘Religion’ cannot save! It is the gift of God through Jesus Christ!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 2:20, 19
- 2) James 1:26-27
- 3) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 4) John 6:44-45
- 5) John 14:6
- 6) Romans 6:3-6
- 7) Romans 8:9
- 8) 1 John 3:1-2
- 9) Luke 14:26-27
- 10) Luke 18:18-27
- 11) Luke 17:5-10
- 12) Job 1:1-22
- 13) Job 2:1-13
- 14) Job 3:1, 25
- 15) Job 9:1-4, 32-33
- 16) Job 13:15-24
- 17) Job 29:1-13
- 18) James 1:26
- 19) Job 29:14-15
- 20) Job 31:5-11, 35-40
- 21) Job 32:1-10, 18, 21
- 22) Job 33:8-9, 12-13
- 23) Job 34:1-12, 35-37
- 24) Job 35:1-7, 12-13
- 25) Job 38:1-7
- 26) Job 40:1-14
- 27) Job 42:1-6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 2 & 3
- Matthew 23
- Acts 5:32
- James 1:25

Also referenced:

- Article: *Iranian Leader, Pope Find Common Ground in Rome* (San Francisco Chronicle, March 12, 1999—articles.sfgate.com)
- Books:
 - ✓ *Keys of This Blood: Pope John Paul II vs Russia and the West for Control of the New World Order* by Malachi Martin
 - ✓ *Webster’s Exhaustive Dictionary*

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The Addicted Society I What Addiction Am I Hooked On?

Fred R. Coulter

I gave a sermon on *The Spirit of Sodom* and how the ‘spirit of whoredoms’ has almost literally possessed this nation, if not the whole world. It brought up another thing that we really need to look to, and that is ***this is the addicted society***. Let’s think about it. God made us so we function best when we have a regular routine. We were created to be habitual creatures. God made us this way so we could be made in His image and develop the character of Christ, learn the laws of God, and so forth.

Enter Satan and, of course, you know what happened in the Garden of Eden. Now we come down to our society today and let’s look at it this way: *Satan is more powerfully deceiving the world than ever before* because he has every tool available for him to do so. Today we are

- deceived and self-deceived
- driven by lust
- driven by addiction
- broken and shattered lives
- controlled, influenced or possessed
- ruled by Satan and his demons

More and more that’s the way the world is; reflected in the way that people live, reflected in all of the media, especially television, movies, etc. Then we have tremendous addiction problems:

- alcohol addiction
- drug addiction
- porn addiction
- sex addiction
- food addiction

and you can throw in with the foods that people are hooked on—junk foods—‘junk food junkies.’ Then you have the control of:

- television
- movies
- video games
- music
- witchcraft
- lying
- stealing

—all of those things.

Today we have a generation that has been brought up that is not responsible, does not understand the word *responsibility* except in a very few, rare cases. You can’t depend on them to come to work on time; they get there when they are ready,

and they work when they feel like it. A lot of that is reflected in their lives, and a lot of it is because they are suffering from *addiction*, and suffering from being cut off from God.

God has many witnesses and many people called into repentance and God works in the ways that are true. People, like Protestants, won’t listen to Sabbath-keepers—because after all we don’t know anything—but they will listen to one of their own. Mickey Bonner has written a book, *Brokenness, the Forgotten Factor of Prayer*

I want to focus especially on the *addiction factor*, and not only on alcohol and drugs, but addiction to pornography online. There are probably 30-40-million people *hooked* online to pornography; they are addicted to it. Some of them spend hours a day watching it—men *and* women. Women get all mad when men watch pornography, but if it weren’t for women showing off their bodies on television and on the Internet, for a fee, men wouldn’t be watching pornography. So, to condemn men without condemning women is the wrong thing to do.

From: *Brokenness, the Forgotten Factor of Prayer*, by Mickey Bonner:

pg 29—For many years we have taught spiritual warfare in fundamentalist churches throughout the country. Many learned critics from the realms of academics and traditional church leadership have accused us of teaching foolishness. In spite of these criticisms, the church at large is now faced with the explosion of witchcraft and suicides among young people in the families of pastors and other Christians.

They actually have an addiction center for recovering pastors who are addicted to pornography.

This has been brought on by rock music, the New Age movement...

Of course, false teachings within churches—a lawless grace.

...Suddenly the wise ones find themselves devoid of ability to offer doctrinal help in these areas. Now the church is being overcome and destroyed. It has lost its power to stand against what is happening. It is non-praying, leaders blinded by unbrokenness...

—because the theme of it is in brokenness that in order to return to God with such callous consciences

that they have to have a 'broken spirit and a contrite heart' *and truly seek God that way*. What is happening? *The blind are leading the blind!*

And we said this before didn't we? Based on what? We see this in action (Matt. 13). What is interesting about Jer. 23 is that God said even the false prophets *that He didn't send*, who are teachers of Baalism: If they would cause His people to stand by His Word, He would honor that, because 'His Word is exalted above His name.' We're seeing this happen in a very profound way, much more so the difference between the Truth of what God's Word is and the reality of how the world is functioning, the gap is greater and greater because this living principle is happening:

Matthew 13:10: "And His disciples came to Him and asked, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' And He answered *and* said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it has not been given'" (vs 10-11). Now, that's something that we all need to really understand. We understand what we understand because of God, the Spirit of God, the Word of God, and because of God's Spirit *in* us. It's been given to us to know, to the world it hasn't been given to them.

Now a perfect example: One the news commentators on Fox News Channel—Juan Williams—wrote a book, *The War Over Christmas*, and because of the 'happy holiday' controversy, they've been promoting Christmas and 'merry Christmas' and putting up Christmas scenes everywhere as much as they can.

I've got here a little cartoon and it shows a woman buying a package in a store. And the clerk doesn't know how to treat the customers that come in because of the raging holiday controversy and she's handing the lady the package and she says, 'Happy holidays, unless that phrase offends you, of course, in which case: *best wishes* for the season, or *merry winter weeks*, or enjoy a *festive end-of-the-year revel*, or *felicities* on which-ever observance you may or may not be pausing to reflect upon within a familial, cultural, or sectarian milieu or whatever.' And the woman reaches out to take the package and says, 'Merry Christmas to you.'

All of those on Fox are good Catholics. It's owned by a good Catholic—Murdock—and he is a high mucky-muck in the Knights of Columbus and all of this sort of thing. They have been promoting all this Christmas. Here comes this fellow to tell you about mythology you don't know about. And Tony Snow says, 'Well tell us about Christmas.' He said, 'Well, Jesus wasn't born on this day.' What they've been saying is that Christmas is all about Christ and the birth of Christ, and even on the same program he

even had Franklin Graham on there and he's saying, 'Well it's all about the birth of Christ.' This man comes on and says, 'This has nothing to do with the birth of Christ. The 25th of December has nothing to do with when Jesus was born. It was originally pagan.' And then Tony Snow says, 'What else can you tell me?' He's trying to use up the two minutes, and then he starts on about Easter and how that's pagan and none of it's Christian. And poor old Tony Snow is sitting there swallowing, nearly choking, he can hardly wait until the two minutes is up so he can move on.

I thought it was interesting. Did God arrange that as a witness for all those gung-ho Christmas-keepers to give them a little witness that what they are upholding is a perversion of the Truth of God married to a pagan custom? Just like this man here [Mickey Bonner], he is a fundamental Protestant, so the Protestants will listen to him. Here is what he says of this generation:

pg 208—Future historians, if there be any, will look at what was once a Christian nation that died because the church lost its place by becoming involved in the business of doing things like the world did. The church became caught up in the busyness of propagation that brought to a dying planet a watered-down, compromising gospel that leavened its truth with error. Propagation became a religious foundation of sand.

Very well put.

Time has shown that many such churches are sinking; some are already gone. These churches have traded activity for prayer as well as compromise for conviction. They are now meeting the people where they are, rather than where Christ is.

Quite a statement!

Consequently, one complete generation of young people has been lost to the value systems that have been coordinated by the demonic calling evil good and good evil and having no use for God and His Christ. We now face the acceleration of the demise and disintegration of the world's first truly foundationally Christian nation. Its very beginning was a harvest of laws and rights for persons who sought God in deep brokenness and prayer. America was birthed by prayer and will die by religion as have many nations in history. America's traditions began with the Holy God and ending with mother earth or better said New Age Wicca or witchcraft. The auctioneer just like that declares at the end

of a sale: Going, *going*, **gone!** So have our traditional values been going and now are already gone. Not going, but gone are the principles of righteousness; not going, but are gone, the hope of glory.

Quite a thing—isn't it? A very accurate description of where we are in this world.

Let's see how this fits in exactly with Matthew 13:12—here is a living principle: “For whoever has *understanding*, to him more shall be given...” What's the key to understanding? *A good understanding have they who keep His commandments* (Psa. 111:10).

“...and he shall have an abundance...” Why? *Because as we grow in grace and knowledge, we learn more and more!* That's why! And it all comes from God, just like Jesus said, ‘The words that I speak to you, these are not My words but the words that the Father commanded Me to speak.’ And the things that we learn, learn of the Bible, and the understanding that we have does not come because of any great intelligence on our part, but because of the mercy, love, grace and kindness of God as we yield to Him and are led by His Holy Spirit and keep His commandments.

Notice what else happens. “...but whoever does not have *understanding*, even what he has shall be taken away from him” (v 12). That's exactly what's happening in the battle for Christmas now. What they thought they had that was Christian is being taken from them, and being exposed for what it really is.

Verse 13: “For this *reason* I speak to them in parables, because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand.”

I couldn't help thinking of that when I was watching Tony Snow's face because they had the split screen showing the man bringing the things about mythology, and then Tony Snow's face over here and he was kind of glum and swallowing and anxious for him to get over, because what he thought he had with this man was taking away from him by really bringing the truth of what it really was. I couldn't help thinking of that.

Verse 14: “And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, ‘In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and *in* seeing you shall see, and in no way perceive... [Now why does God do this?] ...for the heart of this people has grown fat...” (vs 14-15). If you want your way, that's exactly what God is going to give you! And when that happens:

- you're going to lose understanding
- you're going to lose Truth

- you're going to lose conscience
- you will go into the depths of satanism and addiction in any one of these things that I have mentioned here
 - What are you addicted to?
 - What are the secret sins that you may have that nobody else really knows except you and God?

And be guaranteed, sooner or later someone else is going to know and find out because you don't live in a vacuum.

- Which category do you fit into?
- Growing in grace and knowledge and having understanding?

or

- Do you fit into the other category: having your own way?

“...and their ears are dull of hearing...” (v 15). So, if you bring up ‘Well, you shouldn't do this.’ *Well, now you just don't understand. You've got to be broadminded about this!*

“...and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (v 15). You mean Christ doesn't want people converted? Have you ever thought of that? That's exactly what He is saying. *He doesn't want them converted, at this time!*

Now that's almost the same thing when Adam and Eve sinned and were put out of the Garden of Eden? What did God do? He closed the way to the Tree of Life so they couldn't be converted, and set cherubims at the east end of the Garden of Eden to preserve the way of the Tree of Life. What was the sentence? ‘*If you want your way, you have it, but get out of here!* If you want your way, you are going to suffer in pain, agony and the sweat of your brow, because dust you are and to dust you will return. You will die because I have cut off salvation from you.’

That's pretty strong medicine, and people don't like to hear that because a lot of people think they are saved. But you don't know if you're really a Christian or not unless you compare it with the Bible. If your behavior compares with it and you know that you have repented and have been baptized and received God's Spirit, you know you are a true Christian. Otherwise, you are a *fake* Christian, or as the Greek says ‘pseudo’—*false* Christian.

You can't be addicted to these things and have very much of God's Spirit, if you have any at all. This is to say nothing of we used to make a great deal out of smoking, and let's add to this gambling.

Now notice what happens if you really believe God and the Truth, Verse 16: “But blessed *are* your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see what you see, and have not seen; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard” (vs 16-17). All of it is a *gift of grace* from God!

Let’s see why these things are happening. These things go in cycles, because human beings are given to cycles starting out fresh with zeal just like the pilgrims did when they came to America, and now, as he brought out, we are right at the botch of corruption.

2-Timothy 3:1: “Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come.” Key that to 2-Chron. 35 about Manasseh and what happened when he gave all of Judah over to worshipping other gods and witchcraft and passing the children through the fire. It became criminal; innocent blood was shed. So, that exemplifies the cycle.

Verse 2: “For men will be lovers of self... [that’s where all addiction comes] ...lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God... [there you have a perfect description of the whole world] ...having an outward appearance of Godliness, but denying the power of *true* Godliness...” (vs 2-5). Isn’t that something? *Eighty percent-plus of Americans profess a belief in God*, and as James said, ‘Don’t think that’s any big deal, folks, the demons do and tremble!’

“...But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these. For from *men such as* these come those who are worming their way into houses, and are gaining control over empty-headed *gullible* women given over to *various* sins, *being* driven by all kinds of lust. *They are* always learning but *are* never able to come to *the* knowledge of *the* Truth. Now just as Jannes and Jambres stood against Moses, in the same manner also these are *brazenly* standing against the Truth; *they are* men of depraved minds, reprobate in respect to the faith” (vs 5-8). Quite a thing!

Verse 13: “But wicked men and imposters shall become worse and worse, deceiving *others* and being deceived *themselves*.” There is where we are. That’s how we have all of this, that’s how these things come about.

Let’s look at some of the addictions, especially sex addiction, which this whole nation is given over to a whole *spirit of whoredoms*. The

reason I am bringing this is because there are a good number who are in the Church, or *who have been* in the Church who are currently deceiving themselves—who are hooked on porn, hooked on drugs, hooked on alcohol, destroying their marriages, destroying their lives—and they know better, but are unwilling to listen because they are caught up in the times.

Jeremiah 6:13: “For everyone from the least of them even to the greatest of them is greedy for gain; and from the prophet even unto the priest everyone deals falsely.” That’s exactly what he wrote in this book: *Brokenness, the Forgotten Factor of Prayer* And in doing so, all of these things are a step-by-step-by-step process to sear the conscience, to make it almost impossible to repent. So, we’ll talk a little later about how you recover from that.

Verse 14: “They have also healed the hurt of *the daughter* of My people slightly, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when *there is* no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed, nor could they blush; therefore, they shall fall among those who fall. At the time *that* I punish them, they shall be cast down,’ says the LORD. Thus says the LORD, ‘Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths where the good way *is* and walk in it... [that’s talking about God’s way] ...and you shall find rest for your souls....” (vs 14-16). If there is any one thing that an addict does not have it is rest and peace of mind.

“...But they said, “We will not walk *in it*.” Also I set watchmen over you, *saying*, “Hearken to the sound of the ram’s horn...” [Disaster is coming!] ... But they said, “We will not hearken.” Therefore, hear, you nations, and know, O congregation, what *will happen* to them. Hear, O earth; behold, I will bring evil on this people, even the fruit of their thoughts because they have not hearkened to My words, nor to My law, but have rejected it” (vs 16-19). That’s to say nothing of pornography and things like that.

Now let me read to you from the book *The Marketing of Evil* by David Kupelian. What occupies your mind? Because a lot of people may not be addicted to drugs, or addicted to sex or to pornography, but a lot of people are addicted to music. If you want to know if you are addicted or not concerning music, try this: Turn off the radio. Turn off the TV. See if you can think, because most people have their minds occupied by other people’s words and other people’s ideas, which come straight from Satan the devil through music right into your life and into your mind and into your heart.

We learn how things go into your mind, because everything that you do is registered. What

did Jesus say? *In the judgment day we're going to give account for every idle word!* That's why repentance is important, that that can be wiped out and forgotten.

Things you learn:

- 1% you learn through taste
- 1.5% through touch unless you are blind, then you learn more
- 3.5% through smell
- 11% through hearing
- 83% through sight

People are glued to television. Try this with your kids: Turn off the TV, take away the cartoons and sit down and see if you can carry on a little mini-conversation with your kids.

Things we remember:

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we see and hear
- 80% of what we say
- 90% of what we say as we do a thing.

Very interesting—isn't it? What happens when we come to church and we bring our Bibles, and we open them up and we go from Scripture to Scripture?

- you are **seeing**
- you are **hearing**
- you are **reading**
- you are **understanding**

—at the same time. That's why Sabbath services become so very important. I dare say this; none of us would survive very long without the Sabbath.

How many people who have given up the Sabbath, have really survived? *They haven't!* They have gone back *into the world, and they don't want to be bothered.* This happens because they've been programmed and we've seen it even happen within the Church. It's called a *paradigm shift*. Have you heard that before? *Yes!* 'Oh, we've got to get rid of the old paradigm.' God says go back to the old paradigm there in Jer. 6, but people don't want that.

from—*The Marketing of Evil* by David Kupelian

pg. 185-186—Media Matrix: Don't think for a minute that this dynamic of being programmed by others occurs only in far off lands. It goes right here in the good old USA in your state, in your town—perhaps in your home. Of course, for most of us, particularly in America, the pressures are usually less obvious than they are for those

living under horrendous “isms” like Communism or radical Islamism. But the principles are exactly the same. Pick a behavior—say, body piercing....

or we could say tattooing

...Do you really think millions of people independently arrived at the idea that it's a great thing to bore holes in multiple parts of their bodies (and I'm not talking about earrings) and imbed metal objects there? Obviously, people do this because they see others doing it...

Remember what I just read here?

...yet somehow they still believe it's their own idea! No one likes to think he or she has a weak mind or is acting out of the suggestions of other people!"

So what do they say? *It's my choice! I want to express my freedom!*

But here is the key point about being influenced and shaped by peer pressure:

We're going to talk about that in just a little bit because the Bible talks about peer pressure.

If you are unwilling to recognize that something is wrong with your programming, with the way you think and act and feel, that means you're firmly in its grip.

In other words, you're *deceived, self-deluded*.

But if you are more self-aware—if you're introspective and sincere enough to recognize that there is something wrong with the way you are living—then you can break out the peer-pressure matrix....

How do you break out of addiction?

...God rewards honest people, those who are willing to give up the lie, no matter how painful that is, or how damaging to our pride.

But since we all seem to have this part in our nature that is somehow more inclined to believe flattering con men than prophets telling us painful truths, it's essential that our nation's culture revolve around reality.

However we have a ready-made deceived reality.

That's what true civilization is. A culture that affirms good as good and evil as evil acts as a mirror of sorts, helping each of us keep a firm grip on public and private morality.

Then he quoted Isaiah 5:20: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and

sweet for bitter!” Another four-letter acronym for that is ACLU.

Indeed, this book is about how evil is packaged and perfumed to look good—and good made to appear evil.

‘Why, you wouldn’t want to read the Bible! You must be nuts!’

Unfortunately, today’s establishment press, the primary filter through which we receive most of our information about the world, does not revolve about reality. As a matter of fact, over the past few decades no institution has been more culpable for making evil appear good and good appear evil than the media.

So, we are in the age of evil.

- What is your addiction?
- What do you need to overcome?

Let’s look at some of these things. Deut. 30 is what God sets before everyone. You cannot change this proposition. Everyone has to choose. Everyone has to know what is right and wrong; *no one is going to have an excuse!* Even Paul Harvey and Zig Zieglar made the comment concerning the Ten Commandments when people say, ‘They’re hard to understand.’ Well no, the Ten Commandments are very easy to understand, but people don’t want to understand them because it infringes upon their sins and makes them uncomfortable, and they don’t want to change. God made it simple.

In reading this I want you to think about how many Bibles there are in the world. *Billions!* Translated into how many languages? *Probably pretty close to 500 by now*, and the New Testament in over 1,800 languages, and the book of Mark in probably 2,500 languages. So, it’s not hidden, and I dare say every home must have a Bible in it somewhere. That means God made sure it was there. It’s a witness against them, *for* them and *to* them, and if they don’t read it, that’s not God’s fault.

Deuteronomy 30:11: “For this commandment which I command you today *is* not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It *is* not in heaven *that you should* say, ‘Who shall go up to heaven for us, and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?’” (vs 11-12). Just think of the billions that men would spend if that were the case. ‘Oh we’ve got to go up and do it!’ *No!*

Verse 13: “Neither *is* it beyond the sea *that you should* say, ‘Who shall go over the sea for us to bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?’ But the Word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may do it” (vs 13-14). This is

telling you not that God’s laws are in your heart and in your mouth, but the language that you speak is in your heart and in your mouth. If you read the Word of God, you can hear it and do it. That’s what it’s saying here.

Because of this, v 15: “Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.” That’s before every human being, and everyone has to choose. God wants you to *choose the right thing*. We are also going to see the answer to addiction begins right here:

Verse 16: “In that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away... [that’s exactly what both of these men in both of these books are talking about: *a national turning away*] ...so that you will not hear...” (vs 16-17).

Wouldn’t it be interesting if all of those advocates of Christmas on Fox News and elsewhere really understood about it? I wonder, since they say they want the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth. Do they really? or Do they really want the Truth the way *they* view the Truth and want to enforce upon other people?

Bill O’Reilly also had someone tell him about Christmas, that it’s pagan and saturnalia and everything, and he just kind of flipped it off. Now, if “...you will not hear...”—that’s important.

“...but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it” (17-18).

What is the leading cause of premature death today? *Drug addicts reaching the old age of between 40 and 55!* Did they prolong their days? Think about all the teenagers that died when they got in a car and had their drunken graduation parties, etc. Did they prolong their days? *No!* You can add on many more here.

To give the reality, and lot’s of times it’s good to have a reality check, whether you believe God or not. Everyone can do this, they can go outside and stand on terra firma, the earth, and they can look up and see the heavens, and every time you do, you affirm this verse whether you agree with it or not.

(go to the next track)

Now v 19 is a witness to everyone in the world, because every human being in the world is on

the earth. They know about the earth, they know about the world. They can look up and see the sky and see the heavens. So, God makes it simple.

Verse 19: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you...” If you don’t believe a man, if you don’t believe the Word of God, the heaven and the earth have already witnessed against you—it’s very existence. What did Jesus say of His words? *‘Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.’* You can’t run and hide! Where are you going to go? As long as you’re on the earth or in the heavens, if you’re shot out on a rocket, God is witnessing to you that He is Creator, that He has given laws, commandments, statutes, judgments, and that He has commanded you to love Him. As we’re going through this, I want you to ask:

- What occupies my mind?
- What am I addicted to?

Any one of the things we have covered here? Then we will see the solution, what to do about it.

Verse 19: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing....”

Human nature is perverse, because human nature, *the carnal mind*, is enmity against God; deceives itself. *It wants to live in a state of sin and to receive all the blessings of God.* That’s an impossibility! There is a deception in it that begins at first when you are sinning which is this: There’s ‘pleasure in sin for a season,’ and then reality hits you; the circumstances around you hit you.

I recall Dolores read an article about a man who was a cocaine addict, and he had been to many different twelve-step programs to overcome his addiction. But all of those overcoming-addiction programs do not work *unless you choose* to quit being addicted! He had just gotten out of the rehab center and was on his way to buy some cocaine. Reality struck him and he remembered his kids, remembered his wife. Turned his car around, went back home and *stopped everything* from that instant on *because* he made up his mind and *chose* to do so. That’s what God is telling us here. What we are talking about is your own personal responsibility. You are responsible for your own life.

“...set before you life and death, blessing and cursing.... [What does God want you to do? *You have to choose!*] ...Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed... [descendants] ...may live, that you may love the LORD your God, *and* may obey His voice, and may cleave to Him...” (vs 19-20). That’s what God wants. Every blessing will come from God because of that; *even eternal life!*

Here is what most people don’t realize. Everyone thinks that he or she, because of

independent free choice that God has given them, that it’s ‘my choice to make and it’s my life to live.’ That is true! **However**, you have this witness against you.

Now God says, “...for He *is* your life, and the length of your days....” (v 20). What makes you keep breathing? *God originally breathed into Adam the breath of life*—didn’t He? What makes you keep breathing? *You hardly ever think about it!* How many thousands of times a day do you breathe? *Hundreds of thousands of times a day*, and figure your whole life long. Times that by 70-years, 80-years, and even some people live up to be 120 maximum. But the only way you reach whatever age you reach is because *you breathe*. God put it in you, in your system to do so, and it’s automatic, it’s involuntary. We are all breathing right now. God gave that to you. ***You live and exist because of God!***

“...for He is your life and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them” (v 20).

Brethren, that’s why we’re here in good old USA, *because of the blessing of God!* Isn’t that something? Even to the wicked, God does not take away the right to breathe, they may live shorter lives because of their sins, but God hasn’t taken it away. What all of this tells us is another thing, and we can sum it up this way when we realize that Satan is ‘the god of this world’: ***You are either under the authority of God, or you’re under the authority of Satan, and a lot of people would like to choose the middle ground, but there is no middle ground.***

So, as we go through this ask yourself:
What addiction am I hooked on?

- Is it alcohol?
- Is it drugs?
- Is it pornography?
- Is it sex?
- Is it video games?
- Is it television?
- is it music?
- Is it witchcraft?
- Is it fun and daring?
- Is it sports?
- What drives and motivates your life?

We’ll see how we can look at it. You are either under the authority of God or under the authority of Satan because he is the ‘god of this world.’ Paul wrote, ‘There are spirits and principalities at work in high places’—***which sets the agenda for Satan’s way.*** You read Rev. 12:9, he’s got the whole world deceived—right? ***The whole world!***

Now let's look at some things concerning how we think and how we act and how we behave. In what we're covering, we have to go through some basic Scriptures, but these are fundamental. This is a Scripture to learn and never, never forget:

Proverbs 14:12: **“There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the way of death.”** It seems right, natural, good, fun, exciting, thrilling, exhilarating! *Ends in death!*

Let's look at another Proverb. We're going to spend some time in the book of Proverbs because the truth is, the book of Proverbs is perhaps the most important book for anyone who has led a criminal life—been addicted to whatever addiction—to get your life straightened around, because the only way you can recover is to understand there are absolute truths: right and wrong, good and evil. The book of Proverbs tells you in simple, easy-to-understand terms.

Let's come to Proverbs 23:7, a very interesting verse. “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he...”

- What's in your heart?
- What occupies your mind?
- What are you addicted to?
- Who is your god?
- Where are you going?
- How are you going to end up?

Especially if you are in the Church and baptized, and you have any of these problems, I tell you *in the name of Jesus Christ*, you are on dangerous ground. We will cover on how you can get out of it, because *God is there to help*. But **God is not going to help you unless you repent** and understand the weaknesses that are involved.

Whatever your addiction is, whatever your secret sins are, *God knows* and He wants you to get rid of them, but **you have to choose to get rid of them! You have to choose to want God's way!** This is easy to understand, this is not complicated. God wants us to live *His way* and wants us to avoid the evil, He tells us how.

Proverbs 4:14: “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil *men*.” That's the way of transgressing the laws of God, the commandments of God.

Verse 15: “Avoid it... [don't dabble in it] ...do not go in it... [in other words, don't go that way] ... turn from it, and pass on!” All the marketers of evil, the purveyors of evil that want to ensnare you in satanic culture and drugs and addiction and sex and pornography and gambling and all the other addictions that I have mentioned.

Verse 16: “For they do not sleep except when they have done mischief...” That's exactly what David Kupelian brings out in the book *The Marketing of Evil*.

- they plan it
- they plan the response
- they plan the television
- they plan the movies

All of these things are scripted for a response from you! Every ad you see or hear is scripted for a response! Every song, every word in those songs is scripted for a response! That's why:

“...and their sleep is taken away unless they cause *some* to fall” (v 16). They would lose sleep if they started losing numbers. And I tell every teenager: **Do not get involved in MTV.**

- Do not enter into it!
- Don't turn on the channel!
- Don't go that way!
- Avoid it!
- Pass by it!

Interesting, I was in Nob Hill the other night and I couldn't resist. Here is a mother exasperated with her teenage daughter gawking and looking at these women's magazines. When you go through the checkout counter, and I have mentioned this before, every magazine is geared to women to keep them deceived and locked into *the way of the world*:

- sin
- divorce
- promiscuity
- envy
- jealousy
- lust

I will have to give Nob Hill credit, they had at the bottom, almost could hardly see it, a picture on a man's magazine with a muscle man on the front; only time I've ever seen it.

Here is this mother, and I looked at the teenaged girl, and she was looking at these and I said, ‘Hey, you need to be careful, these things are designed to make you do wrong, to keep your mind on evil.’ Her mother is sitting over there nodding her head And I said, ‘You would do well not to pay any attention to them.’ And the mother is nodding her head—yes, yes, yes!

Now here is their agenda, v 17: “For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.” To see how many people they can ensnare in it; to see how many teenage minds they can blow and corrupt.

Do yourself a favor some time, when high school gets out, go park the car and watch all of the sad teenagers pass by hooked with their music blasting in their ears, talking on their cell phones to their friends, knowing that they are going home to a home devoid of mother and father because Satan has created a world where mother and father must work and they cannot do what they need to do to take care of the family. The kids are left to their own and swamped and deluded into all kinds of evil, beginning with sex education in the third grade, maybe even kindergarten, so what do you suppose they are going to do when they get home? *Caught! Hooked! Addicted!*

Verse 19: “The way of the wicked *is* as darkness; they know not at what they stumble.” They have problems, they have difficulties; they don’t know what to do. They can’t find any answers. Their lives are a wreck; their emotions are a wreck. They have given the most precious thing that they have in sin: their lives, their minds, their bodies. And they wonder what’s wrong.

Proverbs 1:1 starts out and tells you how you can avoid this; here is the very first thing: “The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.” A lot of these are David’s proverbs that Solomon put out. But Solomon, as we have covered, is an example of going against everything that he was taught. So, why should we be surprised if people in the Church become like people in the world? *Solomon did, and led the way!*

Verse 2: “To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding.” Of course, that’s what everyone wants; *to be smart, to be intelligent, to be wise!*

Verse 3: “To receive the instruction of wisdom, righteousness, and judgment, and equity; to give prudence to the simple...” (vs 3-4). In other words, to give you the thinking capacity to understand right and wrong, good and evil, blessing and cursing.

“...knowledge and discretion to the young man [or woman]” (v 4). Let’s see if you’re smart or not. It doesn’t matter what your age is.

Verse 5: “A wise man will hear and will increase learning, and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsel.” Doesn’t that sound an awful lot like Matt. 13 that we read? *Yes, indeed!* What you need to understand is this: the Word of God agrees with itself over and over and over again; it doesn’t contradict itself.

Verse 6: “To understand a proverb and its interpretation, the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.... [Here is how you begin life]: ...**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge....**”

(vs 6-7). What does that mean? *That is to give you a conscience and a sense of right and wrong!* It begins with the fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 9:10: **“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...”** It doesn’t matter what your IQ may say on an SAT test, because many wise men are fools when it comes to understanding God’s way.

“...and the knowledge of the Holy *is* understanding” (v 10). In other words, to understand the Word of God gives you understanding so you can live and cope in this world and not be drug down, and that’s not in the way of a pun, but to be dragged into things because you do not have the will power to resist. You have to have the will power to resist and *the beginning of that will power is the fear of the Lord*. And everything that Satan does is to whittle away at your conscience; to drag you further, and further, and further down into the cesspool of sin to where you have no conscience at all! *Then he’s got you!* Have you ever talked to a person who has no conscience? *It is difficult, indeed! Pitiful! Sorrowful!* But the only way that they can come out of it, is to begin to know right and wrong. Start at the beginning again. That’s why it says here, **“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge....”**

Proverbs 1:7 “...*but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.” What are you? A fool? *or* Wise? How the Proverbs make it righteousness or sin, goodness or evil, all the way through.

Verse 8: “My son, hear the instruction of your father... [this is how we know that this is from David to Solomon] ...and forsake not the law of your mother.” What’s the first thing that teenagers are known to do? *Reject the instruction of their parents, and rebel against them!* Isn’t that true? *Yes, indeed!*

I know, and you know, and every person alive knows that when you were a teenager and you got out on your own that you did things that your mom and dad never knew about and you never told them. Hopefully, you have been able to repent of them. That’s the pull of human nature. The way that you overcome the pull of human nature is to understand that God gave you fathers and mothers to teach you the right way. Today, there are very few that teach the right way, for they themselves have been compromised in the generation preceding you.

Now, here is what’s going to happen. You want everything to go right in your life as a young person? *Then listen to the instruction of your father, and the law of your mother!*

Verse 9: “For they *shall be* an ornament of grace to your head and chains of honor... [of

decoration and honor] ...around your neck.” That means

- it’s going to give you strength.
- it’s going to give you the ability to say, ‘no!’
- it is going to give you **the ability to not get involved in transgressing the laws of God**

—to get involved in drugs, or sex, or music.

Friends and Peer Pressure

Now then, let’s talk about *friends and peer pressure* because all teenagers, young people have been made to believe through the educational system through television, through movies, through everything else that they have to conform to the teenagers, and have something made special for them, because after all, ‘we’re different!’ And, of course, your parents don’t know what it’s like to be a teen; never thinking that their parents were young once.

When you grow up in a family, you look at your father and mother, they’re already grown up—right? You don’t think of them as being little at one time. This is how Satan has divided it, ‘Oh don’t listen to your parents; they’re old fashioned. We have new modern things. You need this; you need that; you need the other thing. Listen to this music; watch that video program; get involved in this video game.’ And most video games are almost pure Satanism and occultism. Have your own cell phone so you can talk to your friends. Get your music and blast it into your ears—*so Satan can totally occupy your mind all the time*—and have friends that agree with you.

Verse 10: “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.” It’s your choice! Same way if you are an adult and you’re addicted to pornography and you go online and turn it on, and you sneak around and don’t let your wife know, don’t let anyone else know until your life is already captured and nearly destroyed! Same way with women. There are 30-million women hooked on porn—online porn—and probably that many men or more. So, we are dealing with close to a third of the population of America, hooked on porn one way or the other, then comes drugs, then comes gambling, then comes all of these other things.

Verse 11: “If they say, ‘Come with us...’” Let’s form a club. That goes clear up into adult life—doesn’t it? Don’t they have secret societies? Secret clubs? *Yes!*

“...let us lie in wait for blood...” (v 11). This is gang related. Do we have problems with gangs? *Yes!*

“...we will watch secretly for the innocent without cause” (v 11). Do they have crimes in the cities based on that? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 12: “Let us swallow them up alive as the grave, and whole, as those who go down into the pit. we shall find all precious substance; we shall fill our houses *with* plunder; cast in your lot among us, and let us have one purse” (vs 12-14).

Now in the good little old wonderful town of Hollister, California, they just recently broke up a crime ring, organized by two adult women. They had teenagers that would go out and in the daytime break into homes and steal things: steal cars, drive around and watch where a car is running, let one of them out, jump in the car and drive away POOF! your car is gone! Go in the house and steal things, and then they had the audacity—they shouldn’t have done this because when they did this, they really got the people upset—to go into a house and guess what they found, nine Labrador blonde puppies worth hundreds of dollars, so they stole them. That got them! They were still nursing from their mother and they were about five to six weeks old. That’s how they got caught, peddling this. They went into the house, and they found the house full of all these stolen goods that the police in Hollister had been chasing down all of these things for months! That’s to say nothing of the other thing: There was even a *gang shooting* in Hollister!

But what does God say: ‘your choice.’ Peer pressure: ‘Oh, you aren’t macho if you don’t join us.’ Or like girls, and there are girl gangs and girl things, too, yes!

Verse 15: “My son, do not walk in the way with them! Keep back your foot from their path.” Don’t go with them!

Are you willing to stand alone for the Truth of God and to obey God? *or* To go along with sinners because you need friends? Are they your friends if they lead you into sin? *That’s what you need to ask!* We live in a respectable neighborhood. A respectable neighborhood today is no longer respectable. Dolores told me this morning—I didn’t hear it because I went to bed early—that there was a fist fight and a possible shooting across the street in front of our house. Good thing I was asleep. So, it’s reaching down; that’s what we read there in Jer. 6. Everyone is given over to evil! Amazing thing!

Verse 16: “For their feet run to evil and make haste to shed blood.... [that’s quoted in Rom. 3] ...Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird, but they lie in wait for their *own* blood...”

(vs 16-18). Sooner or later it's going to come back on them, after they have done evil to other people, of course.

"...they watch secretly for their *own* lives. So *are* the ways of everyone who gets gain by violence, who takes away the life of its owners" (vs 18-19). You can take and apply that to anything, and if you are involved in addiction, then you are involved in this way.

The rest of the chapter is really quite an important one because ***God has not left this world without the knowledge of basic right and wrong.*** He is not calling the world, but He has not left them without the basic knowledge of right and wrong, otherwise God could not hold them accountable for their behavior. Because 'where there is no law there is no sin,' but *there is law; therefore, there is sin!*

Verse 20: "Wisdom cries outside; she utters her voice in the streets; she cries in the chief place of gathering, in the openings of the gates; in the city she utters her words, *saying*, 'How long will you love simplicity, simple ones?....'" (vs 20-22). That means *stupid ones*. Will you love *stupidity*? In the Greek it is 'idiotes.' I don't know what it is in the Hebrew. But that's where we get the word *idiot* today. The Spanish Bible says, they are mocking what is right and thinking that nothing wrong will come upon them.

"...And will scorners delight in their scorning? And will fools hate knowledge?" (v 22).

Every time you do something wrong, you have a chance to change. You don't have to be hooked in it. Just like this cocaine addict was on his way to the man who sold it to him, the dealer, and it finally dawned on him that he better quit. So, he turned and stopped. ***Every time that evil comes along, you have a chance to turn and stop.***

Verse 23: "Turn back at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you." Everybody has a chance. If you don't, which is what this world is coming to, let me ask this:

- What are you going to do with your next chance to change and repent?
- What are you going to do the next time you want to take a drink?
- The next time you take a drug?
- The next time you go into a casino?
- The next time you go to online porn?
- The next time you go to online gambling?
- What are you going to do?
- What are you going to do the next time you want to commit adultery with your neighbor's wife or husband? W

- What are you going to do when all the kids want you to go with them?
- **What is your choice?**

When you reject God you reject choice, *you refuse Truth*, and then God says this, v 24: "Because I called, and you refused *to* hearken, I stretched out my hand, and no one paid attention; but you have despised all my counsel... [you counted it as nothing] ...and would have none of my reproof..." (vs 24-25).

You don't want any correction; you don't want anyone telling you what to do. When you reach that point, that you have

- no conscience
- no sense of right and wrong
- no sense of good and evil
- completely seared your conscience

—that you don't care for anyone but yourself and your addiction—and whatever it is that runs your life:

- whether you are young
- whether you are old
- whether you are in between

all of those things are there.

Verse 26: "I also will laugh at your calamity..." You're going to have a lot of trouble and it's coming! Happens in the way of accidents, bankruptcy, lying, cheating, stealing, sexually transmitted diseases, of which there are probably over a hundred different varieties.

"...I will mock when your fear comes; when your calamity comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when trouble and pain come upon you. [Why?] ...then they shall call upon me, but I will not answer..." (vs 26-28). That's one place you never want to get in your life, that you have disregarded God so much and have scorned everything of God so badly, that when you are in the deep pit of your troubles, ***God is not going to hear you because you won't repent!***

"...they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, they would have none of my counsel; they despised all my correction" (v 28-30). Your life is going to come upon you the way you laid it out.

Verse 31: "Therefore, they shall eat the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices. For the waywardness of the simple shall slay them, and the complacency of fools destroys them. But whoever hearkens to me shall dwell safely and shall be secure without fear of harm" (vs 31-33).

The Book of Proverbs *gives you the foundation where you can begin to sort out*

- right and wrong
- good and evil
- truth
- knowledge
- understanding

—and the way of God so you can get your life squared around. But *you have to choose, and you have to choose God's way.*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 13:10-17
- 2) 2 Timothy 3:1-8, 13
- 3) Jeremiah 6:13-19
- 4) Isaiah 5:20
- 5) Deuteronomy 30:11-20
- 6) Proverbs 14:12
- 7) Proverbs 23:7
- 8) Proverbs 4:14-17, 19
- 9) Proverbs 1:1-7
- 10) Proverbs 9:10
- 11) Proverbs 1: 7-33

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Jeremiah 23
- Psalm 111:10
- 2 Chronicles 35
- Revelation 12:9
- Romans 3

Also referenced:

Sermon: *Spirit of Sodom*

Books:

- *Brokenness, the Forgotten Factor of Prayer* by Mickey Bonner
- *War Over Christmas* by Juan Williams
- *Marketing of Evil* by David Kupelian

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The Addicted Society II Addictions

Fred R. Coulter

We look around the world, especially those of us who are in our senior years; we are aghast at what is happening and taking place, and yet, in the process of time this country has been brought down to a level of evil that is permeating the whole society and permeating the whole world. It truly fulfills what Rev.12:9 says, that Satan is ‘deceiving the whole world.’ I want to talk a little bit about what happens to a society and why it is so pervasive.

Proverbs 1:20 “Wisdom cries outside; she utters her voice in the streets.” What does this mean: *wisdom cries out*? What happens to a society when there is no wisdom? You can go back and you can read the history of America and how it was founded on Biblical principles, in the main. And yet, the Achilles Heel, which killed the whole thing, was Sunday. You read what they were teaching concerning the rest of the commandments of God. They made people learn them. They taught children to learn them. What happens when that takes place? What happens to a society when that takes place?

God blesses anyone—whether in the letter of the Law or the spirit of the Law—who obeys Him. We will see that God judges nations. Then we will see what happens to other people who go along and get along and allow all of these things to take place.

Proverbs 14:34: “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” This is a truism: You take the commandments of God, which are righteousness, and you evaluate any nation or society, the closer they are to the laws of God and keeping them as the laws of the land:

- the greater the nation is
- the more prosperous the nation is
- the lower the crime rate
- the lower the rate of
 - ✓ infidelity
 - ✓ homosexuality
 - ✓ thievery
 - ✓ disobedience to parents

—they are all lower. It is a society what you would call *righteous*. I’m sure there were times in American history when we came fairly close to that.

Notice the other half, and this is what’s important concerning the book of Proverbs. As we’ll understand later, the only way to separate *good* thinking from *stinking* thinking is to study the Proverbs. The Proverbs tell us right from wrong, good from evil, all the way through.

It says: “...but sin is a reproach to any people” (v 34)—and the margin says *to nations*. So,

when a nation comes to a point that it goes against God, goes against the Truth of God, then they’re going to find themselves in grave and terrible trouble.

Let’s see what happens, because we are going to understand that this wickedness comes from the very leaders who are supposed to keep the nation righteous.

Psalm 7:9: “O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous...” There is a division. Even in the midst of all the things that are going on, God still can separate His people.

“...for the righteous God tries the hearts and reins” (v 9). That’s important that we understand that every human being is being judged by God *by their behavior*. That’s how He does it.

Verse 11: “God is a righteous judge, and a God Who has indignation every day.”

Here’s what’s happened: When those who don’t believe in God control education, government and law, then you have what we have in America today. There was quite a good documentary on Fox News—*Church and State*—and it showed how that this nation went down the tubes, *when the Supreme Court began getting rid of God!* That’s when it went down. Satan has a plan. When they had the Scopes trial to get rid of teaching of God and about creation in the classroom, now they can’t get rid of it. Parents cannot even have a four-paragraph, intelligent design read to the students on the first day of biology class—only once!—because the ones who have done this are those who cannot allow God in their thoughts.

A recent poll says up to 94% of people believe in God. How is that 6% can cause such distress? ***Well, the truth is, the way they believe in God is far different from the way that God says they ought to believe in Him!***

Always remember this: James says, ***‘You believe there’s one God, you do well—the demons do and tremble!’*** How do you believe in God? It’s one thing to believe *in* God, it’s another thing to *believe* God. That’s the difference! In that special that they ran—*Church and State*—it comes down where we are now, that the atheists are really controlling everything that is done. One of the most fatal judgments made was by Sandra Day O’Connor in the opinion that she wrote that said: ‘in the expression of religion, if it offends someone it should not be allowed.’ That’s where we are on all

the flap that's going on. There is a real spiritual warfare going on!

Psalm 14:1: "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God!'..." What do they do? *They get attractive, good-looking spokeswomen and men—* with the exception of Newdow—*and say, 'I don't believe in God and I'm normal'!* So, people being tolerant say, 'Why should I be critical?' The reason they make that judgment is because *they can't discern the difference between Truth and error* and they cannot be willing to bring a judgment against someone attractive, to bring a negative or condemning judgment against them. Satan knows that!

But God says: "...They are corrupt; they have done abominable works; there is none who does good.... [God is seeing all of this going on] ...The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek *after* God" (vs 1-2).

Jesus made a statement that 'When the Son of man comes will He find faith on the earth?' I don't think that was in reference to the world! *That has got to be in reference to the Church!* What we are seeing more and more is that people want to bring the world into the Church. That's what they've done with Protestantism, and Protestantism is going down the tubes fast, and they want to compromise with the world. They want to get as close to the world as they can and still be accepted of God. Now, if that isn't pure Laodicean thinking, I don't know what is.

God says, v 3: "They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not *even* one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, those who devour My people as men eat bread and do not call upon the LORD?" (vs 3-4). That's what they're doing.

Psalm 9:16: "The LORD has made Himself known. He has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. Selah. The wicked shall be turned into the grave, *and* all the nations that forget God" (vs 16-17). That's what's happening! This nation is forgetting God—we will see that a little bit more!

- Why is that?
- How does it come to this?
- Where are we headed with it?

Let's understand what the *warfare* is. We're going to understand how this comes about. We're going to see how it's taking place today right in front of eyes. We need to see this and realize how much we have to do this every day.

Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His

strength.... [that's the only sanity; that's the only way out] ...Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.... [he is clever, slick and promotional] ...because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against **the spiritual power of wickedness in high places**" (vs 10-12). What does that mean? We've already seen *how it is with the Supreme Court!* We've already seen *how it is with religion!*

Let's look at something here that's important for us to understand and important for us to realize what is taking place. As we know about Babylon the Great, remember, there is an economic aspect—business and economy—with Babylon the Great. There is religion! There is government!

from: *The Marketing of Evil: A Quiet American Revolution* by David Kupelian

pg 57-58—Common sense provides ample proof to a rational person that the First Amendment's religion clauses couldn't possibly mean what the ACLU and many of today's judges say they mean, since there is simply no evidence of it in history....

Anti-Christian Liberation Union—that's what it is!

We are deluding ourselves into believing there is some neutral ground between good and evil...

This is why the book of Proverbs is so important to get straightened out in an addictive society. You have to have right and wrong; good and evil; Truth and error.

...and that this is where the government is supposed to be. But such a neutral ground, if such can even be said to exist, is in itself evil.

pg 61—Chapter three: [The Killer Culture—Who's Selling Sex and Rebellion to Your Children](#)

Here's the aspect of it that has the 'stage has been set' by the elimination of God and by the problems that we have in education, and it's coming right into the churches.

pgs 64-65—[Merchants of Cool](#): "They want to be cool. They are impressionable, and they have the cash.... [and very little, if any, parental supervision] ...They are corporate America's \$150-billion dream." That's the opening statement in PBS's stunning 2001 *Frontline* documentary: 'The Merchants of Cool,' narrated by author and media critic Douglas Rushkoff. What emerges in the following sixty minutes is a scandalous

portrait of how major corporations—Ciacom, Disney, AOL/Time Warner, and others—study America’s children like laboratory rats in order to sell them billions of dollars in merchandise by tempting, degrading and corrupting them. Think that’s a bit of an overstatement? It’s an understatement.

And you can see what has happened! Here’s what the problem is:

“When you’ve got a few gigantic transnational corporations, each one loaded down with debt, competing madly for as much shelf space and brain space as they can take,” says NYU communications Professor Mark Crispin-Miller, “they’re going to do whatever they think works the fastest and with the most people, which means that they will drag standards down.”

This is what has happened.

“It’s a blizzard of brands, all competing for the same kids,” explains Rushkoff. “To win teens’ loyalty, marketers believe, they have to speak their language the best. So they study them carefully, as an anthropologist would an exotic native culture. Today,” Rushkoff discloses, “five enormous companies are responsible for selling nearly all of youth culture. These are the true merchants of cool: Rupert Murdoch’s Newscorp...

Though He owns Fox News—which you do and most people think is fair and balanced and good news—he also has a stake in MTV.

...Disney, Viacom, Universal Vivendi, and AOL/Time Warner.” The documentary demonstrates how big corporations literally send spies to infiltrate young people’s social settings to gather intelligence on what they can induce these children to buy next.

As I read this next part, I want you to understand that today, ***the most dangerous thing you can allow your children to do is watch MTV*** and the major sitcoms on the major television networks: NBC, ABC, CBS, UPS and so forth. Another thing: These entertainment corporations control all the music that is put out. Music is the most devastating and the most controlling factor that captures the mind of children. They are designed to make them rebellious, turn them away from the their parents, cause them to not believe in God, get them involved in sex and promiscuity and drugs ***as a normal behavior!***

“The entertainment companies, which are a handful of massive conglomerates that own four of the five music companies that

sell 90 percent of the music in the United States...

Wonder why you can’t get any good music anymore? *That’s why!*

...those same companies also own all the film studios, all the major TV networks, all the TV stations pretty much in the 10 largest markets,” University of Illinois communications professor Robert McChesney reveals in the documentary. “They own all or part of every single commercial cable channel.”

And to show you how they make their money: They tie MTV together—they bunch it—with four channels on the cable. They have it like with Discovery or History, and they bunch it together with those, and in order to get the ones you want you have to buy MTV. They say, ‘We can block it.’ *Okay, then block it.* But what happens? *Even though it’s blocked, when I pay my cable television bill, a certain portion goes to MTV.* Here’s what they do:

pg 66—“They look at the teen market as part of this massive empire that they’re colonizing....”

MTV: What about the cable channel that positions itself as champion of today’s teens and preteens—champions of their music, their rebellious free spirit, and their genuine, if ever-changing, notions of what is “cool”? Whatever else MTV might be, at least it’s interested in kids, right? Sure, just like the lion is interested in the gazelle.

“Everything on MTV is a commercial,” explains McChesney. “That’s all that MTV is. Sometimes it’s an explicit advertisement paid for by a company to sell a product. Sometimes it’s going to be a video for a music company there to sell music. Sometimes it’s going to be the set that’s filled with trendy clothes and stuff there to sell a look that will include products on that set. Sometimes it will be a show about an upcoming movie paid for by the studio, though you don’t know it, to hype a movie that’s coming out from Hollywood. But everything’s an infomercial. There is no non-commercial part of MTV.”

So, this is how they make the *addicted society*. Just like a drug-pusher, they are, standing on a corner giving out free drugs and then come back and we’ll give you some very cheaply. Also, the law is on the side of the kids, that parents can’t keep control of what goes on in kid’s room. They lock themselves in there and they have their porn; they

have their sex; they have their drugs; they have their MTV; they have their cell phones; they have all of this sort of thing.

As I said before, the generation that is now is the generation of Matt. 24 and it is building itself for a slaughter! You can understand why God is going to absolutely wipe the face of the earth and why there are going to be dead bodies strewn from one end of the horizon to the other end of the horizon, because of what this generation is doing right now. We'll see how that happened before. For example: He talks about the midriff, about teens running around showing their midriff. Where did it first start? How did such a thing happen? *It started on MTV!* Women are involved in it, as well as teens, because it's the *cool* thing to do.

Let me read you about this one music group that is captivating; they keep changing so they can captivate them. Isn't it interesting: *captivating!* Whatever you are captivated by, *you are addicted!* And if you are captivated by something it occupies your mind. Whatever occupies your mind is what you are! Here's a new group out called *Insane Clown Posse*—that's a music group.

pg 69—A member explains: "Everybody that likes our music feels a super connection.... You feel like you're the only one that knows about it."

"These are the extremes," intones Rushkoff, "to which teens are willing to go to ensure the authenticity of their own scene. It's the front line of the teen cultural resistance: Become so crude, so intolerable, and break so many rules that you become indigestible."

Amazing! Isn't it? *No limits!* That's where it's coming to. *Everything! No limits on anything!* Remember, they kicked Howard Stern off one of the radio stations, fined them a great fine. So, what did they do? *Now they're going to have satellite radio on Sirius*—which is the name of the channel—and he can say anything, do anything.

Even Bill O'Rielly interview him on Fox News, and he virtually told Bill O'Rielly, 'I'm going to be gross, evil, and as pornographic as I can.' And he said at 'five-years-old he had a dream that he would do this.' Whose agent gave the dream? Now we're into *no limits!* Look at the way they dress. Look at the way they do.

pg 71—Guess what? Those Hollywood depictions [of Sodom and Gomorrah] don't even *begin* to capture the shocking reality of what is going on in America's culture today—they're not even close.

First of all, there's sex. Very simply, there seem to be neither boundaries nor taboos

anymore when it comes to sex. Anything goes—from heterosexual to homosexual to bi-, trans-. Poly-, and you-don't-want-to-know sexual experiences.

It gets into bestiality and things like this on an open basis and they cannot even convict people in the law of the land for bestiality anymore.

pg. 7—Sex has become a ubiquitous, cheap, meaningless quest for ever-greater thrills.... Moreover, with the evolution of online pornography, every type of sexual experience has literally been shoved under the noses of millions of Americans against their will.

I will have to say: *with their will!*

Then it talks about body-piercing. It talks about other things. Then they get to the extremes, those who are going out were called 'bug chasers,' and what do they do? Those are young men seeking out other men who have HIV and AIDS to have sexual relations with them so they can receive the disease.

Let's see who's to blame in this. *Everyone is to blame!* Then we will see what happens when everyone is to blame. One place in the Jeremiah. God said, 'there is no Truth!' So, when we get to the point that there is no longer any Truth—and we are getting closer and closer to it. Now you understand why there are such abominable translations of the Bible out there:

- to mock God
- to mock the Word of God
- to get rid of the Word of God

In America it all started when *they did not keep the Sabbath with the rest of the Ten Commandments*. That left the door open! Now, that may sound a little extreme, but that is true, because you may know about God; you may have principles concerning the Word of God, which you live by; but you do not know God and *you are not sanctified by God unless you keep His Sabbaths—He says so!* (Exo. 31)

So, here's what happens, and this is going to happen to us, Isaiah 3:1: "For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread and the whole stay of water." As we're reading this, let's understand that it did happen; let's understand that these are part of the punishments that God brings, because of sin.

Notice who it affects, v 2: "the man of might and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honorable man and the adviser, and the cunning

charmer and the skillful enchanter. ‘And I will give young lads *to be* their princes, and capricious children shall rule over them. And the people shall be crushed, every man by another, and every man by his neighbor; the young shall rise up against the old, and the base against the honorable.’” (vs 1-5). And we’re going to see:

- they are *corrupt*
- they are degenerate
- they are *satanic*

That’s what’s happening.

Verse 5: “And I will give young lads *to be* their princes, and capricious children shall rule over them. And the people shall be crushed, every man by another, and every man by his neighbor...” (vs 4-5). You don’t know who your neighbor is; you don’t know what the kids are like; you try and be nice with them.

Like happened in one case. It was a 14-year-old boy and an 8-year-old girl. She came over to his house and they became friends and then she went into the boy’s bedroom, and lo and behold, he had his own computer with a big sign to the parents: Keep Out! Of course, the court will uphold that as ‘private property’ for the children against the parents. He was involved in porn and all kinds of stuff. He got involved with the 8-year-old girl, killed her, didn’t know what to do with her; stuffed her body between the mattress and the box-springs and wasn’t discovered until the body started stinking and they had to find out what was going on. You can’t even trust your neighbor; like it says here: *oppressed!*

“...the young shall rise up against the old...” (v 5). Just recently a bus driver, because of the yakking of one child, put some tape over the mouth of the child to keep it quiet, and *he* was reprimanded and moved to a different job.

“...and the base against the honorable” (v 5). And it’s going to get so bad

Verse 9: “The look of their faces witnesses against them; and they declare their sin like Sodom. They do not hide *it!* Woe to their soul! For they have rewarded evil to themselves.” That’s exactly what it is in this society.

Now, here’s one little verse to give you hope about your life, v 10: “Say to the righteous that *it shall be* well with him; for **they shall eat the fruit of their doings.**” That is of righteousness and obedience toward God.

Verse 11: “Woe to the wicked! For the evil doing of his hand will be given to him.” We’re going to see *whatever you are addicted to, you’re going to receive.*

Verse 12: “*As for My people, **children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.***...”

Every writer, just as this writer of *The Marketing of Evil*, shows that the degradation of the family began when women demanded equal rights

- it was equal *political rights*
- then equal *working rights*
- then equal *sexual rights*
- then *we want all of men’s rights*, as well as, *all women’s rights*,

—and men have none! That’s where we are!

“...Oh, My people, those who lead you cause *you* to err and destroy the way of your paths” (v 12). It’s been planned, calculated, inspired by Satan the devil and his Babylon corporations of the world.

- it is intended to get us addicted
- it is intended to tear us down
- it is intended to make the nation immoral and corrupt and debased

And according to the *doctrine of Balaam* to sell them to sin so that God must judge them, and *it is going to happen! Without a doubt!*

Verse 13: “The LORD stands up to plead His case, and stands up to judge the people. The LORD will enter into judgment with the elders of His people, and their kings: ‘For you have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor *is* in your houses. What do you mean? You crush My people and grind the faces of the poor?’ says the Lord, GOD of hosts” (vs 13-15). Then it talks about what the daughters of Zion do and what they have done. And it’s going to come just exactly as He says here:

Verse 16: “And the LORD says, ‘Because the daughters of Zion are proud...’” All you have to do when you go through the checkout stand look at the ‘haughty’ faces of all women on these magazines, designed to keep all women brainwashed into the foolishness of the feminist movement and promotion of homosexuality and lesbianism and the fashions design.

“...and have walked with stretched out necks and ogling with *their* eyes, walking and mincing *as* they go, and making a tinkling with their feet... [having ornaments and things like this] ...therefore, the LORD will strike with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will uncover their secret parts” (vs 16-17)—and making them naked in public, and we go full circle to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now, what happened in Sodom and Gomorrah? *Well, Lot should have moved!* Look at how disjointed and dysfunctional his family was. When it came time to go, he told his sons—they

didn't want to go. They probably said, 'Well, this is cool. We understand this. We're not affected by it; we can keep it away from us. We'll be fine.' And what happened? *They died with it! They died with the destruction!* Even Lot's wife didn't believe. She had to turn around and look when she was told: 'Don't turn around and look.' *She turn to a pillar of salt.* Josephus says that the tourists come and 'view that pillar of salt to this day.' Amazing, isn't it? Let's see how God does this. Then, Lot's daughter's felt free to molest their own dad, so we have Moab and Ammon.

Jeremiah 18:7: "If at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up and to pull it down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them. And if at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build it and to plant it; if it does evil in My sight, that it not obey My voice, then I will repent of the good with which I said I would do them good" (vs 7-10). And that's exactly what has happened here in America over the last 200 years.

Verse 11: "Now, therefore, speak to the men of Judah, and to the people of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "Behold, I am forming evil against you, and devising a plan against you. Return now, each one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.'" That's their responsibility. For any addict to say, 'Oh, I'm helpless and can't stop it,' you're kidding yourself. You don't want to change. All the misery you go through hasn't convinced you you ought to change. It is your responsibility to change.

Verse 12: "And they said, 'There is no hope; but we will walk after our own ways, and we will each one do according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.'" We're just about there again—aren't we? *Yes, indeed!* God is going to judge, not only in individual lives. What happens when people get to this point? Instead of there being wisdom in the street, let's put it this way: You are under two authorities:

1. The authority of God
2. The authority of Satan

—and if you put yourself under the authority of God, there's going to be wisdom—there's going to be a *spirit of wisdom*. So, we're talking about the spirit that is permeated in a society because of righteousness or because of sin. The more sin, and the more that people give themselves over to Satan, the more demons that are allowed to come to control. You have *the spirit of whoredoms*; the *spirit of addiction!* Rather than the spirit, which comes from righteousness. God's Spirit is not devoid in the

world. Where there is a group of people that do righteousness and do what God wants, they have a *spirit of doing right*. When you have the permeating of evil, more and more evil comes, and more and more demons are let loose to control.

Let's go back to some of the other things that I have given in the past years. When was the first Parliament of Religions of the World? *1893!* When was the challenge concerning Sabbath and Sunday between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestants? *1893!* Re-read *Rome's Challenge to the Protestants!* And like I said, ***keeping Sunday was the key to opening the door to evil!***

Now, when they had this great witness in 1893 and they rejected it, when did we start coming apart as a nation? *Right about that time—step-by-step-by-step!*

(go to the next track)

Addiction: Let's talk about how much it costs in America—all kinds of addiction! It's one of the most costly public health problem in the United States. It's very simple to solve: *quit promoting it!* Singapore has a policy: If you are caught with drugs, you're executed—that's it! No appeal! No nothing! If you're selling them, you're dead! That would end it, but people don't want to do it. One way or the other, if you're addicted to it, are you not the walking dead. So, what is the difference if you are executed for doing it.

You might give those who are addicts a chance to quit, but what it says from a copulation of various websites:

Addiction Statistics—It is a progressive syndrome, which means it increases in severity over time unless it's treated.

Do we have more drugs than ever before? *Yes, indeed!*

Substance abuse is characterized by frequent relapse or return to the abused substance. Substance abusers often make repeated attempts to quit before they are successful.

Which is true. They go to rehab centers sometimes two, three, four, five times before they finally get it turned around.

In 1995 the economic cost of substance abuse in the United States exceeded \$414-billion. Healthcare costs attributed to it: \$114-billion.

So, you are dealing with over a half-trillion dollars a year! And then they list all different addictions and the solution for them.

- sexual addiction
- gambling addiction

- drug addiction
- alcohol addiction
- eating addiction
- tobacco addiction—causes more sickness and disease than anything else

If you are an addict, you've got to quit being an addict instead of substituting one thing for your addiction.

Alcoholics: When they go to AA they have candy. And candy is only *a substitute* for the alcohol, because what you're getting, you're getting the carbohydrates from the sugar which alcohol is.

Smoking: Instead of taking cocaine or something like that, now you smoke. Instead of taking 'meth,' now you smoke. And 'meth' is the most destructive of all; it stays in your system, it stays in your liver and kicks out every once in a while when you are recovering and makes you angst and angry and all of those sorts of things.

What we need to do is realize how pervasive *addiction* is. **All of these addictions change the chemistry of your brain!**

One person overcame alcohol addiction by becoming an ice cream addict—and ate it by the gallons.

Eating addiction: I want to cover two things on eating addictions. Eating addictions come from:

1. eating the wrong things—you don't know what is nutritious and what is not
2. you're so concerned about your appearance—either too fat or too thin

Anorexia and bulimia and bingeing and all of those affects 5-million American men and women. Fifteen percent of young women have substantially disordered attitudes toward eating and eating behaviors.

Diet soda addiction: You can always tell if someone is addicted to a soda. Sodas are as bad as alcohol! You can tell because they carry a bottle of soda with them and they take the top off and they take a little swig and nip on it and they put the top back on and they walk along and carry the bottle.

One thing about *diet sodas*: Aspartame is the major sweetener that is used—and some of these other substitute sweeteners are just as bad—is a protein. When it gets into the system, it causes a carbohydrate craving, because your body is imbalanced without enough carbohydrates. People believe that if they eat carbohydrates—those that are low in fat—they don't gain weight. But it causes them to gain even more weight. Those who are

addicted to the diet sodas generally become obese over a period of time because of that. They get into the habit and pattern of drinking more diet sodas so they won't gain weight.

Fat-free foods is one of the worst things you can have, and also you need to realize that your body needs a certain amount of the right kinds of fat. Your brain is made up mostly of fat and cholesterol anyway.

There are many, many different addictions!

Prescription pain killer addictions

Pornography:

Let's understand something that's important. There are two things that Satan wants to capture that you have and that you alone are responsible for:

1. your mind
2. your sex organs

If he can capture you on those two things, he's got you! This is why *'guard the door of your mind,'* because *'as a man thinks in his heart so he is.'* Let me just read some of the things that I have marked on the important problems in pornography, because we are under the *spirit of whoredoms*. We are under the *spirit of Sodom and Gomorrah*.

Internet pornography: 2.5-billion e-mails per day are pornographic. Thirty-four percent of church-going *women* say they have intentionally visited porn websites online. Eighty-one pastors surveyed—74 men, 7 women—98% were exposed to porn; 43% intentionally accessed a sexually explicit website.

MSNBC ran a trap—a chat-room with kids—where they made out as if they were a little kid looking for something online, and they had come to a home. They had a Catholic priest; a banker, a rabbi and all walks of life come in there and they wanted to see how far this guy would go.

So, he said, 'Oh yes, by the way, come into the garage, it will be open, and undress and then come into the house.' Sure enough he did! Then the next day, he said, *'I need help' and all this sort of thing.* The next day they trapped him again, and said, 'Meet me down at McDonald's.' So he came down to McDonald's hoping to get a pedophilia relationship with a kid. They all said, 'This is the first time I've ever done it.' What's that old saying: 'Liar, liar, pants on fire!'

In 2004 there were 272-million pornographic web-pages; 2.5-billion e-mails—which is 8% of all e-mails; 100-thousand websites offering illegal child pornography; and 72-million worldwide visitors to pornographic websites.

They even have websites setup for kids to order little innocent things and then download pornography right in front of them. You have to be careful of that.

One in five kids have been propositioned for cyber-net sex. Pornography and cable television and videos: There are 800-million rentals each year of adult videos and DVDs. Cable companies brought in revenue of \$177-million from sexually explicit pay-per-view programming. Americans spend \$10-billion annually on pornography. Thirty-eight percent of adults believe it's *morally acceptable* to look at pictures of nudity or explicit sexual behavior.

They say there's nothing wrong with pornography! Here's a section on teens and sex and sexually transmitted diseases.

Proverbs 5 needs to be taught to every child beginning at five-years-old: ***guard your mind and guard your pants!***

Proverbs 5:1: "My son, attend to my wisdom; bow your ear to my understanding; that you may keep discretion, and that your lips may keep knowledge.... [you've got to be taught] ...For the lips of a wanton woman... [or man, girl or boy] ...drip as a honeycomb, and her mouth *is* smoother than oil" (vs 1-3).

Sounds good—freedom! 'Oh, you can take a pill and not get pregnant. Oh, if you're pregnant you don't even have to tell your folks and you can have the school take you over there on school day and get an abortion.' Isn't that wonderful! You've just destroyed your life, because once you give up your mind and give up your sex organs to promiscuity, you're life is never the same. I can tell you this right now, that most of the marital problems that people are having today—*not in the Church and in the Church*—because of these kinds of sexual behaviors when they were younger. It still effects them to this day! ***Impress upon your children you are dealing with the 'issues of life'*** (Prov. 4:23).

- your life
- your health
- your ability to think, to reason, to live, to work

Verse 4: "But her end *is as* bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on the grave. She does not ponder the path of life; her ways are unstable—... [going to change the tactics, but the end result is the same] ...you cannot know *them*" (vs 4-6).

If you allow your children, or your teenagers to watch MTV, get involved in all of these video games—and you do not know what they are doing or where they are going—they are so sexually active today, it's almost impossible to trust them, to leave alone anywhere! They demand their privacy. Not so they can study the Word of God, not so they can pray to God, but so that they can *play* together—male and female; male to male; female to female—and have promiscuous sex and everything is all right. You get home from work and you don't know what's going on. Today, in this corrupt Sodom and Gomorrah society, parents even encourage their children to have sex at home.

Here's the advice—we're going see this again and again: ***The only way to not get caught up into it is to avoid it—period!***

Verse 7: "Now, therefore, hear me, O you children, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. Remove your ways far from her..." (vs 7-8). Whatever the temptation is sexually, get away from it! You have no control if you stand there and are enticed in it.

"...and do not come near the door of her house, ***lest you give your honor unto others*** and your years unto the cruel; lest strangers be filled *with* your wealth, and your labors *be* in the house of a stranger; and you moan when your end *comes*, when your flesh and your body are consumed, and say, 'How I hated instruction, and my heart despised correction; and I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ears to those who taught me! I was almost in utter ruin in the midst of the congregation and assembly'" (vs 8-14).

This is why the Proverbs are so important. We're going to see ***there is no way that you can overcome any addiction of any kind that we have mentioned here if you give yourself one little degree of fudge-factor!*** What do I mean by that? 'Well, a little bit won't hurt,' or 'I can get close to it, but it's not going to bother me!' You cannot do that! You must get rid of it totally. You either have to put yourself under the authority of God, or you're under the authority of Satan. There is no middle ground because Satan owns the *middle ground*.

Proverbs 6:23: "For the commandment *is* a lamp... [this is why they wanted to get God out of the schools] ...and the Law is light; and reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life". You can no longer discipline or correct children; that's 'cruel and unusual punishment.' Here's what it's to do:

- it is to arm you
- it is to give you mental strength
- it is to give you ability to say 'no' when you ought to say 'no'

Verse 24: “To keep you from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart...” (vs 24-25).

That’s the whole heart an core of pornography! Where would there be pornography if there were not women willing to do that? Just like when I went to the checkout stand. There are thirty magazines with the faces of women in various degrees of whoredom and slutism, and one muscle magazine for men.

“...nor let her seduce you with her eyelids” (v 25). Flashing! Where do you see the first of that? *On Disney cartoons! Yes, indeed!*

Verse 26: “For by means of a harlot *a man is vanquished* to a piece of bread; and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?” (vs 25-27).

Look how many female teachers are seducing their male students, and men the girls. Then, to avoid prosecution, in a news story, they ran off to Georgia—a 15-year-old boy and a 34-year-old woman—and got married, because it’s legal to do so. The way it’s going today, what’s the greatest percentage of ministers and priests that are involved in it? *Well, the Catholic Church is notorious for what it’s done!*

Verse 28: “Can one walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So is he who goes in to his neighbor’s wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent” (vs 28-29). Then it talks about those who steal compared to those who commit adultery:

Verse 32: “But whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he *who* does it destroys his own soul. He shall get a wound and dishonor; and his shame shall not be wiped away” (vs 32-33).

How many churches has this kind of behavior destroyed? *They claim to be ‘Christian’*; and we’ve seen it also in the Church of God!

Let’s talk about the ‘dagger that goes through you.’ Let’s talk about the ‘two-edged sword’ that gets them. Satan is interested in you from as young as he can get you.

Teens and sex, sexually transmitted diseases: Approximately 19-million new cases of STD occurred in 2000.... [Now, we’re here at 2005—what is it now?] ...Sixty-eight percent of teens are unconcerned about sexually transmitted diseases. Seventy-eight percent of new cases of genital herpes are caused by a

virus found chiefly in the mouths of 16-21-year-olds.

You tie that in with all the oral sex that’s going on.

Sixty-five percent of all sexually transmitted infections contracted by Americans in a single year will occur in people under age 24. Every day 8,000 teenagers become infected by a sexually transmitted disease. A young mother today has had an average of 2.3 sexually transmitted diseases. Teens from communities of color are disproportionately affected by STDs because they are more sexually active. The only black leader willing to admit that is Bill Cosby.... [He was caught with an illegitimate child.] ...Young African-American women experience at least 14-times more the reported gonorrhea rates and about six times the chlamydia rate of young white women. Chlamydia rates among African-American men ages 15-24 are 12-times higher than rates among white males.

That is not discrimination. That is a statistical fact based on their behavior. Where is the worst AIDS and HIV? *In Africa! The next: Southeast Asia!*

STD and HIV: In 2002 it was estimated that 3.2-million teens under the age of 15 were living with HIV. Although African-Americans comprise only 13% of the US population, it accounts for over 50% of new HIV diagnosis reported in 2002, and 49% of AIDS diagnosis in 2003.

I have one solution, and this is not too radical, and it’s not racist. ***Quit fooling around!*** If you don’t get involved in illicit sex you’re not going to get sexual diseases—*period!* It’s that simple! We’ll talk about what God talks about next on solving the problem.

Pres. Bush wanted to sponsor and have more money for *abstinence programs*. And guess what? Abstinence programs work! Guess what? *Those who sexually abstain do not get sexually transmitted diseases. Wonder of wonders!*

Teenage Sex: 42% of guys and 33% of women ages 15-17 have had intercourse. In grades 7-12, 23.4% of first sexual relationships are one-night stands.

They go out to the dance or go to the football game, or go to the basketball game. ‘Oh, mom and dad, you’re such a prude; why can’t I be with my friends?’ Then there are the ‘overnighters.’

33% of guys and 23% of girls feel some or a lot of pressure to have sex.

Why? *Because they go to sex-education classes!* Guess what's on their minds when their walking home from school? Just when their bodies are beginning to mature and the sex hormones are pouring through their systems, and their parents are not home to watch them because the satanic system has it that they have to work in order to live. So, their lives become all messed up: **mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically**—every other use.

Let's talk about what's going on here with a lot of teens—77% of teens; I want you think about that!

77% of teens would classify oral sex as sex, while 43% say oral sex is not seen as being a big deal as much as sexual intercourse.

Where did they get that? It's a big enough problem without having the President of the United States [Bill Clinton] saying that having oral sex is not sex. Now there is a plague of gonorrhea of the throat among teenagers.

55% of teens 13-19 admitted to engaging in oral sex.

This is a summary of hundreds and hundreds of magazines, and we are literally possessed with the *spirit of addiction and whoredoms*. And it's not going to get any better unless there is a great deal of repentance coming down the pike.

Delores made a comment just yesterday: 'What if we could resurrect George Washington, Thomas Jefferson—all the signers of the Constitution—and say: 'Look at America.' They would say it is fit for destruction! This is not what we intended.'

Let's how this has happened through history over and over again. We're living in a time very similar to what Jeremiah lived in, only on a greatly magnified basis worldwide.

Jeremiah 5:7: "How shall I pardon you for this? Your children have forsaken Me, and have sworn by them that are not gods. When I had fed them to the full... [which we are] ...then they committed adultery, and gathered themselves by troops in a harlot's house.... [any bar on Friday night, that's what it is] ...They were *like* lusty, well-fed stallions in the morning; every one neighing after his neighbor's wife. Shall I not punish for these *things*?" says the LORD. 'And shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?'" (vs 7-9). Isn't that something?

It got so bad that Jeremiah had a very tough ministry. He had to stand alone, and he had to withstand everyone's hatred toward him. In standing alone, here's how he felt:

Jeremiah 9:1: Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place for traveling men, that I might leave my people and go away from them! For they *are* all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. 'And they bend their tongues *like* their bow *for* lies. But they are not valiant for the Truth on the earth..." (vs 1-3). You tell them the Truth and they get angry and mad.

"...for they go from evil to evil..." (v 3). This means, as it has been coined in today's terminology, *the making of deviancy downward*—taking away all laws for those kinds of behaviors and making the perverted the norm.

"...and they do not know Me,' says the LORD. 'Everyone beware of his neighbor, and do not trust any brother! For every brother will supplant his neighbor, and will walk with slanders. And everyone will deceive his neighbor and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies, *and* they weary themselves to commit iniquity. Your dwelling *is* in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me,' says the LORD" (vs 3-6).

Here's the heart and core of the whole thing, v 13: "And the LORD says, 'Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, and have not walked in it, but they have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after the Baalim, which their fathers taught them.' Therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and make them drink poisonous water. I will also scatter them among the nations, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them.'" (vs 13-16).

That gives us an obligation what we have to do, and that's why I'm doing what I'm doing here. We'll finish where we began, that 94% of the people *say* they believe in God. This is depicted in Isa. 58.

Recently, the History Channel showed that in the Civil War they had hordes of prostitutes following the army and they actually had more deaths because of venereal disease because of that—syphilis and gonorrhea—than they did of the men who were killed. They had over 300,000 die from venereal diseases.

Isaiah 58:1: "**Cry aloud, do not spare, lift up your voice like a ram's horn...**"—not to be mealy-mouthed, not to compromise. We need to ask ourselves: If anyone is offended by what I've said in these sermons, then you'll just have to be offended, because *you're offended at the Word of the Truth of God*, and the truth of the facts that are going on in

the society around you. We have a responsibility not only to the Church but also to the people at large.

“...and **show My people their transgression**, and the house of Jacob their sins” (v 1). So, if 94% of the people believe in God, but we have this kind of behavior, what are we dealing with?

Verse 2: “Yet, they seek Me daily, and seem eager to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and one that did not forget the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they seem eager to draw near to God.”

But they take no delight in doing what God wants them to do. Isn't it interesting? You read all the way through this—the 58th chapter—and what do you do? *You come down here to v 13, and it comes right back where I started!* What did I say is the chink in the teachings of ‘Christian’ America: Sunday-keeping. What does God say:

Verse 13: “If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires on My Holy day...” It starts at sundown!

- How many crimes are committed on Friday night through Sabbath morning?
- How many adulteries?
- How many drunkennesses?
- How many addictions?
- How many sales of cocaine and illicit drugs take place on Friday night?

Then they desecrate it with sports activities in the daytime, all day on the Sabbath. they don't know God! So, God says the solution is *to start with the Sabbath!*

“...and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking *your own* words” (vs 13). It has to begin with the Sabbath.

We're going to see some things in part three of this series on *how you stop becoming an addict*. You've got to do it, and you've got to *do it no uncertain terms*, regardless of what the addiction is.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 1:20
- 2) Proverbs 14:34
- 3) Psalm 7:9, 11
- 4) Psalm 14:1-4
- 5) Psalm 9:16-17

- 6) Ephesians 6:10-12
- 7) Isaiah 3:1-5, 9-17
- 8) Jeremiah 18:7-12
- 9) Proverbs 5:1-14
- 10) Proverbs 6:23-29, 32-33
- 11) Jeremiah 5:7-9
- 12) Jeremiah 9:1-6, 13-16
- 13) Isaiah 58:1-2, 13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 12:9
- James
- Matthew 24
- Exodus 31
- Proverbs 4:23

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Marketing of Evil* by David Kupelian
- *Josephus*

Article: *Rome's Challenge to the Protestants* (cbcg.org)

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The Addicted Society III Steps to Overcoming Addictions

Fred R. Coulter

Before we get into the specifics of the Scriptures involved—because they're all necessary—to really understand how anyone who is addicted to anything can really overcome. God will give you the help and the strength and the power to do it, if you turn to Him.

Many people are addicted physically. The worst kind of addiction, physically, is substance abuse. Substance abuse comes in many, many different forms from food addictions to drug addictions—hard drugs, soft drugs, prescription drugs—and all of these have varying affects on the body; this includes smoking tobacco, smoking marijuana and other things that go along with physical addictions. These are not only physical—we put them in the category of physical—but they go in the category of mental and spiritual, too.

They are physical from this point of view: Many of the programs which are out there that can help people, and there are many rehab programs: Gamblers Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, state mandated rehab programs for cocaine and heroin users, methamphetamine users, those that are addicted to prescription drugs, and so forth. Many of these programs work. However, there is a great recidivism, or a repeat offending, because many who go through the programs have to go through them three or four times, in some cases. Some can go through them once and pretty well overcome, because their addiction is not so severe.

Nevertheless, in all of these situations we need to realize that whatever help that can be gotten from these programs, by all means use them! Each one is going to have varying degrees of damage that the drugs have done to the body and to the mind. So, with any of these substance abuse rehabilitation and reprogramming, what you're going to have to do is you're going to have to do some real deep research on it so you can understand it, or have someone do it for you, and someone to help you with a health program. You have to change your diet. You probably have to get quiet a few supplements to up-build your system again, because all the drugs take away vitamins, minerals and body strength from you. These have to be rebuilt! And because they're not rebuilt, this gives a re-occurrence of the craving to go back to taking the substances.

It's very hard to get rid of the craving of heroine, cocaine and methamphetamine. These things lodge into the liver, and you can have

repeats—especially with methamphetamine; it's as dangerous as any of the substances that people take—whether it is smoking it or shooting it up or whatever kind that you are addicted to. It destroys the body, so you must—in your program of rehabilitation—rebuild the body; rebuild your health, and it's going to take some help and cooperation to do so.

When you are recovering, do not get hooked on a secondary addiction. What do I mean by that? *A lot of people who have been on drugs then take prescription drugs to counteract what the illegal drugs they have done, and they become addicted to that; that is a substitute addiction.* Many times smokers and those who are alcoholics (alcohol addiction) will revert back—especially with an alcohol program—and they're still addicted. Or a cocaine or a methamphetamine addiction—people will revert back to smoking cigarettes. While cigarettes may be legal to buy over the counter, they're still addicting, and ***you're only substituting one addiction for another!***

Another addiction that alcohol addicts have is that they substitute alcohol for candy or ice cream. Their high sugar content becomes, in the body, another form of alcohol that the body is craving. So, what has to happen with these? ***You must get on a health-building program!*** You must also get on a mind reprogramming regiment, as well. You *must* have your health taken care of. You *must* be working at that simultaneously as you are recovering.

First of all, let's understand the first point that an addict needs to come to in order to begin. A lot of people want help. A lot of people can admit that they have a problem. Admitting that you have a problem, that's fine, but there are a lot of people who admit that they have problem but still continue in it, because they haven't done what is necessary to do. They haven't really sat down and *talked to themselves* and *come to themselves*.

In the story of the prodigal son and receiving forgiveness and so forth, here's a young man who went out, got his money from his inheritance from his father, and then he found himself in terrible, wretched conditions. He ended up losing everything.

Luke 15:15: "Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he was longing to fill his stomach with the husks that the swine were eating, but no one gave *anything* to him"

(vs 15-16).

Part of the beginning of recovery that all addicts have to come to is that you have got to go the bottom! The bottom may be varying degrees of difficulty, problems, troubles, anxieties and psychological hang-ups and maybe encounters with the law, jail time, prison time, probation time, fines; all of those various things are the signposts of coming down to hit the bottom! That's what happened with the prodigal son. When he came to the realization of what he needed to do—and this is where every addict needs to come—you need to do this before God as well:

Verse 17: “And when he **came to himself**...” In other words he came to himself to be honest, not only to admit he had a problem, but that he was really going to do something about it. That admission was followed by repentance, which is very, very important! A lot of people, before they reach this point, admit it; they begin to quit, but they have relapses. Some give up and just go back and become even worse, rather than try again, rather than see if they can overcome again.

Let's see another example, another parable. Even if you slip back, *there is still hope*. Remember this: **As long as there is life, there is hope!**

- *it depends on what you do with your life*
- *it depends whether you take advantage of the hope*

Luke 13:6: “And He spoke this parable: ‘A certain *man* had planted a fig tree in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it, but he did not find *any*. Then he said to the vinedresser, “Look *here!* For three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and have not found *any*. Cut it down. Why should it *continue* to waste *space* in the ground?’” But he answered *and* said to him, “Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and put *in* manure”” (vs 6-8). To do this it will revive the plant. Likewise, a lot of the slipups, fallbacks and reoccurrences happen because there's not the physical nourishing that is necessary to take care of the body to produce the fruit.

Verse 9: “And *see* if in fact it will bear fruit; but if not, after that you shall cut it down.” Here is a chance that people have, but you've got to do something about it.

It's the same way with asking for forgiveness. God is there to forgive, and He will forgive, but you have to do something about it. **You've got to come to yourself!** When you come to yourself, one of the first things you need to do is this: Do not allow yourself any *fudge-factors*. What do I mean by that? *Fudge factor is going back to the*

same situation that you were in.

- the same kind of problems
- the same kind of difficulties
- the same kind of friends
- the same kind of environment
- the same kind of thinking

and you allow yourself a fudge-factor. ‘Oh well, if I slip just a little bit, that won't matter because I'm improving. That is only continuing your *self-deception and justification* of what you do for your bad behavior. You cannot allow yourself a *fudge-factor*.

Luke 15:17: “And when he came to himself...” he started thinking correctly, and that's what you need to do:

- get your mind oriented right
- get your thinking correctly
- get rid of accusing others
- stop accusing the environments
- stop accusing the drug dealers
- stop accusing those who allow it

You have control over yourself and you are responsible to God for yourself, and you must make the choices. God will be there to help you and uplift you and bring you out of it. **But you must come to yourself!**

“...he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have *an* abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger?’” (v 17). You know the story: he went back, he was forgiven, his father accepted him and so forth. You've got to **come to yourself!**

The next thing you have to do is when you are confronted with situations that you will not allow a *fudge-factor* to get hold of you. This applies for every addiction—whether it is:

- TV addiction
- food addiction
- soda addiction
- pornography addiction
- gambling addiction
- sex addiction
- hard drug addiction

—whatever it is! Here is a principle that you need to understand and realize:

1-Corinthians 6:13: “Foods *are* for the belly, and the belly *is* for foods; but God will destroy both it and those. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality...” or addiction, or drugs, or porn, or any of the things that people are addicted to.

“...but for the Lord...” God created you; He created you to receive His Spirit. He created you in

His image, and He wants you to change and repent and come to yourself and come back to Him.

“...and the Lord for the body” (v 13). God wants to do His work within you, but you have to come to yourself.

Here is what you need to do: If you happen to be a baptized member and you have slipped and you’re addicted and you’re into some of these things, and you don’t know how to get out and you’re trying to repent and so forth, then you need to understand what is happening here.

- you can’t *allow* yourself a fudge-factor
- you can’t *justify* your behaviors
- you can’t blame it on other people

Verse 15: “Don’t you know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot?...”—or of drugs, pornography, whatever addiction that there is.

“...MAY IT NEVER BE! WHAT! Don’t you know that he who is joined to a harlot... [or to drugs, pornography, gambling] ...is one body? For He says, ‘The two shall be one flesh’” (vs 15-16). This is applying strictly to sexual problems, and today it’s out there everywhere!

Verse 17: “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.... [here’s what you need to do]: ...**Flee** sexual immorality....” (vs 17-18). Flee drugs; get away from it; temptation comes at us, get out of there, don’t get around it. Don’t go back to the same friends, the same environment, the same hangout. **Flee whatever it is**, be it:

- sexual immorality
- drug addiction
- food addiction
- television addiction

Television addiction is probably the easiest to handle. Hit the remote, kill it!

- music addiction

Don’t let it blast into your ears! Those are probably easier to stop. But

- you still have to *come to yourself*
- you still can’t give yourself a *fudge-factor*
- you still can’t go back and give yourself excuses for doing it
- you have to **flee!**

All of these things you *have to get away from!*

“...Every sin that a man may commit is outside the body, but the one who commits sexual immorality is sinning against his own body” (v 18).

That goes along with substance abuse, as well. You’re putting it into your body.

- You’re sinning against *your body*
- you’re sinning against *your mind*
- you’re sinning against *Christ*
- you’re sinning against *God the Father*

God is not going to be mocked! Until you *come to yourself*, until you realize what you need to do, I recommend people do—when they’re confronted with these things—is sit down, have a good long, hard talk with yourself in prayer to God, and ask yourself:

- What am I doing?
- Where am I going?
- How am I going to overcome?
- How can I change?
- How can I get out of this?

and:

- look at what you’ve done
- look at all the people you have hurt
- look at all the people you have caused great problems for

Drug abuse causes great havoc in families mentally, emotionally, spiritually, financially; and many parents have to go out and shell out thousands and thousands of dollars to help their adult children out of substance abuse. It’s a terrible situation. It leads to divorce, and it leads to all kinds of problems.

Now, let me just mention here—something you need to realize and understand: If you’ve come from a family that has had divorce—maybe once, twice or three times—or if it is a dysfunctional family, or if it is a drug-addicted family, or whatever the family addiction may be, ***you must break that cycle***. You must, by your own self—***with the help of God and His Spirit***—come out of it. You must stop! ***But there can be no stopping unless you come to yourself*** and make up your mind and realize ‘I’ve got to turn and quit!’

There’s another factor that Jesus said with the woman who was caught in adultery—and it was actually a matter of judgment rather than a matter of mercy there (John 8). When no one accused her He said, ‘Neither do I. Go and sin no more.’ And likewise, when He healed in the account of John 5, He told him, ‘Go and sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you.’

STEPS to OVERCOMING ADDICTION:

Step # 1: Admit it

- recognize it
- do not excuse it
- no fudge-factors

- realize what you're doing to yourself and other people

Step # 2: Repentance! Repentance to God!

The kind of repentance that God wants is not just a superficial thing—like: 'Oh, I know I got a problem.' NO! ***It is a deep and profound repentance that comes from within, from the very guts of your being!*** It is not a superficial thing at all, but it is a profound and traumatic and deep and lasting repentance that needs to be.

Here in the book of Joel we find ***how*** to repent. We're going to look at several verses here on how to repent and what repentance is.

- repentance to God
- repentance to those you have offended
- repentance to those you have caused to spend money on you to help you recover

In many cases people lose their jobs, lose their family, lose their children, lose everything that they have because they're so intent on shooting up and sticking drugs in their nose, or swallowing them, taking them, and then you add all of this to the ***music and the things that just pounds into your very being!*** You've got to *come to yourself* and get rid of ***all*** of it. God will help you. Other people will help you. Maybe some of these other programs that are out there can help you. So, get whatever help and support that you need.

Here's the kind of repentance that God will honor: Joel 2:12: "'Therefore, even now,' says the LORD, 'turn to Me with all your heart...'" Can't be any half-heartedness, can't be any fainting, can't be any superficial thing; ***your whole heart***, because God knows! If you want God to help you, ***it's got to be with your whole heart!***

"...and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. Yes, rend your heart and not your garments, and return to the LORD your God..." (vs 12-13).

That's what it has to be: a ***complete turning around***; that your repentance to God is always on a continuous basis. The initial great repentance that comes when you *come to yourself* and recognize what you are. Then continuous repentance as you see and God unfolds to you step-by-step the depths of your lust and your selfishness and your vanity and your greed, and doing all of these things to ignore and hurt and despise other people. We know the world is wicked out there and we know that it's filled with a lot of these things. But you can come out of it.

Verse 13: "Yes, rend your heart and not your

garments, and return to the LORD your God: for He *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and He repents of the evil." All the evil that you have gone through is a direct result of breaking and transgressing the laws of God. That evil that has come upon you and you find yourself down at the bottom of the pit and you don't know what to do or where to go ***because you have brought upon yourself the curses of disobeying God!***

- He's willing to lift them
- He's willing to take it from you
- He's willing to put it all on Christ

because 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.' He took upon Him ALL of our sins. He was beaten! He was scourged! He was crucified! (Isa. 53). ***For everyone who comes to Christ in deep repentance that sacrifice is applied!***

Let's see an amplification here; a very important Psalm because David—who was king—was chosen by God to be over the 12 tribes of Israel. You can read the whole account of his debacle with Bathsheba. ***Great sin!*** When he finally *came to himself*, when God had to send Nathan the prophet to tell him that 'you are that man!' then David *came to himself*. So, as we go through here, I want to ask: **What is going to take for you:**

- to *come to yourself*?
- to quit *deceiving* yourself?
- to quit *lying* to yourself?
- to quit *making excuses* for yourself?
- to quit *falling down* and getting back into all of these *substance abuse* problems?
 - ✓ *mental* abuse problems?
 - ✓ *emotional* abuse problems?

—because people become *addicted* to them! As you *rend your heart*, here is the prayer, and see what this is and see how this has to apply, and see what you need to do.

Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions"—because God will. God will forgive them! He will 'remove them as far as east is from the west.' He will 'remember them no more.' But we're going to see there's something else you need to do when you repent, because repentance is only a step! Repentance is not a completion, but a step toward completion.

Verse 2: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." Part of *coming to yourself* and with the Spirit of God, He's

got to clean you inside out. He's got to start with your mind, your heart. You've got to admit your lust and your attitudes. You've got to admit the substance and the destruction of your body that it's caused. And you also, in your repentance, have to take care of your body and start building it up.

But here's what you need to do, v 3: "For I **acknowledge** my transgressions..."

- go to God and confess them
- go to God and repent
- go to God and pour out your heart to Him in weeping, mourning and fasting

—that God will turn to you (Joel 2).

"...and my sin is ever before me" (v 3). That's exactly what addicts know. They know that they're in the clutches of sin. It is ever before them. It is ever something that they are held in the grips of. So, you must break—with the help of God through repentance—that bondage of addiction and giving yourself over to your own lusts.

Here's the thing that you need to realize: Yes, you hurt other people in the world:

- your wife/husband
- your mother/father
- your children
- your neighbors
- your employer

They become disillusioned. They become disheartened to see you go through all of these things. Everyone of them are willing and hopeful that you will recover and repent! *And God wants you to!*

But here's what you have to admit, v 4: "Against You, **You only**, have I sinned..." You've gone against God. God has made you. God has given you life and breath, a mind and a body for a great and fantastic purpose, which has been totally corrupted and nearly destroyed by addiction. There is a way out and that way out is Christ, and you have to take it. There is no other way.

"...and done this evil in Your sight..." (v 4). Every time you go through a session of addiction, God knows! *He knows!*

- He knows the evil!
- He knows the depths.
- He knows the degree.
- He knows everything!

And He's willing to forgive you with this kind of repentance.

"...that You might be justified when You speak, and be in the right when You judge" (v 4).

Whatever penalty, whatever hardship has come upon you, God is justified in doing so. God has done so to bring you to your senses. God has done so to let you know that there is a right way, and there is a way that is evil; so that you can change what you are doing.

Verse 5: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." That means you're born with a human nature that has a downward pull to sin and you've just given into it totally!

Here's what God wants with this kind of repentance, because there are other things that you have to do when we get to the part of reprogramming—because you've got to reprogram your mind, your thoughts, all of these things, because it is **repentance, recovery, and reprogramming!**

Verse 6: "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts..." Not all those hidden lies and self-deceits that you go through to kid yourself into thinking that everything is okay. Or you look around and you think: well everybody else is doing it, and if everybody else is doing it, then hey, it's got to be okay. *No!* You judge everything based upon:

- the Truth of God
- the Word of God
- the laws of God
- the commandments of God
- the teachings of the Bible
- the teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles

"...and in the hidden part... [that's between you and God] ... You shall make me to know wisdom" (v 6).

Here's what you have to be willing to let God's Spirit and God's Word do for you, v 7: "Purge me with hyssop..." Just like taking a crusty old dirty pot and cleaning it with steel wool and harsh soap to get rid of all the crud and the scum and everything associated with it.

"...and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (v 7). Then it goes on that there's going to joy and repentance (v 8).

Verse 9: "Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." Here's what has to happen. This is part of the **recovery and reprogramming**. We'll get into more particulars on reprogramming the mind, because that's what has to happen. In order to beat addiction, you must, with the Spirit of God and the Word of God, **reprogram your mind**; because you have destroyed parts of your mind and ability to think, especially by the substances that you have used. If you're into substance abuse, and you have perverted your way of thinking; if you're into pornography and

television addiction; food addictions can also, as the book *Excitotoxins: The Taste that Kills* points out, you can actually damage the brain, the connections in the brain that make you think, that help you to put things together. That's why it's important to get things reprogrammed.

That's what he's talking about here in v 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." This is something that has to be completely renewed *every* day! Just like they tell you in every recovery programs: one day at a time, one hour at a time, one minute at a time—it has to be. And some of these cravings of addictions will take quite a while to overcome. You really have to exert the effort. You need the help! You need the strength! You need other people to help you if they are willing to help you!

Here's what to realize: Some people are so ashamed of what they have done. Some people are so down and think that they can't come back to God. Some people have ruined their lives so much that they really feel that there's no hope and some even go out and commit suicide. Well, that's not the answer! Yes, it does end the problem, but that's not the answer. **Yes, God will forgive you upon deep and profound repentance!**

Psalm 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy." And everyone who has been addicted to whatever the addiction is, you're poor and needy:

- you need the help of God
- you need the Spirit of God
- you need the Word of God
- you need the strength to build up your mind

Verse 2: "Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You." You've got to trust in God every day, every hour, every minute—begin trusting in God for everything that you do.

Verse 3: "Be merciful to me, O LORD, for **I cry unto You all day long**" (vs 2-3). You can't just have a one-time thing and everything is okay and now everybody's got to get back to normal because 'I have been successful this one day.' ***NO!*** Daily!

- *Prayer* daily!
- *Repentance* daily!
- *Reprogramming* daily!

All of those things have to be done. Then there is hope. Then there is progress. Then there will be no slip-backs. All the way along, as I have said, do not give yourself any *fudge-factors!* You must have it absolutely! Do not go back. If that's a hard thing to

do at first, resolve over and over again, and with the help of God and continuing on whatever program you are in, the guidelines for *recovery, repentance and reprogramming* that we're covering here, ***you can overcome; you will overcome; you will change.*** God loves you and is *for you* and wants you to do His will.

Verse 4: "Rejoice the soul of Your servant..." In other words, let God's Spirit and His Word and the change that's affected in your life give you some joy. You haven't had anything but sorrow and depression and wretchedness.

"...for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul" (v 4). Lift up your whole life, mind, heart, *your very being*, to God.

Understand this, v 5: "For You, LORD, are good, and **ready to forgive**..." God is just waiting for you to repent. He's ready to forgive! He's not going to begrudge you. He's not going to turn His back on you. If you turn to Him, He will turn to you, and *He's ready to forgive*.

"...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You. Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer..." (vs 5-6). It's got to be through prayer—deep, profound, personal prayer—daily. You can accomplish that. Use the Psalms as a guide. Pour out your heart to God. He knows the very depths of your very being.

- He will help you
- He will strengthen you
- He will give you the hope

—*if you turn to Him with all your heart and mind and soul and being!*

When there are difficulties, v 7: "In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me." So, as you go day-by-day, and a temptation comes along, and you resist it and you don't give yourself any fudge-factor—you flee from it; you get away from it; you get your mind off of it—***God will help you!*** Without a doubt!

As we go along we will see that all of these main things are interconnected.

Step #3: Constantly seek God

- He will hear you
- He will answer your prayers
- He will do so and encourage you and uplift you and help you and strengthen you day-by-day.

You're going to have some days that will be other days. You're going to have *up* days; you're going to have *down* days, especially if you've been on substance abuse. There are residuals of the drug

within your body—within your liver, your mind, your tissue—that will begin leeching out into your system. That’s why it’s important that you get on a good physical rehab program, too, and diet to help purge these things out.

With the different ups and downs you have, you’ve got to seek God daily! Let’s look at the promises that are also contained in Psa. 119. Every verse is a promise from God to do His part **IF** you do your part; that’s what’s important.

Psalms 119:2: “Blessed are they that keep His testimonies...” We’ll talk about keeping the laws of God in reprogramming in a little bit, get into that even more specifically.

“...and who seek Him with the whole heart” (v 2). What do we have here? We have **repenting** with your whole heart, **seeking** Him with your whole heart! Then we’re also going to see **loving** Him with all your heart, mind, soul and being! That’s how you overcome the cravings and the temptations. You:

- recognize it
- get away from it
- stop it
- avoid it
- flee from it

and then—with prayer and repentance—*seek Him with the whole heart!*

When you do that, v 3: “They also do no iniquity... [that means you can overcome] ...they walk in His ways”—instead of your own ways.

- walk in the way of God
- walk in the way of His commandments
- walk in the way of His Truth

Verse 4: “You have commanded us to keep Your precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!” (vs 4-5). David was lamenting the difficulties and problems of human nature that is inclined to be carried away by lust and human desires. It’s a process.

- You must *change!*
- You must *grow!*
- You must develop!
- You must *reprogram!*

Verse 6: “Then I shall not be ashamed when I have respect unto all Your commandments.” Isn’t that something?

Verse 9: “With what shall a young man cleanse his way?... [God has His part; you have your part] ...By taking heed according to Your Word.” Following God’s Word. Seeking His way. They all go hand-in-hand.

Matthew 7:7—here is a promise. When you discouraged, you get down, you go to God and say:

- God, I’m discouraged
- I’m down
- I’m fighting this problem
 - ✓ it’s a temptation
 - ✓ it’s coming upon me
- Lift me up out of it
- Give me the strength to overcome
- Help me to resist
- Give me Your word
- Intervene for me
- Help me to seek the way
- Give me the strength and resistance that I need
- Help me to not have any more *fudge-factors*
- Help me to not get enticed
- Help me to seek You with my whole heart

Matthew 7:7: “**Ask**, and it shall be given to you...” Claim the promise. Not because you’re righteous, but because God promised it, and He’s Holy.

“...**Seek**, and you shall find...” (v 7). The Greek in all of this means: *ask and keep on asking; seek and keep on seeking*

“...**Knock**... [and keep on knocking] ...and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks **receives**, and the one who seeks **finds**, and to the one who knocks **it shall be opened**” (vs 7-8).

- God will help you
- God will strengthen you
- God will be right there to give you the ability to:
 - ✓ **repent**
 - ✓ **recover**
 - ✓ **reprogram**

(go to the next track)

Let’s see how we can apply this, and let’s begin to look at the aspect of **reprogramming**. We’ve covered somewhat on prayer.

Step #4: **Prayer**

Daily prayer! Coming to God in a repentant attitude and broken heart and mind and praying to Him:

- yielding to Him
- asking for His guidance
- asking for His help
- asking for His deliverance

in everything. We find we have the model prayer

(Matt. 6). If you analyze all the Psalms, you will see that they very carefully follow the model prayer that Jesus gave here. That is not to repeat this prayer; this is a guideline.

Matthew 6:8: “Now then, do not be like them...”—the heathen, who, in just vain repetition kind of pray. They think that in multiplying words that they shall be heard. Jesus says, ‘Don’t be like them.’

“...for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him.... [God knows!] ...Therefore, you are to pray after this manner: ‘Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name’” (vs 8-9). ***You pray directly to God the Father in the name of Christ.***

- He is Holy
- He is there in heaven
- He controls the vastness of the universe
- He is the sole Sovereign of everything that there is
- He loves you
- He cares for you
- He wants you to change and grow and overcome
- He wants you to overcome your addiction
- He wants you to solve the problems that have been the result of it
- He will help you
- He will strengthen you

That’s why you go to Him first!

Verse 10: “Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven... [let God’s will be in your life] ...give us this day our daily bread” (vs 10-11)—which means ***every need*** that we have: our physical needs, our spiritual needs, our mental needs, everything that we have *daily*; not just once whenever you’re in trouble, *but daily!* This is an outline on how to pray daily.

- sometimes your prayers will have a lot of joy
- sometimes they’ll have a lot of sorrow
- sometimes they’ll be a lot of repentance
- sometimes there will be a lot of thanksgiving and praise to God

All depending on how your particular day is going!

And here’s another thing that’s important to remember, v 12: “And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors... [‘our sins’ (Luke 11)] ...and lead us not into temptation...” (vs 12-13). Don’t let us be led into trials and difficulties, because Satan is there ready to entrap you.

“...but rescue us from the evil one....” (v

13). Satan the devil is the one out there perpetrating and causing all of these things, as we’ve seen in *Addicted Society #s 1-2*, and he is making it happen! We need daily to be rescued from the evil one. Then to acknowledge that all the authority and all the power comes from God the Father, through Jesus Christ, to everyone.

“...For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (v 13).

Step #5: Reprogramming

Let’s begin on the reprogramming aspect of overcoming. Remember this is: ***Repentance, Recovery and Reprogramming.*** So, we’ve seen:

1. resist and you flee—you get away from it
2. repent
3. seek God
4. have prayer daily
5. reprogramming

Let’s understand something that’s important, and, of course, these points will interlock and overlap. We find here how they do that.

James 4:6: “But He gives greater grace.... [than our own lust and our own envy (v 5)] ...This is the reason it says, ‘God sets Himself against *the* proud...’ God was against you when you were addicted. And every time you go back to that addiction and give yourself a *fudge-factor* you’re going against God. You are tempting God to set Himself against you again.

“...but He gives grace to *the* humble” (v 6).

- that’s why the repentance
- that’s why the confession of sin
- that’s why all of these things are so profound and important

Verse 7: “Therefore, submit yourselves to God. **Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you.” First you submit to God, then you can resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Verse 8: “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners, and purify *your* hearts, you double-minded!” It has to be a wholehearted effort on your part. You can’t have one foot in *your* way and one foot in God’s way, and have a split mind. You want to change, You want to overcome, but you’re really not willing to put forth the wholehearted effort, because that makes you ‘double-minded.’

‘A double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways.’ (James 1). It will just be a repeat, relapse,

going back into it, *unless you draw near to God and humble yourself to Him*, and unless you apply yourself. God will help you! He's not going to do it for you. **You must do it, but He will help you!** That's important to understand and remember.

Now, let's go back here to the book of Proverbs and let's see how we begin *reprogramming* the mind. That's the whole point of true Christianity: **Reprogram the mind with the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and develop the mind of Christ.** Instead of thinking on your own ways and your own lusts and your own things, **you think on God's way and His plan and His Truth and with His Word and it's a wholehearted effort**—a complete fulltime effort! Wherever you are, whatever you are doing: *to be reprogrammed!*

And lots of times it's going to take the nutritional things that I have mentioned in order to physically help repair the mind and get it going again. Help clean out all of these toxins **out of your mind, out of your liver, out of your system:**

- if you're addicted to porn, to get erased out of your mind, cleaned out of your mind
- if you have a craving for something
- if you have an addiction to gambling

whatever it may be. You cannot give yourself a *fudge-factor* because you always end up being double-minded and unstable.

Let's see how you can be established; here are the keys. Proverbs 16:1 "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, are from the LORD.... [He created it in you, it's part of you] ...All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes..." (vs 1-2). We covered that previously. Just don't look to your own ways and think 'well, I'm doing better than so and so; I've improved here'; or 'I've been good for one day.' How about two? How about ten? How about many months? How about a year? Two years? Five years? Ten years? It's not just what you've done in a short time.

"...but the LORD weighs the spirits. **Commit your works unto the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established**" (vs 2-3). *Reprogramming your mind* is establishing your thoughts! **Gaining control and discipline:**

- over your mind
- over your passions
- over your urges
- over your desires
- over your addiction.

Verse 6: "By mercy and Truth iniquity is purged..." Mercy is showing *repentance*; Truth is the *Word of God*.

- being truthful with yourself.
- being truthful about your circumstances.
- being truthful with other people

quit

- lying
 - cheating
 - deceiving
 - hiding
 - excusing
 - justifying
- When you repent, *replace it with Truth*
 - When you recognize error, *replace it with Truth*
 - When you get rid of self-deception, *replace it with Truth*

"...is purged... [it is a process. It is a reprogramming of the mind.] ...and by the fear of the LORD *men* turn away from evil" (v 6).

How do you handle evil? That which held you in its grips?

- you must learn to hate
- you must learn to abhor
- you must see the power that that has done to you
- you must overcome it
- you must realize that only with the power of God and His Spirit...

That's why it's important not only to repent, but when you do that and you're *recovering*, if you have not been baptized and buried your sins in the watery grave and have come to Christ, that you can, after baptism—which is the full burial of the self in the watery grave—when you come up out of that, then you can have hands laid upon you to receive the Holy Spirit so that you can have the strength and power to overcome even more.

In the final analysis, unless you turn to God with all your heart, mind, soul and being, you're going to have, at best, an uphill battle. Here's part of the *reprogramming* of the mind that you have to have. That which you liked before, that which you craved before, that which you were addicted to before, **you must learn to hate!** There's a proper Godly hatred; hating iniquity. Christ was commended because He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Those who are addicted are lawless. You've got to change that! You've got to change your thought process by being reprogrammed with the Word and the Spirit of God.

Proverbs 8:13: "**The fear of the LORD is to hate evil...**" Because if you hate it, if you despise it, if you just absolutely cut it off as an abomination, then you can begin to reprogram your mind, and you

can begin to change.

“...I hate pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth” (v 13)—says God. And every one of these addictions are all involved in self, pride, arrogancy and evil ways; and it’s just got you right in its grip. What is that song? *He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands*. That’s not of Christ, that’s of Satan—he’s got the whole world in his hands. You’ve got to come out from underneath it.

Let’s see how you need to do it. That’s why I said that the book of Proverbs is the way to start. I’m going to encourage everyone of you to read and study the book of Proverbs; do so on your knees; do so in a prayerful way. Not only when you’re reading and studying and you learn from each proverb as you go through, but that gives you a chance to *talk with God, to repent, to cleanse your heart, cleanse your mind* with the Spirit of God.

Here’s the attitude we need to have. This is not just kind of a half-hearted thing that you can get away with. This is a full-time thing. This is a complete absolute, with repentance, turning around and going the other way. That’s what repentance is all about. Repentance is not just being sorrowful. Repentance is turning *to God* and turning *from sin*. Then when you have done that, here shows how we do it, how we become reprogrammed.

Proverbs 2:1: “My son, **if**...” I want you to understand how these are all conditional for every single one of us.

“...you will receive my words, and treasure up my commandments within you... [they become a very part of your being] ...so that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding... [notice all of these conditions] ...yea, **if** you cry after knowledge...” (vs 1-3). You’ve got to go after this tooth and nail; just as you were hooked and addicted to whatever addiction that you have, now you’ve got to turn around and apply yourself in the total opposite direction. You’ve got to *cry after knowledge*. That only comes from God’s Word.

“...and lift up your voice for understanding.... [that implies daily prayer] ...**If**... [we have three *ifs* here; use this as a test for yourself: Are you doing this?] ...**if** you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures” (vs 3-4). That is God’s way, God’s Word, God’s Spirit, everything about God.

Verse 5: “Then shall you understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.” This means

- you’ve got to be thorough in it
- you’ve got to follow through in it

- you’ve got to realize that these conditions you have to meet

God has given His promises that He will fulfill and He will provide. If you do these things, then:

- He will give you wisdom
- He will give you understanding

But you have to apply the effort as if you’re searching for “...silver and search *for* her as for hidden treasures, then you shall understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom.... [that’s where it comes from] ...out of His mouth *comes* knowledge and understanding” (vs 4-6).

Please understand this: Every word that God wants you to know He has caused to be recorded in the Bible and these are the words of God. That’s why Jesus said, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live.’ He’s had them recorded. He’s had them preserved. God down through all the centuries of time:

- has watched over His Word
- has preserved His Word
- has inspired His Word
- has given this as a spiritual guide and understanding

so

- we can come out of our sins
- we can come out of our addictions
- we can come out of our problems
- we can solve our difficulties
- we can draw close to God

They are here, but we must apply ourselves. God is not going to come down and put a funnel hole in the top of your skull and put a funnel and insert it in there. That’s why Prov. 2 is important. But you’ve really got to apply yourself for it.

Verse 7: “He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous... [and you’ll be able to begin to think straight] ...*He is* a shield to those who walk uprightly.... [that means a defender] ...He keeps the paths of *right* judgment and preserves the way of His saints.... [Compare that now with v 9—all the other first 8 verses apply]: ...**Then you shall understand righteousness and judgment and equity, every good path**” (vs 7-9).

- that’s the way out of it
- that’s the way you reprogram
- that’s the way you overcome
- that’s the way that you build the right pattern of living and thinking

so you can resist against the evil and sin that is

engulfed and enveloped your life.

Verse 10: “Wisdom shall enter into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasing to your soul; discretion shall preserve you and, understanding shall keep you” (vs 10-11).

- you’re going to make the *right choices*
- you’re going to be *able to resist*
- you’re going to be *able to flee*
- you’re going to be *able to get away from it*
- you’re going to be *able to get your life and your mind squared around*

Verse 12: **“To deliver you from the way of the evil man...”** That’s what got you where you are: your own lusts, your own deception, and giving in to evil people. Who first gave you or sold you ‘meth’? crack cocaine? cocaine? heroine? whatever substance abuse there is? Teenagers now die from taking ‘ecstasy’ and all of those things. Whoever first gave it to you or sold it to you, *you walked in the way of evil men!* You’ve got to come out of that.

Look at all that it takes. This is all the effort that you have to put forth. God will bless you in it, but you’ve got to put forth the effort. You’ve got to take these Proverbs, and as I said, get on your knees and study them and ask God to make them a part of your heart, your mind, your thinking, your will and your way.

- God will do that!
- God loves you!
- God is for you!
- God wants you to overcome!
- God wants you to change!

He doesn’t want you addicted to any of these addictions that we have mentioned. You can come out of every single one of them and have a clean heart and have a clean mind. Over a period of time begin to put it away from you further and further and further. The more of God’s Word and God’s Spirit that you put into your mind and your heart and your way of doing things, as God blesses you and gives you His strength and His Spirit, the more you’re going to be away and forgetting these things and overcoming the temptations and the urges that are deeply rooted in your system. Some of them you’re going to have to fight for many, many years because of how you may have been addicted to them—just depending on your circumstances.

“...from the man who speaks wicked things, those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness” (vs 12-13). ***That’s where you have gone:***

- in the ways of Satan

- in the ways darkness
 - in the ways of this world
- Think of what it has done:***
- it has made you addicted
 - it has brought you low
 - given you mental anguish
 - give you emotional anguish
 - ✓ the loss of family
 - ✓ the loss of friends
 - ✓ the loss of job
 - ✓ the loss of financial ability
 - ✓ the loss of ability to work
 - ✓ the loss of ability to think

—because you sold your soul to the devil by the hands of evil men!

Verse 14: “Who rejoice to do evil *and* delight in the perversities of the wicked.” These are the things you have come to hate. You cannot guard against any of these things unless you make a part of your being and the way of thinking (Prov. 2:1-13)—then you can. This takes time. This takes practice. This takes determination. This takes the will and *the will* is what you must recover! ***You must recover your free choice out of the depths and the dregs addiction!*** You can do that through Christ! It is all possible; every bit of it is possible. It’s possible *because God loves you! Christ gave Himself for you!* He’s ready to forgive your sins. He wants you to change and overcome. ***But you have to make the choice.***

Verse 15 “Whose ways *are* crooked, and *are* devious in their paths; to deliver you from the wanton woman... [this can be ***any*** sin] ...*even* from the stranger *who* flatters *with* her words, who forsakes the guide of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God” (vs 15-17).

This can be applied to any addiction—not just sexual immorality; not just to adultery or fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, or any of those things; but it can be applied to heroine addiction, cocaine addiction, prescription addiction—any of these things! God gives you the guarantee that if you do the things that He has given you to do:

- You can overcome!
- You can change!
- You can come out of the addition!
- There is forgiveness!
- There is mercy!
- There is kindness!
- There is help!

Verse 18: “For her house sinks down to death, and her paths to the dead.” Look at the bodies that are strewn all over. If you want an eye-opening

experience, talk to a nurse who works in emergency and ask her what happens at their hospital every Friday night: drug overdoses, drug addictions, all of these things, because people have just been hooked! God says that that's the way these things are.

Verse 19: "None that go unto her return again, nor do they take hold of the paths of life in order that you may walk in the way of good and keep the paths of the righteous" (vs 19-20).

If you avoid it, you're going to avoid all of these things. If you have been in the clutches and grips of it, you've got to determine to come out of it.

- you've got to flee these things
- you've got to repent to God
- you've got to pray to God
- you've got to seek God
- you've got to now reprogram your mind

Let's understand this: ***You must have the laws and commandments of God in your mind!*** When you're baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God, God says He 'will remember your sins no more.' He will begin to *write and inscribe* in your heart and in your mind *His laws and His commandments*. It cannot be done unless you obey God! It also includes the Sabbath and the Holy Days of God. If you are going to really change and overcome from addiction, and live by every Word of God and have the Spirit of God, ***it must encompass all of God's way***—not part of it! That's only a patch job.

Proverbs 3:1: "My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commandments." Jesus said: 'If you love Me, keep My commandments' (John 14:15). John said, 'And hereby we know that we love God when we love the children of God and keep His commandments—and His commandments are not burdensome. By this we know that we love God.' That's all New Testament doctrine.

The truth is that the Bible agrees with itself from one end to the other. There's *no contradictions* in the Word of God. There are *no loopholes* in the Word of God. There are *no fudge-factors* in the Word of God. The only way, if you've been addicted, that you can come out from being in the grips of addiction is that you've got to understand the absolutes of right and wrong, good and evil—Truth and righteousness, the commandments of God. You need to know what sin is and how it destroys.

"...but let your heart keep my commandments; for they shall add length of days, and long life, and peace, to you. Do not let mercy and Truth forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart" (vs 1-3).

There is the active, ongoing *reprogramming* that everyone must do. Not only if you're recovering from an addiction, but if you're going to grow in grace and knowledge as a Christian, you must do the same thing.

Verse 4: "And so you shall find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man."
God will bless you:

- you'll be able to retain your job
- you can recover your health
- you can recover your dignity
- you can recover from the shame that you have put on
 - ✓ you
 - ✓ your family
 - ✓ your children
 - ✓ your relatives
 - ✓ everyone through

because of your inordinate addiction

- you *can* recover

This is all a part of the reprogramming, v 5: "**Trust in the LORD...** [not in your own way; not in other men; not in ministers and preachers—but in the Lord] ...**with all your heart...**" That's what God wants; that's how you can change and overcome; that's how you can come totally out of the grips of any addiction.

"...and **lean not unto your own understanding**" (v 5). Don't just do it your way. ***Look at what your way has done to get you where you are.*** Do you want that again? "...**lean not unto your own understanding**"—but to the understanding of the Word of God. You have to study and you have to know to know what the Word of God is, and that way you won't be leaning to *your own* understanding, but to the ways of God.

Verse 6: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths."

- Do you want God to direct your paths?
- Do you want God to help you in time of trouble?
- Do you want God to help you overcome?

Here's the formula—this is all part of the *reprogramming*.

Verse 7: "Do not be wise in your own eyes... [don't go *your own way*] ...fear the LORD, and depart from evil." There is Psa 34: depart from evil, seek the Lord—all of these things. When you start going through the Psalms and the Proverbs in your program of reprogramming your mind and overcoming addiction, you're going to be surprised how much strength and power comes from the very words of God, because Jesus said that *these words*

are spirit and they are life.'

Verse 8: "It shall be health to your navel... [the innermost part of being] ...and marrow to your bones." The bones are what produces the blood and the life is in the blood. It means you're going to be healthy.

Verse 9: "Honor the LORD with your substance and with the firstfruits of all your increase." Then you need to come to God. The way that you thank God is not just through words alone, but through tithes and offerings; through giving. God will honor you and bless you even more if you do.

Verse 10: "And your barns shall be filled *with* plenty, and your presses shall burst *with* new wine." In other words, you shall be prosperous in what you are doing, regardless of what occupation you have or work that you do, God will bless you in.

God is going to continue to correct you. This is not going to be a one-time, five step program as we're outlining here. There are going to be *corrections!* There are going to be *circumstances!* There are going to be *difficulties!* You're going to have to work your way through it, just like every one of us. When I'm saying 'you' I'm also talking to myself! Because if I don't teach myself from the Word of God while I am teaching others, I am nothing! I'm just like so much blowing of the wind.

Verse 11: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be weary of His correction"—because it's going to come. There are going to be tests that you're going to face. There are going to be difficulties that you're going to be confronted with. But you can come through all of them!

Verse 12: "For whom the LORD loves He corrects, even as a father *corrects* the son *in whom* he delights."

- this is how you can do it
- this is how you can change
- this is how you can reprogram your mind

Proverbs 4:1: "O children, hear the instruction of a father, and be attentive in order to know understanding, for I give you good doctrine; do not forsake my law, for I was my father's son, tender and the only *beloved* in the sight of my mother" (vs 1-3). This is Solomon writing about his personal circumstances.

Verse 4: "He taught me also, and said unto me, 'Let your heart hold fast my words... [think of this as God the Father talking to you] ...keep my commandments and live. Get wisdom; get understanding; forget *it* not, nor turn away from the

words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she shall keep you; love her... [the wisdom of God and the Word of God] ...and she shall preserve you. Wisdom *is* the principal thing; get wisdom; and with all your getting get understanding" (vs 4-7). So these are some practical steps that you need to do.

Let's see some other things that will come with it, a very important Psalm in reprogramming. Psalm 112:1: "Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments."

Psalm 111:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever."

Psalm 112:2: "His seed shall be mighty upon earth... [God will bless you and bless your children] ...the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house... [God promises that in a right way and a right balance] ...and his righteousness endures forever. To the upright there arises light in the darkness... [and that's what you want in your life: the light Christ, the light of His Word; the light of His Truth] ... he is gracious and full of compassion and righteousness" (vs 2-4). That's how God is. That's how you get reprogrammed and straightened out.

Verse 7: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his **heart is steadfast**, trusting in the LORD." That's where you need to come to in the resolve. Like I mentioned, ***no fudge-factor!*** Now you've got to graduate to the point of ***having your heart fixed:***

- fixed on *God's way*
- fixed on *the love of God*
- fixed on *the Truth of God*
- fixed on *His commandments*
- fixed on *His Word*

Then these things replace all lust and desire and craving for evil.

"...His heart is established; he shall not be afraid until he sees his desire upon his enemies" (vs 7-8). Addiction is your greatest enemy! You want to see your desire come upon overcoming those. That's what it's talking about. Let's go one step further and see what God wants us to do.

Luke 10:25: "Now, a certain doctor of the law suddenly stood up, tempting Him and saying, 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'" We need to move from beyond just overcoming addiction; to how do you receive eternal life. You must have the Spirit of God to do it, that's true, absolutely! You must keep the commandments of God, that is true, absolutely!

Verse 26: “And He [Jesus] said to him, ‘What is written in the law? How do you read *it*?’ Then he answered *and* said, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.’ And He said to him, ‘You have answered correctly. Do this, and you shall live’” (vs 26-28). That’s what God wants you to do.

Let’s see that upon loving God and neighbor the whole of God’s Word has been completely structured. This is a parallel account of what we just read in Luke 10:

Matthew 22:35: “And one of them, a doctor of the law, questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, ‘Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is *the* first and greatest commandment” (vs 35-38).

This is how you replace the addiction that has held you in its grips. The ultimate of these steps that I have given is coming to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. That’s why:

1. you’ve got to resist and flee it
2. you’ve got to repent
3. you’ve got to seek God continually; continually ask, and God will hear
4. you’ve got to constantly pray daily, wherever you are—
 - ✓ at work
 - ✓ in the carpray in your mind silently to God

That’s what Paul talks about ‘pray without ceasing.’

5. you’ve got to reprogram your mind which entails building up
 - ✓ your physical health
 - ✓ your mental health
 - ✓ your spiritual health

and

- reprogram the way that you think
- reprogram the way that you operate
- reprogram you mind with:
 - ✓ the Word of God
 - ✓ the love of God
 - ✓ the commandments of God
 - ✓ obedience to God

And Jesus said: “And *the* second *one is* like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (vs 39-40).

- there is hope
- you can overcome
- God wants you to overcome

- God wants you to get rid of your addiction
- God wants you to put them aside

There is a way to do it and that way is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 15:15-17
- 2) Luke 13:6-9
- 3) Luke 15:17
- 4) 1 Corinthians 6:13, 15-18
- 5) Joel 2:12-13
- 6) Psalm 51:1-7, 9-10
- 7) Psalm 86:1-7
- 8) Psalm 119:2-6, 9
- 9) Matthew 7:7-8
- 10) Matthew 6:8-13
- 11) James 4:6-8
- 12) Proverbs 16:1-3, 6
- 13) Proverbs 8:13
- 14) Proverbs 2:1-5, 4-20
- 15) Proverbs 3:1-12
- 16) Proverbs 4:1-7
- 17) Psalm 112:1
- 18) Psalm 111:10
- 19) Psalm 112:2-4, 7-8
- 20) Luke 10:25-28
- 21) Matthew 22:35-40

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 8, 5
- Isaiah 53
- Psalm 51:8
- Luke 11
- James 4:5, 1
- John 14:15
- Psalm 34

Also referenced: Book:

Excitotoxins: The Taste That Kills by Russell L. Blaylock

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The Addicted Society IV Reprogram Your Mind

Fred R. Coulter

We're certainly living in an addicted society; addicted to so many different things that it is really something! The most difficult addictions to overcome are substance abuse, be it: drugs—legal or illegal—or whatever other substance that you're going to have. A lot of people say, 'Are you on drugs?' *They say no!*. But they don't tell you that they don't consider smoking pot being a drug. When you look at what is happening, substance abuse is the worst.

- Television addiction: it's easy to make up your mind to hit the switch.
- Pornography addiction is a little harder to do because it's in your mind so much. But you can turn off the computer and not play the DVDs.

But substance abuse is entirely different. People need a lot of help on that; if you do not make up your mind and finally make the decision—if you are on substance abuse—to quit.

When people get into substance abuse, they start out and think 'Well, I can handle it. It's not going to affect me. I'll never get addicted.' They don't understand how powerful that these drugs are, and they don't realize what they're doing to their lives, their families: mothers and fathers and their own children, etc.

What the schools do with Ritalin is very close to cocaine. They get addicted and they start at a young age. The reason that it is because there's no discipline at home, there's no discipline at school, and they do not have enough men teachers to have enough authority to rule over the boys. It's mostly boys that are on Ritalin because all of these feminist women cannot handle boys. They don't know what to do. They don't know how to do it. They don't think like boys. They don't think like men. So, the only way they can handle it is drug them out.

Here you have a generation coming up that is *dumbed-downed, stooped-downed, drugged-downed*, and by the time they get to teenage they're already hooked. Then mix in illicit sex and all the other things that go with it, and you have got a society that is headed for disaster—*which we are!* Also on the playground, there are those giving it out free and getting them hooked early.

What happens in families when substance abuse comes along is that it costs a lot of money. They end up not working, they end up stealing, they lose their homes, they lose their cars, they lose their jobs. Parents try to help them out. They lie to them;

they rob them in the sense they say they'll do things. I know of one family that spent \$8,000 for six weeks rehab. The guy went in there and everything was good, fine, lovely, roses; came out and BAM! right back to cocaine. *Because* in there he *did not come to himself* and he did not have a confrontation with God and His Word. *That's a key!*

In order to overcome—part 3 of this series I covered repentance, recovery and reprogramming—there's got to be that *repentance first*; you've got to *come to yourself*; you've got to *come to God!* Not just a matter of admitting—like with Alcoholics Anonymous: everyone gets up there and says, 'My name is So-and-So and I'm an alcoholic'—while he's sucking on candy and puffing on a cigarette. *He's still an addict!*

Admission won't work. Just like this MSNBC thing in entrapping men coming after children in their pedophilia case. They all said, 'Oh, this is my first time.' Then they catch them the second time and they say, 'Oh, I need help!' They haven't said, 'I'm a dirty, rotten, pedophile and I'm repenting to God, never again to get involved in it.' *NO!* They blame other people—'Oh, I need help. Oh, it's the society.' *NO! It's your lust! It's your selfishness!* All substance abuse revolves around *lust, lawlessness and selfishness! Just for you!* You think

- nothing about your *family*
- nothing about your *children*
- nothing about your *husband*
- nothing about your *wife*
- nothing about the *repercussions on the rest of the family*
- nothing about the *repercussions in the rest of society*
- nothing about all the *repercussion of all of those tax dollars* going to try an enforce and help and stamp out and everything

I tell you what, someone said if you want a real eye-opener, go to a big city emergency hospital room on Friday night, where they have all of those who come in with 'ODs' and what do they have on Friday night to desecrate the Sabbath? *All of their parties, rock concerts*, all of the things where all of this goes on. It's something that this society is possessed of the spirit of Sodom and Gomorrah and whoredoms, and possessed with the spirit of drugs. That all comes from Satan the devil, and that all comes from the enemies of God.

Before a person can really make any progress, he or she has to come to the point of understanding that:

- they have sinned against God
- they have sinned against their family
- they have sinned against themselves
- they have sinned against their bodies

—and the only way out is to turn to God! They can, in some cases, make some progress and make some improvement without going to God directly. However, that's very rare and few in between!

Let's look at something that is important. A lot of people think, 'well, if you study the Bible you're *religious*.' If you *believe* God, which is different than believing *in* God—because if you believe *in* God you're no different than the demons; they believe *in* God and tremble. **People don't believe God!** 'Well, the Bible is only for those people who want it.' They don't understand that God is going to judge them by the words in this Bible *whether they know it or not!*

After Jesus had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, Matthew 4:3: "And when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.'" Which Jesus could have done just like that. But if He had done it, He would have obeyed Satan and Satan would have become His god—because whoever you obey that's your god. So, *if* you are a slave of an addiction of any kind, *that addiction is your god*.

- you'll work for it
- you'll pay for it
- you'll lie for it
- you'll do anything for it

Some people even *kill* for it. **That's your god!** Now, whether you shoot it up in your arms, stick it in your nose, put it in your mouth *that is your god!*

Verse 4: "But He answered *and* said, 'It is written, "**Man** shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God.'" Who is man? *In this sense that's the plural of every human being on earth*—from the time of Adam until the time there are no more human beings.

Let's also understand something else. This does not have to do with just people in the Church. This is all human beings that are walking the face of the earth at any time during any point in history. God expects them, if they are not converted, to obey in the letter of the Law. If they are converted to obey in the *spirit of the Law*.

What else does this tell us? *That everything in the Old Testament has been endorsed by Jesus*

Christ! No such thing as New Testament replaces the Old. The New Testament *spiritually amplifies and magnifies* the laws of God, as Jesus said. That's why in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* we have Appendix H (also in *A Harmony of the Gospels*): How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets. Very important to understand. He did not, at any time, do away or abolish anything that He did to improve from the physical of the Old Covenant to the spiritual of the New Covenant, you will see it was:

- to make the standard higher
- to make it spiritual
- to make it permanent

This tells us it applies to everyone.

Now we are going to see that while there are different programs that people can get into in the world—while they may be taught to think positively; to overcome certain things—they haven't come to fundamental realization that **the only way that they can change is:**

- through God
- through His Word
- through His Spirit

This is where it has to be—**can't be any other way**—for a permanent change! You also have to consider the people raised in a society where God has been removed from their lives, removed from the school, removed from the churches—how do you do it? *You have to tell them the place to begin is you need to find God*, and you need to find Him in the Word of God! You need to understand that as much help as people can be, God can help you even more. His Word can help you even more. That can help you *reprogram* your mind.

It may seem like a very foreign thing to them to turn to God, but that's the very reason why the Word of God is here, so they can start someplace! Even those who don't believe in God and still make a measurable recovery, well that's commendable, but everything that they do that is in a positive way is based somewhere, somehow, on the Word of God—whether it is directly stated or not.

Let's look at the reprogramming that has to happen. When people get involved in addiction, they lower the standards of right and wrong, good and evil. They blur all of these into a way of thinking where these things are not wrong. And the reason that the addiction comes is because when they get to this point, they have nothing where they can just say no! They have no standard. They have no foundation. This is why in the Word of God the place to begin is not with conversion. The place to begin is getting the right things into your mind, then

conversion can come later if that's what God wants.

The book of Proverbs is the place to begin; it is not a doctrinal issue concerning salvation, Sabbath, Holy Days or any of those things. The book of Proverbs is designed to give all people in the letter and, in many cases, *the spirit of the law* how they need to live their lives. This is what is so important. Here's why you need the Word of God. Here's how you begin to do it.

As I mentioned, to admit you have a problem is perhaps the first half-step. To really understand that you have a problem, begin to cope with all the consequences of it, and begin to realize what you need to do about it becomes another thing.

Proverbs 8:13: "The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil..." You have got to come to ***hate*** what you are doing with such a passion that it gives you a motivation to not do it. That's the beginning of the 'fear of the Lord,' and that's the beginning of re-instituting a conscience that has been so destroyed by being addicted and compromising everything that you know and that you do.

Here are the things that cause all the problems that people are in: "...I hate pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth" (v 13). This means a complete change in thought pattern and behavior.

Now, the way that you rewire is going to take some effort. Every one of the recovery programs that they have, they have classes that different ones attend and they learn to identify things and they learn how to get their thinking squared around to a certain rate. But here is the way to break through even that a little bit more:

Proverbs 7:1: "My son, keep my words... [you do it through the book of Proverbs] ...and store up my commandments within you. Keep my commandments and live..." (vs 1-2). Just understand this: *Before you live, overcome, survive and get out of this addiction you've got to keep the commandments of God*, and it begins right here in the book of Proverbs. How do you orient your mind? *The way that you orient your mind and get it reprogrammed is to put the right things in there.* That's what it says here.

"...and keep my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them upon your fingers; write them upon the tablet of your heart" (vs 2-3).

Now, this tells us something very important, because this is all about programming the mind and the thinking that you have. If you succumb to any addiction, you've got to reprogram your mind this way. At first, this is going to be very alien to a lot of people, because growing up in a society where God is not around, though they've had the Bible

everywhere, it's a difficult proposition. But it can be done. 'Bind them upon the table of your heart.'

Let's come back to Prov. 3 and review it again, where it says it again; and wherever it says something like this it means that it's important. In overcoming an addiction, ***repetition to reprogram the mind is vital!*** Key things you have got to repeat and repeat, over and over again, and this is what the book of Proverbs does.

Proverbs 3:3: "Do not let mercy and Truth forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart." Mercy and Truth have to do with character, the Word of God, the commandments of God, right thoughts, and "...write them upon the tablet of your heart." This tells ***what*** we need to do to reprogram the mind.

Verse 4: "And so you shall find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man."

Prov. 4 bears repeating. This becomes *the heart and core and the central way to overcome addictions* and to get yourself reprogrammed where your thinking is getting squared around. Whenever you're on substance abuse, or addicted to anything, you're thinking has been all messed up. You may have a lot of various mood swings.

You may go along and because of health problems you have brought upon yourself because of the abuse that you have been giving to your body and to your mind, you also need to take care of your health. Sometimes these things will be residual in your body and your liver and come back and hit you again. That's all the process of getting it out of your system. You've got to have both the *mental reprogramming and the health conditioning* in order to get yourself back on the right way. Here is the difference. Here's part of the reprogramming—absolutes: right/wrong, truth/error, obedience/sin. This is what Proverbs does.

Proverbs 4:18: "But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day. The way of the wicked *is* as darkness..." (vs 18-19). If you've been addicted to something:

- think of all the darkness that you've gone through
- think of all the misery that you have suffered and caused other people to suffer
- think about the depressions that you have had
- think about the things that you have brought to others on it

It is a way of darkness! And here's what happens when you are addicted:

"...they know not at what they stumble" (v

19). They have fears. They have anxieties. They have all kinds of problems and difficulties because of it. So, there is the contrast:

Verse 20: “My son, attend to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart” (vs 20-21). How many times have we read about the heart here? *Three times!* Very important! That’s part of reprogramming.

Now, a simple way to start reprogramming is this: ***memorize the Ten Commandments!*** Then start memorizing some of the Proverbs. Let that be in your mind and go into your mind, because when it does your mind is a fantastic thing that God has created, and you can reprogram your mind. They’ve been able to do this with people who have had brain tumors and they have had to take out one-half of their brain. Through therapy and reprogramming and teaching, they are able to recover to a very high degree every aspect of thinking and learning and speaking. But they have to really apply themselves to it. So, you need to realize how much you need to apply yourself, too; and it talks about ‘in the midst of your heart.’

Verse 22: “For they *are* life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh.” This is going to give you:

- a good attitude
- a positive attitude
- a right way
- a coming out of the depths of the abuse that you have been in

—whether it is substance abuse, porn addiction, smoking cigarettes; whatever it is, it will help you.

Verse 23: “Above all guard the door of your mind with diligence...” You are responsible for what goes into your mind and stays in your mind. Some things can go in your mind and you can’t get them out of your mind. You have to *guard it*.

Here’s why: “...for out of it... [the heart/mind] ...*are* the issues of life.” The very thing of

- how to live
- why you’re here
- where you’re going
- what are you going to do
- how you’re going to repair all the damage that has been done because of your addiction
- how you are going to find yourself
- how you are going to be stable
- how you are going to be able to control your emotions
- how you are going to do all of these things

The deeper the substance abuse and the difficulty that a person is in, the more they have to come back to ground zero and start everything all over again. That’s what’s important to remember, and that’s what’s you’re doing. “...out of it are the issues of life.”

That’s why in being addicted your life is all messed up; your life is upside down. A lot of people end up doing crimes and things where because of drug addictions they steal, they commit murder, manslaughter, beat up people, and all because they’re addicted!

Stop and think for a minute, what a fantastic thing that it’s going to be when the Kingdom of God is on the earth. None of that’s going to happen.

There’s a book by Dr. Laura Schlessinger which is: *Bad Childhood, Good Life*. The long and short of that book is this: *Regardless of what has happened in your childhood or in your life stop blaming other people! Stop blaming the circumstances!* You got yourself in the circumstances, you fell into it and you gave into it. So, you’ve got to stop saying, ‘He did it.’ Just like those pedophiles they caught on MSNBC: ‘Oh, this is my first time I ever did it.’ Every single one of them. *No!*

Let’s talk a little bit about Ritalin again because a comment was brought up which is this: Kids in school are given Ritalin and they’re innocent victims of it. They’re told that they need this and then when they get out of school they’re addicted to it and now they’re ripe for cocaine addiction and they’re told that that is wrong. Not only are we dealing with substance abuse, we are dealing with adult abuse of children by giving them drugs.

When you watch the news, how many are drug ads? Almost all of them! It is Satan’s endeavor to addict this nation, to destroy it. So, it’s a perfect setting in an atheistic school where there is no God, where there are feminist women who destroy little boys—and they can’t control them. Give them drugs! Give them drugs! Give them drugs! A drug for this, a drug for that, a drug for the other thing!

What did the world do for thousands of years without the drug companies. What do you do when you grow up and you’ve been reared on Ritalin? *You’re still faced with the same choices we’re talking about here!* If you want to get your life squared around, you’re going to have to do this. And I’m sure there are a lot of people out there that are suffering from it and going through it. It’s really quite a difficult thing for them.

Also, a lot of parents don’t want to take care of the kids anymore, so they turn them over:

- to TV
- to fast foods
- to video games
- to unsupervised playing with other children
- to daycare centers
- to teachers

Teachers are all frustrated because they can't control the kids, because they're not controlled at home. So, you have one great huge problem that is going to impact this nation in the next few years. The biggest thing we're going to be faced with is overcoming addiction from those who grew up being addicted to the drugs and the system and to the way that it is.

I'll tell you what the final solution is going to be to a lot of it. The only way out of it with the state is to put the *mark of the beast* on them so you can control them.

Back to what we need to be doing here, because this is an important thing that we need to understand. If you're a child who has been victimized by it, and if you have come through the system and have grown up in it—and you don't know what to do with your life and you're fighting all kinds of wrong thoughts, depressions and all these sort of things—you have got to get on a health-cleansing program and a mental-cleansing program that does not involve drugs or medications, but where you can use those thing to clean your system out and get it functioning correctly; so you can begin to *think*. The first point in straightening is to get yourself to a point where you can begin to *think!*

Prov. 5 talks about the 'strange woman.' Let's not use this for just pornography, sex addiction, adultery and fornication, though many people are addicted to sex. They have sex clubs where they have 'swinging adults' where they swap husbands and wives and all of this sort of thing on Carnival cruises and in hotels and things like this. I mean, ***this world is going nuts!*** But what it has to be is that you have got to combine some of these Proverbs that we have seen, how you've got to hate the evil. If you don't, it says right here:

Proverbs 5:8: "Remove your way far from her..." Substitute *her* for whatever your addiction is: pornography, substance abuse, alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, food addiction; *remove yourself from it.*

"...and do not come near the door of her house" (v 8). Don't let any of these temptations take you down.

What do you do when a temptation comes along? Because, lo, *they're going to come!* They're going to put themselves upon you in a pretty powerful way. What do you do? How do you handle

it? You've got to recognize it when it comes. You know what it is, and the temptation is there: 'Oh, I need something to help me. Oh I've got this craving.'

I've told those who need to overcome smoking addiction and alcohol addiction—and it has even helped out in some cases of cocaine addiction—that whenever you get an urge, whenever you get a strong feeling that you've got to have whatever substance it was that you had before, get yourself a whole batch of lemons and whenever you get a craving take a lemon, cut a little hole in the small end of it, and then squeeze it and suck on it. Just keep that with you and squeeze it and suck on it.

Very good, because your body is receiving something because it's craving something. What the lemon juice will do is it will help cleanse the system, will bring you Vitamin C, *will help you regain your control*—very important to do. What the lemon juice does is helps clean out the liver. You can take as many as you can. When you get too much your lips may get a little puckered and you may have a little lemon sore on the inside of your mouth temporarily, but you can overcome that. That helps cleanse the liver, helps end the urge.

James 1:13: "Do not let anyone who is tempted say, 'I am being tempted by God' because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil.*" It's your own lust. It is Satan the devil. It is the society around you.

Let's put in there another thing that unhinges your mind and sets you up for all kinds of addiction is the music—the rock music, the rap music and all of that. I tell you the most brainless people in the world are those who drive through the neighborhood with the windows down and their low-booming box going BOOM! BOOM! and the whole neighborhood is shaking! Every house is shaking as they drive by, and they sit there and nod their heads: 'Hey, I'm cool!'

Verse 14: "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and is enticed by his own lust." The temptation comes along and starts drawing you away and then you're entrapped by your own lust, your own selfishness, your own desire to please the self and to feed the addiction.

When you give into that, v 15: "And after lust has conceived..." A process that takes place, and each point along the line you can say *NO*, you can get up and run away from it, you can go get away from it, you can replace your thoughts with something else, you can do something else. In cases I've mentioned, grab a lemon.

"...after lust is conceived, it gives birth to

sin; and sin...” There’s a process; all of this you can stop up to the point of sin.

“...when it is completely finished, brings forth death... [that’s the end result of all of this] ...Do not deceive yourselves, my beloved brethren” (vs 15-16). Every time you justify giving into a sin or temptation, you are deceiving yourself and you’re staying in deception, and you are serving self and Satan.

Let’s talk a little bit about drug addiction for senior citizens. A lot of people are on drugs for many different things. A lot of senior citizen like to talk about the drugs that they have and say, ‘I take this one and I take that one. What do you take?’ The biggest drug-pushers now are the pharmacies and the drug companies.

If for example, Jim and Betty Hyles—way past 60 and into their 70s—they were talking to someone and they said, ‘How old are you?’ They were surprised when they told them what their age was. Then they said, ‘By the way we don’t take any medicine.’ *You don’t take any medicine! Why? They try and take care of themselves and eat right and so forth!*

A lot of senior citizens are addicts to the medicines that the doctors give you, and you are as much hooked as the addict that shoots up cocaine or heroine that you condemn! A lot of it is because you have not taken care of your health as you’ve gotten older. That’s a struggle. I know what that’s like and I have to take care of my health. I’ve had to learn. I’ve had to just *come to myself* and say, ‘Fred, if you don’t take care of yourself nobody will.’

Just as an aside for people who don’t know the Word of God. You need to understand about clean and unclean meats. A lot of sicknesses are caused by pork, by shrimp, by lobster, by all the things that God said don’t eat. And the there’s a reason He said don’t eat it, because He wants you to be healthy.

What do you do mentally? How do you handle it mentally? Proverbs 5:20: “For why will you, my son, be ravished with a strange woman...” Substitute that for whatever the addiction is.

- Will you be ravaged by marijuana? cocaine? methamphetamine?
- Will you be ravaged by pornography?
- Will you be ravaged by prescription drugs?

Whatever it is just put that in there and that’s what it is.

“...and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man *are* before the eyes of the LORD, and He ponders all his paths” (vs 20-21).

- God is there to help you!

- God is there to give you the strength that you need!

That’s why the book of Proverbs, as well as the whole Bible. Here’s a key; you can bank on this. What is it they say? *‘Take it to the bank.’*

Verse 22: “His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be held with the cords of his sins.” In other words, he’s going to be a complete slave to his lusts and his sins, and that’s what’s going to control him.

Now, if he doesn’t get a hold of himself and begin to work at overcoming the addiction, v 23: “**He shall die** without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall breathe his last.” That’s talking about an awful lot of people in the world today; an awful lot of people with the problems and difficulties that they are in.

Proverbs 6:20: “My son, keep your father’s commandments, and do not forsake the instruction of your mother.” Again, *reprogramming* your mind. Consider your Father: *God!* Consider your mother as it were: *the Church*, but not in the strictest sense.

Verse 21: “Bind them continually upon your heart...” Notice how many times we’ve talked about *the heart* and what you need to do to control your thoughts. **Bind them!**

- Make it a part of the way that *you think!*
- Make it a part of the way that *you act!*

This is the only way you’re going to get reprogrammed! It’s not going to happen any other way.

That’s why some of these programs that are by the state—the state can’t tell you about God because they’re forbidden—have a 3-step, 8-step or 12-step program that they go through. It only takes you so far; that’s why there are so many repeats. Those that go through the drug rehab sometimes they’ve got to go through two, three, four, sometimes five times, until they get to the point they say, ‘I’m tired of it and I’ve got to stop.’ What happens? *They finally made the choice they’ve got to quit!*

Here’s a way you won’t have to go back and repeat: “...tie them around your neck. When you go, they shall lead you; when you sleep, they shall keep you; and when you awake, they shall talk with you” (vs 21-22).

What does that mean? *Every person talks to himself all day long!* That’s called *thinking within!* So, if you have the laws and commandments of God that you are thinking on, it is going to talk with you as you go. In other words, *you’re going to think in the right way!* It’s going to help you overcome—

'Get rid of stinkin' thinkin'!' {note sermon: *Stinkin' Thinkin'*!}

(go to the next track)

I need to also mention something that's important: There are a lot of medications that people need. They may not necessarily be addictive medications, but they need them. If you're in that category, then that's fine; take those, no problem. However, do yourself a favor and do some research because there are a lot of things that you can find with natural remedies, herbs, and things like this which will help you.

For example: I just talked to a diabetic up in the Northwest, and he's had a terrible diabetic problem for a long time. So, he found out about cinnamon and started taking quite a bit of cinnamon and, lo and behold, he's lost 85 lbs and he has cut his insulin that he has to take every day in half. He told his doctor what he's doing. He said it works, and as long as it works, keep at it. He said, 'You're better off.'

So, look at that with other things, too. There are a lot of things that can be done to help your body and your system so you can function well without having to be on various drugs and medications. Lots of times a doctor will say you need this and you need that and you need the other thing. You may or may not need them; you need to find out for yourself because most doctors operate their practice based upon their malpractice insurance policies. They prescribe things for people that they really don't need to cover themselves in case of a lawsuit. You need to realize that. A lot of doctors do not practice to help you, they practice to minimize their malpractice insurance. Some doctors have to pay \$200,000 a year malpractice insurance. So, you can understand where they're coming from, which then gets back to another whole thing about not only are we to 'guard the door of our mind' but maybe we ought to say, *we ought to guard the door of our stomachs*—what goes in it and what we put there!

Jim was telling me about a woman who had been consigned to drugs because of mental difficulties, emotional problems and the state said, 'You need this and we'll provide it for you. You can get your prescription over here.' She took it and gained weight and gained weight and he saw her recently at a local restaurant and he kept looking at her and looking at her and said, 'I know this woman.' So, he went up and said, 'Are you So-and-so?' and she said, 'Yeah!' He said, 'My, you really lost a lot of weight.' She said, 'Yes, I just had to make up my mind to stop these medicines and lose weight.' She figured it out herself!

What does that tell you? That comes right in to what we've said all along: ***You have got to come***

to yourself and make the decision and commit to doing it! Not giving excuses; not blaming other people, but take responsibility for yourself: your mind, your body and your life!

Also another suggestion was brought up with this. A man went to a doctor and said, 'I'm having trouble sleeping and now he's discovered that his problem in sleeping was not what the doctor thought it was. The doctor said, rather than give him any real understanding, he said, 'here, take this drug.' He said, 'What is it?' *Oh, it's not addictive.* What you're up against is this: A lot of the drug salesmen convince the doctors to prescribe these things and give samples of it. So, what this man did was he went home checked up the drug on the Internet and the first thing it said was, 'This drug is addictive.'

You need to understand, people can get themselves in very bad situation when they give the responsibility of their health and their bodies and their minds to professional people who are locked into a system in the way that they do things.

They're able to help a lot of people. They're able to do a lot of good. There is a place for MDs, there is a place for chiropractors, there is a place for acupuncture, there is place for herbs, etc. But it's got to be in the right way. Now, there are a lot of doctors who are so busy that they have their nurses line them up and overbook and run them in and run them out, give them this, give them that—not even checking what to do. Please understand this: Doctors are not taught anything about nutrition!

A good book you need to get is *Natural Cures: "They" Don't Want You to Know About* by Kevin Trudeau. You might be surprised if you are on a lot of prescription drugs, that you can probably reduce the amount that you are taking or eliminate them altogether. You need to look at that, because you may be in the addicted position and think you're addicted because 'the doctor' has prescribed it. Remember, I did mention addiction to prescription drugs when we first started.

Proverbs 6:23—this is what the world does not like. "For the commandment *is* a lamp..." We are living in a dark world and you need to see where you're going, and the commandments give you light.

"...and the law *is* light, and **reproofs of instruction** are the way of life" (v 23). *Instructions which tell you to do this; don't do that! Follow this; don't follow that! This is evil; this is good!*

Verse 24: "To keep thee from the evil woman... [whatever your addiction is, put it in there] ...from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman"

Isn't that what it is when all the dealers come along. 'Here, try some.' *How much does it cost?* 'It's free, try it.' **Get them hooked!** That's what they did with crack cocaine. Destroyed lives! Destroyed communities! Destroyed whole areas of big cities! It was hard to get those crack addicts off of it. Some of them, the only way they could get them out of the addictions was because they had committed crimes and they had to go to jail and they couldn't get any there. However, there are smugglers of drugs who bring it right into the jails. I've heard people say, 'When I was in jail for a drug thing, I could have gotten it right there.' Right here in Hollister, what did they find here recently? *A probation officer, working for the county, was pushing drugs and carrying a gun!* How corrupt is the world? We'll talk about what you need to do.

Verse 25: "Do not lust after her beauty..."—or after the effect that you want from the drug or whatever it is.

"...in your heart... [all these decisions are *within*] ... nor let her seduce you with her eyelids" (v 25). Where do you first see that? *On Bug Bunny cartoons!* Minnie Mouse would flutter, move her eyelids, and what do they have? Look at the look of every woman on the cover of every woman's magazine and what do you find? *Some kind of look! Some kind of stare? Something!*

Verse 26: "For by means of a harlot... [or an addictions] ...*a man is vanquished* to a piece of bread, and the adulteress... [or drug dealer] ...will hunt for the precious life"—or the pedophile, or the pornographer.

Verse 27: "Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" (vs 27-28). Then it talks about adultery and all those sort of things.

I just found out here recently that there was a man (not in the Church but one of the relatives was in the Church) who happened to work on one of these offshore oil platforms. He was gone two weeks and home two weeks and work two, and his wife, while he was gone two weeks, had another man on the side; just before she divorced him and took everything. The judge agreed to give her everything and make him pay for all her debts, because that's how crooked the system is. You get the book *The Marketing of Evil*—there's a whole section in there on the 'divorce industry' and how much they are supported by the government.

What happened? *He caught her and she left!* Got everything! Unless you have a commitment to God, **believe in God, believe God, keep His commandments**, you're always going to have the

subterfuge of deceitful human nature: whether it be man, whether it be woman, whether it be boy, whether it be girl, whether it is young, whether it is old. Whatever your situation is it's going to be there, and it's going to cause you terrible and miserable things in your life.

Verse 32: "But whoever commits adultery *with* a woman..." Whoever becomes addicted to any of the forms of addictions that we've been talking about—especially substance abuse:

"...understanding; he *who* does it destroys his own soul" (v 32).

- destroy your mind
- destroy your heart
- destroy your ability:
 - ✓ to think
 - ✓ to reason
 - ✓ to work!

All of those things are destroyed!

Verse 33: "He shall get a wound and dishonor; and his shame shall not be wiped away." That is unless you change and repent and turn to God! Amazing!

Here's what the book of Proverbs does. It's called *wisdom!* Wisdom that comes from God, that's available to everyone in the world, not just those in the Church—everyone in the world.

- right and wrong
- good and evil
- Truth and error

The first place to come, in making up your mind, is to realize there are absolutes and you need to begin thinking in the terms of absolutes, not in the realm of the gray areas where temptation lurks.

Proverbs 8:1: "Does not wisdom call? And does not understanding put forth her voice?" How many books are out there written by how many people saying:

- get rid of this
- stop this
- how to overcome drugs
- how to overcome family problems
- how to overcome all of these difficulties

These are written by people who have wisdom that God has provided, that is there in the world and it is much like we find here in the book of Proverbs.

Verse 2: "She stands in the top of high places, by the place where the paths meet." In other words, it's out there for you to see and hear and understand.

Verse 5: “O you simple ones, **understand wisdom...**” Begin to make right decisions. That’s what the whole book of Proverbs is about—to *give you wisdom! To give you the means of making the choices!*

“...and, you fools, be of an understanding heart.... [Listen to these things!] ...Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips *shall be right things*” (vs 5-6). Proverbs 8-9 are introducing the rest of the book of Proverbs, because you’ll see when we get to Prov. 10 it suddenly changes. Proverbs 1-9 is setting the stage so that you can begin to use the Proverbs in a right way and understand what they are about.

Verse 7: “For my mouth shall speak truth...” Let’s understand something: Truth is what you need to seek in everything!

“...and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.... [starting to get the contrast: truth and wickedness] ...All the words of my mouth *are* in righteousness; there is nothing twisted or perverse in them. **They are all plain to him who understands, and right to those that find knowledge.** Receive my instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom *is* better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it” (vs 7-11).

If you lose your mind, your emotions, your health, you can’t buy it with those things. That’s what it’s talking about. Read all the rest of it! Study the Proverbs on your knees. What do I mean by that? *Obviously, you can’t do it all at once!* You open your Bible to the book of Proverbs and you start reading and praying and studying; ask God, ‘Help me to understand. Help me to put this together.’

You don’t have to be there with your eyes closed. A lot of people think the way you pray is point your hand like this upward to heaven and you close your eyes and you mutter. **No!** Right while you’re reading it you can pray. Ask for understanding. It’s going to take time. This is a long-term project and if you need to, go back and do it again. Always come back and refresh your memory with it, because this is going to help you.

Verse 32: “And now, therefore, hearken unto me, O you children, for blessed *are those who keep my ways.*”

- Are you tired of the curses and all the penalties that come along from the addiction that you’re in?
- Are you tired of the self-deception and the lies that you’ve been telling yourself, that other people have been telling you?

- Are you tired of being depressed and having your mind all messed up because of these things?

Listen, v 33: “Hear instruction, and be wise, and do not refuse it.” Don’t say, ‘Oh well, it’s just some preacher!’ *or* ‘He’s some religious nut!’ Whatever!

Verse 34: “Blessed *is* the man who hears me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.” Anxiously anticipating how you can use the new Truth that you are coming across in the book of Proverbs.

Verse 35: “For whoever finds me finds life and shall obtain favor from the LORD.” God will bless you! Even in the letter of the Law, even in the society in general. Where did we start out? *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God!* Every human being will benefit from it.

Verse 36: “But he who sins against me **wrongs his own soul...** [you’re doing it to yourself!] ...all who hate me... [can’t stand God, don’t want God, don’t want the Bible, get rid of it, it’s too restrictive] ...love death.” You think about that!

Let’s just do this. Why don’t you do a survey of all the famous rock stars who are drug addicts and great abominable sinners in most cases. Most of their music is made to destroy your mind and get you to give into all these various addictions that we’ve been talking about.

As David Kupelian brought out in his book *The Marketing of Evil*, one of the first songs that came along that started people into thinking along promiscuous lines and then one step leads to another is this: *If You Can’t Be with the One You Love, Love the One You are With.* That sounds innocent enough. ‘Oh that rhymes, isn’t that interesting?’ Set to a nice tune. But it programs the mind for promiscuity. “...all who hate me love death.” There you go, that’s it!

Proverbs 9:6: “Forsake the foolish and live...” If you’ve got friends that pull you down, they’re not your friends. If you’ve got friends that pressure you and intimidate you to go along with what they want to do, which is sinful—especially if you’re a teenager or a young person. You’ve got to go along and get along with everybody. You have been brainwashed in school in the herd mentality. You’ve got to have people around. You can’t do anything alone. That’s exactly what Satan wants to lead you astray.

It was brought about in an ad, which talks about friends and what they do, and peer pressure. Corporations are out to make you buy what they want. Here’s this one ad: This daughter comes up

and says, 'Dad, I need 80-bucks.' He looks up from whatever he was doing and says, 'What for?' And she says, 'To buy some jeans. Everybody has them.' You gotta get along, go along; you've got to conform. Why do you have to conform to the herd? He says, 'Let's go look at it.' They went and found it online. Now, I don't know if he ordered it online, but I think the gist of it was that well, hey, he's going to agree with this because he's and investor and now he's going to invest money in this company because they're selling these ridiculous, stupid jeans at \$80 a pop!

You can just repeat that over and over again! 'Oh, I gotta have these shoes because everybody's got 'em. Oh, I gotta wear these baggy jeans, which the crotch is down to the knees and I'm walking on the bottom of the cuff.' You've gotta have this hair hanging down and you've gotta have this black jacket, and you've gotta have these Nike shoes. All original thought—right? **NO!**

- ***You've been programmed!***
- ***You've been had!***
- ***You are addicted!***

Verse 6: "Forsake the foolish and live; and go in the way of understanding. The one who rebukes a scorner gets shame to himself..." (vs 6-7). That's what happens! When you say, 'That's wrong.' *Who are you to tell me what to do? You're just an old fogey!*

"...and the one who rebukes a wicked one gets himself an insult. Do not reprove a scorner, lest he hate you; give rebuke to a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise one, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning." (vs 7-9). Which are you? *You have to make the choice!* Are you willing to *learn and change*? Are you willing to *come to yourself* and repent and overcome these addictions; quit going along with the crowd?

Know this: Jesus said, 'Broad is the way and wide is the gate that lead to death, and many are those who go in that gate.'

Know this: If the whole world does it, stop and think: Why should I? Maybe there are some things that they do that are good. But you have consider and make the choice. That's what we're talking about here in all these things.

Verse 16: "'Whoever is thoughtless... [that is, does not have understanding] ...let him turn in here.'.... [come and sin with me] ...And to one lacking understanding, she says to him, 'Stolen waters are sweet...' (vs 16-17). Oh, this is going to be the best thing that ever happened to you, whether it's:

- a woman
- illicit sex
- a man
- homosexuality—male or female

I mean, we've got to cover the whole thing—don't we? It's kind of like this cartoon that we had about the poor clerk who didn't know what to say with the attack against 'Merry Christmas'; should I say, 'have a good winter season; happy holiday or winter solstice festival. And the woman in the cartoon said, 'Merry Christmas.'

Verse 17: "'Stolen waters are sweet... [this is good; never had anything like it] ... and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.' But he does not know that the dead *are* there; her guests *are* in the depths of the grave" (vs 17-18).

Not many people realize it, but during the Civil War they had hordes of women—prostitutes—following wherever the soldiers went. This program said that more people died of venereal disease than were killed in the Civil War in America. Amazing!

Proverbs 10:1 "The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a glad father..." Here we have a contrast—right and wrong, good and evil, wise and foolish, diligent and sluggard, and so forth.

"...but a foolish son *is* grief to his mother" (v 1).

You go back and you read what God said to Eve, that 'in sorrow shall you bring forth children.' That's not just the pain of childbearing. This sorrow here, 'heaviness of mother,' is because women have more of an emotional attachment to their children than the fathers, and they worry and they stew about their children, and it just becomes heaviness and depressing.

If your children are out there doing things you know they shouldn't do, and you have no control over it and you don't know where they are, and you don't know who they're with—it doesn't matter what age they are, whether they still live in your home, or they have their own home, whatever: 'Heaviness of his mother' regardless of the age.

Verse 2: "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing..." That's clear and easy to understand. Recently, a woman didn't know it, but she got from the bank some counterfeit bills and she didn't know they were counterfeit until she went in to buy something, and now they have a machine where you can put the 20s, 50s, 100s and just lay them on there and it will instantly tell whether it's counterfeit or not.

So, she got \$700 worth of these bills. I think they were \$100 bills—all counterfeit—from the bank! She went to the bank and said, 'Hey, I want

my money, I got these from you.’ They said, ‘Sorry, we’re not responsible for it.’ So now, if you get a \$100 from the bank, have your own little black pen and go over it.

Verse 2: “Treasures of wickedness profit nothing...” How many deaths and murders occur because of trying to split the spoil of illicit gain? How many are in jail now because of trying to get treasures? Look at how many corporate executives have been indicted here in the past three years for what? Back at the end of the 90s when they were bumping up all the oil and the gas and all the electric prices and everything; and they were buying and selling back and forth to each other to create a shortage in the market and all this sort of thing, they found out: Hey, they made billions of dollars. How about Enron—\$11-billion, that was fraud. Those that sold their stock in time lucked out, but the others were left holding the bag.

Verse 2: “Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, **but righteousness delivers from death.**” In other words, do the right thing all the time. Don’t succumb to the temptation or the sin or the desire or the lust. You see how these change into simple to understand things. These are going to help program the mind, reprogram it what you need to do to get your mind squared around.

Verse 3: “The LORD will not allow the soul of the righteous to famish, but He thwarts the desire of the wicked.” True— isn’t it? Whenever you get involved in addiction, what happens? It’s going to cost you a lot of money and it’s going to cost a lot of other people a lot of money. And in the case of teenagers and parents, it’s going to cost the parents a lot of money. It’s going to take away your substance, especially if you get involved, you get arrested, you go to court, you go to jail—and the jails are full of these things! Taking away substance. *Yes, it does!*

Verse 4: “He who deals *with* a lazy hand becomes poor... [which tells you what you need to do] ...but the hand of the diligent makes rich.” Quit being lazy! Why are you poor? *Because you won’t work!* The city of New Orleans is a testament to the whole welfare system of the poor that depend on the handout and they don’t want to work! They had to get out and work and some of them say, ‘Hey, I’m glad I’m working. I’m not going back to New Orleans. I’m not going to be enslaved into that welfare system anymore.’ But it had to take Hurricane Katrina to get them out of there so they could see the difference—*living proverb!*

Verse 5: “He that gathers in summer *is* a wise son...”—because that’s when the crops ripen. You’re not going to go out there in the middle of winter and pick apples. You’re not going to go out there in the middle of the winter and dig up potatoes.

You’re not going to go out there in the middle of the winter and find any fruit or anything you can eat.

Today, all you have to do is run down to supermarket, and we live in an artificial world! You don’t have to work to get your food. You don’t have to dig, you don’t have to plant, you don’t have to sow, you don’t have to harvest—you don’t have to do any of those things—just walk down to the store if it’s close enough or get in your car and go down to the supermarket and VOILA! the world is there for you! Where does milk come from? *Oh, from a carton, mommy!*

I’ll tell you one story on Rachele, she was about three years old when we were living out north of Hollister on Lover’s Lane. We were in the throws of a drought at that time. So, we’re coming back from church and here’s this big area where they had all the sprinklers going to irrigate for the crop. And we’re going along and she says, ‘Look, daddy, it’s raining!’ Because, in her three years she hadn’t seen any rain. She heard about it. So, she says, ‘Look, daddy, it’s raining!’

Notice the last half of this: right and wrong, good and evil: “...but he who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame” (v 5).

Today there are a lot of people who are hooked on drugs, or wasted out on marijuana. You will find in many of the building trades a lot of these guys don’t get up till noon. I know one man who’s having a house built and some of the guys he’s dealing with are so-called ‘recovering’ drug addicts. They don’t show up on time, so what does he do? *He knows where they live, drives down there and sure enough, 10:30 in the morning the guy who’s supposed to be out there working is still in bed!*

You have the other extreme of those who are on methamphetamine they’re so high and hyper they get out there and do it as quickly as they can and they take shortcuts and they have sloppy workmanship. So here it is, right here, right in the book of Proverbs.

Verse 6: “Blessings *are* upon the head of the just, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.” Why is there so much crime? *Because they’re wicked!* They’re not taught the way of God. Just think how much better it would be if the schools could teach the Ten Commandments? Or if the schools could sit down and teach out of the book of Proverbs? Give the children some consciousness of God so that they will have the understanding to know that they have to be responsible for what they do! and they’re going to be held accountable!

Most of the world is in the middle ground. They’re sitting there in the middle ground and they say to their kids: ‘Don’t get involved in pornography. I’ve got this online so you can’t get

into pornography.’ And they’re sitting there reading a catalog from Victoria Secrets or the local paper which the ads for women’s wear are nearly pornographic. And the kid looks at that and says, ‘Huh? I’m not to watch pornography. What are you reading?’ *Oh, well, this is just a catalog!* So you see the things that you’re confronted with.

These things are intended then so you can get your mind reprogrammed in the right way with the Word of God!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 4:3-4
- 2) Proverbs 8:13
- 3) Proverbs 7:1-3
- 4) Proverbs 3:3-4
- 5) Proverbs 4:18-23
- 6) Proverbs 5:8
- 7) James 1:13-16
- 8) Proverbs 5:20-23
- 9) Proverbs 6:20-28, 32-33
- 10) Proverbs 8:1-2, 5-11, 32-36
- 11) Proverbs 9:6-9, 16-18
- 12) Proverbs 10:1-6

Also referenced:

Books:

- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Bad Childhood, Good Life* by Dr. Laura Schlessinger
- *Natural Cures “They” Don’t Want you to Know About* by Kevin Trudeau
- *The Marketing of Evil* by David Kupelian

from: *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*—Appendix H: How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets

Sermon: *Stinkin’ Thinkin’*

FRC:bo
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The Addicted Society V Heal Your Body, Your Mind and Your Spirit

Fred R. Coulter

Believe it or not, here's something we also need to discuss. On #4 I discussed some health things, and someone asked me if I would discuss some health things. I'll try and do that because there are a lot of health things we need to do because of the way that the food supply is today, that we really need to take care of ourselves with a great deal of diligence.

Half of Americans use prescription drugs. In the case of an illness and you really need them, then that's fine. But let me just suggest one book that you might get; I'm not suggesting throw away your prescription drugs, because you may need them. But what I'm suggesting is that you investigate and see. This is particularly true for anyone who has been addicted, that you do not make a substitution addiction for your illegal drug addiction, which is very easy to do.

Now, let me mention in order of severity from least to worst. A television addiction, a music addiction; you have to be very, very careful with music, too. Just to give you an example: I got the car washed the other day and it was about 8:50 in the morning and I'm sitting there sipping on a cup of coffee and guess what they have playing? *The first hard rock of Elvis Presley*. Banging away at 8:50 in the morning! I'm sitting there drinking coffee, trying to wake up, get ready for the day and all this sort of thing.

So, I asked the gal, 'Could you please ask the manager if he could put some softer music on—it's kind of nice to wake up to something pleasant.' So, she went back and turned it off. I said, 'Thank you, I do appreciate that.' But, I'm sure she turned it up as soon as I went out to get the car. Here's this other lady standing there and I said, 'Boy, that's sure nice to have it quiet. That sort of pounds into your head—doesn't it?' She said, 'Oh, that's nothing,' she pulled out her iPod and said, 'You'd be surprised what I have to keep me going all day long.' So, she's got her iPod with all the rock music that she pounds into her head all day long. I just looked at her and I said, 'That's kind of sad.' It is, that you have to have your life governed by someone else. So, TV addiction: you can turn off the switch. Music addiction: You can turn off the player.

When you get into prescription drugs then you have to decide how you're going to take care of yourself. One book I would recommend is this—there's a new edition of it—you've probably seen it advertised on television. The author is Kevin

Trudeau and it is: *Natural Cures "They" Don't Want You to Know*—very, very good. By the way, he says, don't eat pork, don't eat shrimp, don't eat lobsters, and the best rest you can get is from Friday night to Saturday night, because of the cycle of the body and everything else. Maybe he's a 'closet Christian'—who knows!

Then you start getting into substance abuse, which then we can label cigarettes, then marijuana. The problem with marijuana is that lot of people who have been on harder drugs go back up the scale to marijuana because they say marijuana is not a drug. Well, all they're doing is substituting a worse evil for what they consider a less evil. Then you go down the line and the next one would be cocaine. Worst than that is crack cocaine. Then you get into heroine and the worst of all is methamphetamines because of what they do. The substances that they use to make 'meth' are so absolutely deteriorating to the body.

Handout: *Brain Can Bounce Back After Meth-users Quit*. That's an important thing. We won't read through it, that's an important thing because that means there is hope for the 'meth' addicts. Look at pg. 2 and look at what happens to people who get hooked on 'meth.' If this doesn't backup what the Proverbs say: 'In the end a dart goes through your liver.' All of these drugs affect the liver. It's very, very sad what happens.

What is worse—and this is important to understand for young kids; and this is why in the book *The Marketing of Evil* he says the solution for young people is home-schooling. Home-schooling with what they have online you can really do a good job. Actually, your children come out a whole lot better and they have many more job skills when they come to the job market, because they've learned how to think, they've learned how to apply themselves and so forth. The reason I mention that is because I heard an interview of a man who was a 'meth' addict, and someone gave it to him first when he eight-years-old!

It's a shame that we live in such an evil society, that you have to tell your young children some of the hard facts of life that they may be confronted with. We are in such a society that it's absolutely imperative that you do. At 24 he was finally able to quit, after many, many bouts with recovery; it is profound. 'Meth' makes you feel so good that you think 'this is wonderful, this is the best stuff in the world.' People take it so they can do

more, stay up later, and all they're doing is killing their bodies very quickly.

So, when you look at the pictures of what happens to people who become addicted to 'meth' it is absolutely incredible! That is sad. How much these people can recover that get hooked on that is really something. Then it gives some reports on all the different things about 'meth'; clandestine laboratories and so forth.

Delores saw on the History Channel about 'methamphetamine' laboratories. They can use up to 300 different chemicals to make 'meth.' They can buy a lot of the stuff right off the grocery shelf and put it together. One of the ones they use is Drano. Now if you want to know what that does to your system, just put some down the sink, if you can have a clear, plastic sink to watch it work.

It is so absolutely devastating that now policemen that have to go in and raid 'meth' labs are suffering from the effects of the chemicals that are in those places. In the city of Hollister they have a policy, especially if it's a mobile home, because a lot of them live in mobile homes and do the 'meth' there, they make them move the mobile home out and destroy it. That's how severe it is.

Those who are hooked on it really need the help and the support and the encouragement and they need to also repair their health by supplements, vitamins, juices, liver cleanses and different things like that. Because if they don't, that 'meth' in the liver is going to come out and hit them again, and when it does, if it's just a little bit, then they become angst and cranky and hard to get along with. If it comes out real heavy then it can have more severe results. I tell you, it's amazing!

Guess where the 'meth' capital of the world is? In America? *No, it's not San Bernadino.* Lake Ellsinore? *No!* No place in California. 'Meth' capital of the United States? *Franklin, Missouri!* Virtually all the police there have SWAT team training, because you have to deal with it. It's amazing!

Now, I'm glad we have it here [about the handout]. They have quite a few things here on the 'bounce back' level.

NAA levels didn't bounce back either when abusers kicked their habit, researchers noted, with levels staying more or less the same years later. However, former methamphetamine users who have been off the drug for one to six months showed elevated CHO levels suggestive of neuron growth.

When you take these drugs you actually sever the connections between brain cells—these little fiber neuro growths.

While those who have been off the drug one to five years had CHO levels equal to those of a healthy controlled group.

So there is a recovery period, and they can recover. If you have the right kind of diet, the right kind of supplements and eating the right kind of food and probably drinking a lot of juices to purge your system, then the recovery level will probably be a whole lot easier. *So, that's hope!*

In all of these situations there has to be a condemnation of the drug. There has to be a condemnation of the practice. But there also has to be *hope* for the addict that they can get out of it.

What I'm trying to do here is show how they can recover; how they reprogram their minds. They have to **repent**, then there has to be **recovery** and whatever support group they need, wherever they can get that, they need that. But, you can't give yourself any *fudge-factor!* You've got to stick with it. They have to be very disciplined in it.

We're going to spend all the time in the book of Proverbs, because the book of Proverbs is very important in getting the mind programmed the way it needs to. The book of Proverbs is very important for young people so that they can get the values of right and wrong, good and evil, set! One of the problems that you have in public schools today is that beginning very early they can't teach them absolute moral values, because that would be akin to teaching religion in schools.

I've got an article here: *Erasing of Christianity in America.* That's what they have done. We're going to see another generation rising here that is going to overwhelm the so-called conservative movement. You can see this anywhere, anytime. Watch any sports event, especially college sports events. And when they show a shot of the audience and the students and everything there, just think of this: They've grown up in a public school system where there is no God. They've grown up in a public school system where everything is relative—meaning: *If you have an opinion and an idea and it's good for you, then it's truth for you.* What happens is that in that frame of mind where everything is relative, what you believe is true so you look to see things that will prove what you believe is true.

Whereas, those who know and understand the Bible, when they see it then they believe it, rather than believe it then see it. There's a difference. And if you've watched anything of the confirmation hearings of Judge Alito and Roberts, you'll see that's exactly what they did. Those who were against them framed what they believe and then came after them to find it. That's how they

work, rather than saying, ‘What is Truth and let’s follow the Truth.’

One thing that’s going to help every addict is this, and also all young people: Not to scare them, not to give them fear, but to know that God is always there and that they can always cry out to God. They can always ask God for help.

This is quite a verse, Proverbs 15:3: “The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” You can tie that in with the sermons that I did *The Spirit of God, The Spirit of Man, The Seven Spirits of God*.

Verse 4: “A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life...” Do you see the contrast here? Wherever the Proverbs condemns and evil, it gives a way out—showing the right and the wrong. This is what addicts need. They need wholesome talking or speaking.

“...but perverseness in it crushes the spirit” (v 4). That’s quite something—isn’t it? Everyone who has been addicted to something has come to the point that you have blurred the standards enough that you don’t think it’s going to happen to you. ‘Oh well, I can handle this. I won’t get addicted.’ And guess what, BAM! it happens.

So, if you know anyone who has an addiction problem they need to overcome, encourage them and let them know, yes, it can be overcome! But they really need to grasp a hold of it themselves. When they come to that point then they can make progress.

Fear:

Let’s look at some things here concerning *fear*. Prov. 10 is a sudden shift in the book of Proverbs. Prov. 1-9 is all the preparation coming up to chapter 10. Here then we have the good/the evil, the right/the wrong, righteousness, wrong kind of fear/good kind of fear. So, the thing we’re going to look at is the two kinds of fear. Whenever someone is addicted they have fears, and they try and overcome the fears by denying the reality—that’s what happens.

Just like how many people still smoke today but know that it causes cancer. Yet, you see them smoke. They don’t think it’s going to come upon them, or they think, ‘Well, if I do this or I do that or if I do the other thing, then it won’t come upon me.’

But here is a truism in life that everyone needs to understand, Proverbs 10:24: “The fears of the wicked shall come upon him...” Just like Job said, ‘That which I greatly feared has come upon me.’ God says to the wicked that He will bring the fear upon them.

“...**but...**” (v 24). Now you see the complete opposite; this is why the Proverbs are so good, because what is so important for any addict to overcome an addiction is to begin to think in absolutes:

- right/wrong
- good/evil
- resist sin
- resist temptation
- yield to God.

Reprogram your mind with these Proverbs. Read and study them over and over again.

“...the desire of the righteous shall be granted” (v 24). If you want good things to happen, you have to be righteous with God—even in the letter of the Law. Since God is not calling people in the world—the calling to salvation is a special calling—God expects everyone in the world to live by *the letter of His laws and commandments*. They are blessed if they do.

The whole thing that the Church of God has, unfortunately—in condemning sin and condemning the world—not realized how God will deal with is those in the *letter of the Law* if they obey Him. That’s why you see many programs that work. Many people who follow the *letter of the Law*. We have a lot of *letter of the Law Christians*—don’t we? They take some of the things of Christianity and they have certain amount of blessings because of it, though they may not necessarily be called to salvation. So, this is important to realize. You can’t say, ‘Unless you’re converted there’s no hope.’ There’s got to be some hope even in this physical life. Then, if they’re successful in that, then maybe God can begin to call them and deal with them.

That’s why people who confess their sins to God, not knowing anything about salvation, if they confess their sins and repent of them, God will forgive them to the *letter of the Law*. **He will!** That’s important to understand. So, that people who are addicts can have hope. We don’t want to come along and say, ‘You’re an addict. Unless you’re converted you’re going o hell and burn,’ because that’ll never work!

Good Fear:

All right, let’s look at some good fear. You take these pictures of these poor people who were addicted to ‘meth,’ v 27: “**The fear of the LORD prolongs days...**” They can change. They can turn around. They can cleanse their bodies and cleanse their minds. Reprogram their minds with the Proverbs and the Word of God.

“...but the expectation of the wicked shall perish” (v 27). That’s why the Proverbs are good.

They show this contrast. This is easy for them to understand. Those who have been addicted need things that are easy to understand, that are easy to remember.

Proverbs 14:2: “He that walks in his uprightness fears the LORD...” That is keeping the commandments of God, which are righteous; the laws of God, which are righteous.

“...but *he who is* perverse in his ways despises Him” (v 2). Everyone that comes out of it. They’re going to have to be dealing with friends that are fellow-addicts. When they come out of it, at first, they’re going to be ridiculed. ‘Oh, what are you trying to do?’ They’re going to be ridiculed. So, don’t worry about people not caring for you. Maybe some of the friends that you’ve had in the past, that you considered friends, are really not friends because they got you addicted. And if they despise you when you’re coming out of it, walk away and leave them!

Verse 16: “**A wise man fears and departs from evil.**...” That’s a good kind of fear. Fear of God, fear of evil—and with addictions you’ve got to stay away from it. You’ve got to get totally out of it. If necessary, you have to move out of the area that you are in. Sometimes, in many cases, they have to do that, because there’s just so much there.

“...but the fool rages, and is confident” (v 16). Quite a contrast—isn’t it?

Verse 26: “In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence...” That is anyone who has been hooked on any kind of drugs, that’s what they need, *confidence!* This fear of God then is going to give them the confidence that ***God will hear them! God will help them!*** As long as they are using the way of God and the Proverbs of God to get their minds reoriented and reconnected and reprogrammed, ***God is going to hear them.***

“...and His children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death” (vs 26-27).

- give yourself a space
- give yourself a cushion
- set some rules for yourself that:
 - ✓ you won’t do this
 - ✓ you won’t do that
 - ✓ you won’t do the other thing

and

- ✓ you will do this
- ✓ you will do that
- ✓ you will do the other thing

Whatever the addiction is, what is the temptation leading up to it? How quickly can you recognize it and stop it? Each one of us are

responsible for ourselves, what goes in our minds, what goes in our bodies, etc., etc. God gave that responsibility to us. So, if we have *the fear of God to depart from evil; the snares of death.*

I look back on my childhood and my teen life and my early adult life and I can see that there were certain key turning points where I had to make a decision. What was right? What was wrong? What was I going to do? I can also look back and see that, yes, I’m convinced that God had a hand in giving me the right choice. That’s the frame of mind that we need. This is something that needs to be.

You’re going to have a lot of temptations if you’ve been hooked. You’re going to have times when you’re going to stumble and fail. Do not get discouraged. Remember this: ***As long as there is life, there is hope!*** Remember that! Here’s what you do. You’re probably, as well as all of us, because we sin, you’re going to have to confess your sins daily. You’re going to have ask for God’s mercy daily. That’s an important thing. I know I do! One of the most important things in relying on God is this: ***Understand that you are not adequate yourself!*** I’m not adequate myself for anything. In teaching and preaching the Word of God, if I try and do it on my own because I’m some big thing, then sure enough I’m going to fall right on my face.

We all need mercy and Truth all the time, but here’s what it does, here is the key. This is the program on getting your mind cleansed, purged, as well as taking care of your physical body with the things you need to do.

Proverbs 16:6 “By mercy and Truth iniquity is purged...” That’s how it’s going to be wiped out of your mind. Those who are addicted to pornography, you have to have your mind cleansed. You’ve got to stay away from it. You can’t do it. You can’t watch it. You’ve got to count it the most evil thing in the world. Just like a person addicted to a hard substance. You’ve got to have ***mercy and Truth. Repentance to God, mercy and forgiveness for your sins and replace it with Truth.*** What is the Truth?

- the Word of God
- the laws of God
- the commandments of God
- the teachings of Jesus Christ

“...and by the fear of the LORD *men* turn away from evil.” Again, notice how much the *fear of God* is important! As I mentioned before, the *fear of God restores your conscience!* When you get into compromising, everything is relative, nothing is right, nothing is wrong, whatever you believe if you think it’s good, it’s good; if you think it’s bad, it’s bad; *you have to completely reorient your mind.* So,

this is how you do it. You must develop a conscience, which then is going to be the automatic trigger of what's right, what's wrong, what's good, what's evil. This is going to give you a barrier and a buffer so that you are not going to be taken down by temptations. That's why when you read in 1-Cor. 6, what is the solution for sex sins? What does Paul say? *Flee fornication! Why? Because you can't dabble in it, because if you dabble in it, you're going to go down!* You've got to get away from it. This is the same thing here.

Verse 7: "When a man's ways please the LORD..." It's possible to please the Lord. Is not God pleased whenever anyone is seeking Him? *Yes, indeed!*

"...He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." That's what you need to rely on, especially when you start overcoming, especially when you are having the problems of temptation with the addiction coming along. But give yourself more and more space from being in situations where you're going to be tempted and taken down.

Wisdom and Foolishness:

Let's look at some other things. Let's look at the wise and the foolish, because this is important to do. Just realize this: Part of repentance and part of admitting what is wrong is to really say, 'Oh, God, I have been foolish and dumb and ignorant.' So, let's look at some things comparing wisdom and foolishness and so forth.

Proverbs 10:8: "The wise in heart will receive commandments..." Instead of having resistance toward the commandments of God, which is foolish, then you're going to be wise. You will *receive* them. You'll *receive* the Word of God. You'll receive instruction from those who are trying to help you.

"...but a prating fool shall fall" (v 8). In other words, if you don't hear, you don't listen, you're still going to fall.

Verse 9: "He who walks uprightly walks surely: but he who perverts his ways shall be known." There's no way around it.

Here's another thing that's important to realize: When people are coming off addictions, when they make a little progress, they think, Boy! They've really done it! Like one man I know of. He got so addicted that he wouldn't work. He had his own business, he could really do great, he could make fantastic amounts of money, but he got so wasted down on drugs and pot that he wouldn't work. It was hard to get through to him. Finally, I got through to him and he started to go back to

work. But then he slipped back. I said, 'Well, when are you going to go to work?' He said, 'Well, I've been to work, yesterday.' I said, 'You've got to do it every day.' One day is fine, but the next day is another day.

Here's the key, because it's going to be hard, as an addict you're used to giving in to the worst and not making yourself do anything. It's important for this:

Proverbs 11:27: "He that diligently seeks good seeks favor..."

- if you want God to bless you, *be diligent*
- if you want God to help you, *you do your part*
- if you want to get your mind *reoriented*—which is possible—and *reprogrammed*, and your brain *reconnected* the way it should be, *be diligent!*

Take every day, make sure that every day you start out:

- with the determination
- with the diligence
- with the guarding of your mind

to not succumb to any temptations! You've got to talk with yourself. You've got to tell yourself: Today's a new day. I made it through yesterday.

- What am I going to do today?
- Am I going to fear God?
- Am I going to keep His commandments?
- Am I going to resist temptation?
- What am I going to do when I'm confronted with some of my old friends?
- How am I going to handle it?
 - ✓ you've got to prepare yourself for it
 - ✓ you've got to think ahead about it

That's what it is here, v 27: "He who diligently seeks good seeks favor; but he who seeks mischief, it shall come to him." Always does!

Verse 29: "He who troubles his own house shall inherit the wind, and the fool *shall be* servant to the wise in heart. The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life, and he who wins souls *is* wise" (vs 29-30). So, let it all be a tree of life, *let it heal you!* You have to heal ***your body, your mind and your spirit.*** All of that can be healed. That's all a part of overcoming and changing.

We've talked about a *tree of life*, here it talks about a *well of life*, Proverbs 10:11: "The mouth of a righteous one *is* a well of life..."—to impart and teach knowledge, and that's what the Proverbs is all about, to give you that.

"...but violence covers the mouth of the wicked. Hatred stirs up strifes, but love covers all

sins” (vs 11-12). That’s what we are dealing with here. In starting out to overcome the addictions, starting out to change the past habit patterns, addiction patterns, thought patterns, and yes, sleep patterns, eating patterns—the addict’s life is totally upside down!

What we are teaching is *the love of God*. That’s what John said, ‘For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome.’ What we are trying to do and what you are trying to do is, through the forgiveness of God *you are covering the sins and you are overcoming the past!* As you overcome the past you’re covering sins. If you’re dealing with anyone who has been an addict, continually encourage them. You can warn them, but *don’t live in the past!* You must take today, every day. That’s one thing that athletes have; they have that mindset that you *take today*. They say, ‘One game at a time.’

What is it that a good athlete is able to do, which every recovering addict needs to learn: *If you make a mistake, learn from it and blot it out!* In the case of overcoming addictions and things like that, repent to God and have Him blot it out and overcome it. He’ll give you the strength to do it. *All of these things are building blocks of recovery.* They’re all right there in the Word of God.

Now, we’ll look at some of the fools, and everyone who has been involved in drug addiction has some sort of foolishness. Foolish to get into it.

Verse 21: “The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom.” Quite a Proverb! Think about that! Think about all the situations where people do foolish things and die—especially teenagers! And especially when you get away from your parents for the first time and you are on your own and you know that you can do things that your parents will probably never find out about, and yea, all of us as teenagers did that! I mean, to say you didn’t, then boy! show me; you’re a perfect person! But know, as we started out, *the eyes of the Lord are everywhere beholding the good and the evil!* So, if you know, *God knows!*

Now, to show you an example of something stupid—and we all do stupid things, we all do foolish things. When I was about 13 or 14 we were blasting off firecrackers for the 4th of July and we have some of these cherry-bombs. You know what cherry-bombs are—don’t you? They’re about an inch and a quarter long, somewhere around there, and they’re about half-inch thick and they’re round and they have a fuse in it. We were lighting off these cherry-bombs.

So I did something very stupid! And God saved me from it, but it was stupid! I wondered what it would be like if I held it in my hand and let it go

off? So I did! BAM! Whoooo, did that hurt! All my fingers and everything was there, and I said, ‘That was stupid, that was dumb!’ If my parents would have been there and I would have tried to do it, they would have said, ‘Don’t do that!’ But they weren’t there. So, in my *foolish wisdom* I decided I’ll see how it is.

Unfortunately, that’s how a lot of people get hooked on drugs—try it, you’ll like it, it’s good; it’ll make you *cool*. And then BAM! You look at the pictures of these poor people who have been on drugs—and notice it didn’t take very long if you look at the timeframe—I wonder what they thought *if they came to themselves* and looked in the mirror and then looked at a picture of themselves before and asked: What have I done? Is this not dumb? Is this not foolish?

Don’t let yourself get involved in stupid and foolish things when you’re overcoming!

(go to the next track)

Proverbs 12—here’s the deceitfulness of it. All addictions are deceitful, and all addictions appeal to the lower based lusts of human beings. That you’re going to get something great and special out this. But remember this:

Proverbs 12:15: “**The way of a fool is right in his own eyes...**” If these things come along and they look good, they sound good, they appear good and pressure is put upon you, *think about what’s happening!* Don’t take the explanation that this is *good* or this is *cool*. ‘Well, everybody does it.’ Know this for sure: If everybody does it, *it’s got to be wrong! Except breathing!* That’s the peer pressure that comes along. That’s why God gives so many warnings: Don’t follow the crowd.

Here it is, the fool one way and the one who is wise: “...but **he who listens to advice is wise.**” So, what you’re trying to do in overcoming an addiction is to *recover from foolishness by using wisdom.*

That’s what the whole book of Proverbs is; that’s what the Word of God is, and that’s what those who are trying to help you get across to you. So listen! *Listen!*

Verse 16: “A fool’s wrath is presently known: but a prudent *man* covers shame.” This is what we’re trying to do. We are dealing with a society out there that is so addicted, so hooked on so many things. I fear for the generation that is coming up now, because there is now a complete generation coming out that has had no training in God, no understanding of the Bible, and are now being nurtured on Harry Potter and occultism.

In the book *Occult Holiday or God’s Holy Days—Which?* I talk about Hinduism—one practice

of Hinduism is Deepak Chopra; who wrote in his book *How To Know God* the long and the short of knowing God is this: Know yourself and *when you look in the mirror you see God because God is in you and you are God.*

In Hinduism there is what is called the left-hand way to God. Here's the kind of reasoning that they use: Since God is everywhere—they believe in a pantheistic god: god is in the wall, god is in the ceiling, god is in everything, every person, god is also in the evil and corrupt.

Since that is the premise that they operate on, therefore, the left-hand way to God is to go do the evil and the base things, even sleeping in cemeteries with corpses that are rotting. This is where you get the body-piercing, the tongue-splitting, the tattooing and these shows that are on television now; reality shows! They are base. They are evil. They are teaching people to destroy their consciences and fear by doing things that normal people would not do. What that is doing is presenting the Hindu of the way of the left-hand way to God.

In other words, if you can find God through good, because He's in good, you can also find God through evil because He's in the evil. You talk about perverted thinking! Here Deepak Chopra said, 'Well, it's been a tradition for thousands of years so it must work.' What are people going to believe? All of those that get into it have justification—don't they? That's exactly what we're talking about.

Here's what they're doing in that, Proverbs 14:9 "Fools laugh at sin..." That's what's going to happen, especially for teenagers and young people. When you have to go against the crowd. When you have to go against those who have no morals. They're going to mock it! If you say 'no, I'm not going to do that because I'm not going to get involved in sex, I'm going to save myself until I marry.' *You got to be kidding! Everybody does it!* They'll mock at you. Don't let that bother you. Stand up and walk away. It can be the same thing with drugs. 'Oh, let's go to this party.' And by the way, most parties and most dancing today is designed to break down the moral barriers that you have. If you've ever wondered why they have these flashing lights—strobe lights—*it hypnotizes people!* It gets them in the mood. It gets them into going along with everything that's going on. Then they add to it.

People have given me a lot of books. I have a whole stack of books. Someone just sent me something on rock music and what it does with the strobe lights and everything like this, and how the beat of the music is designed to break down the moral barriers of those who participate in it. Some people may say, 'Ahhhhhh, how can that be?' I'll

just tell you this: If that is not so, then you tell me what causes all of the sin among young people today, if you eliminate that. Rock concerts, by the way, have music that is not designed to listen to. I mean, you hear it, but it is so powerful and they turn up the amps so high and the beat is so absolutely overwhelming that ***it is designed to go through your body.*** The sound actually goes through your body. I wonder if that has to do with the morals and everything like that.

You've all experienced this just a little bit when someone goes down the street with the windows rolled down and he's got this big boom box on and he's got his 200 watt thing in the backseat and he's driving down the street, shaking his head to the beat of it. It comes down the street BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! And as he's going down the street the houses vibrate, your room vibrates! And here, he may be 100 feet away going down the street! ***Think of what that's doing to the mind and to the body!*** Think of what it's going to take to get away from that kind of behavior so you can return to normal. That's really something!

Verse 9: "Fools laugh at sin, but among the righteous *there is favor.*"

Verse 12—key verse, first one to memorize when you come into the knowledge of the Truth: "**There is a way which seems right unto a man...**" That's what we have today: everyone is right, everyone has an opinion, everyone knows how to solve the problems of the world. They won't do it God's way.

"...but the end thereof is the way of death" (v 12). The very first thing! So, whatever you do check it out with the Word of God.

Very important! Here's the very first thing that's most important to do: ***Stop lying to yourself!*** That's very important from this point of view: ***The way that you compromise yourself to sin is to lie to yourself that it's okay!*** Stop lying to yourself! And you're also going to have to *apply some self-correction.* Let's look at some Proverbs here. When you first start out, you're on a difficult path.

Proverbs 15:9: "The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD, but He loves him who pursues righteousness.... [God loves those who follow after righteousness] ...There *is* grievous correction..." (vs 9-10). It's going to be hard.

What about those who are hooked on alcohol so bad that they have the shakes, and they just can't get along without a drink. They have these bad dreams where a lot of them visualize that they're being, in many cases, attacked by things and snakes and all this sort of thing, that their minds are just so out of it. To stop that, 'I just got to have a drink'

when they get the shakes so bad. That happens with heroin! That happens with cocaine! That happens with ‘meth’! That happens with alcohol! The changing of that is *grievous*—you really need help when you’re at that point. You need other people to help you, and you’ve got to do the things to not only build up your resistance health-wise, but set your resolve.

Verse 10: “There *is* grievous correction for him who forsakes the way... [of God] ...and he who hates reproof shall die” (v 10). In many cases, you’re up against a point: *You’re either going to live or you’re going to die.*

Here’s what’s important, v 31: “The ear that hearkens to the reproof of life...”—which is what it is. *It’s correction!* People who want to continue in sin don’t like correction. They just don’t like it!

“...life shall remain among the wise. He who refuses instruction despises his own soul, but he who hearkens to reproof gains understanding” (vs 31-32). What you need to do is go through the book of Proverbs and maybe through the whole Bible

Verse 33: “**The fear of the LORD... [is restoring the conscience] ...is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility**” (vs 31-33). That’s all involved in repenting, and so forth.

Proverbs 12:1: “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge...” What you have to do, you have to come from the point of resisting correction; then hating evil, then you have to come to the point of loving reproof and correction and then loving instruction. What you need is the *saving knowledge* to overcome an addiction.

“...but he who hates correction *is* stupid” (v 1).

Verse 5: “The thoughts of the righteous are right...” That’s what you need to come to, the righteousness of God. It’s going to give you:

- good thinking
- clear thinking
- decision making
- being able to resist sin and resist those things

“...the counsels of the wicked *are* deceit” (v 5). You can go all the way back to Gen. 3 and the Garden of Eden.

Verses 17: “*He who* speaks truth shows forth righteousness, but a false witness deceit. There are those who speak like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise heals.” In other words, what he’s saying here: To face the truth of an addiction is difficult, and the first correction that comes along is like you’re being stabbed! You don’t

like it.

Verse 19: “The lips of truth shall be established forever, but a lying tongue *is* but for a moment. Deceit *is* in the heart of those who imagine evil...” (vs 19-20). This is what you’re going to have to do, because remember what it says there in Jer. 17:9—*The heart is deceitful above all things!*

In order to quit deceiving yourself, you’ve got to admit that you’ve been lying to yourself. And you’ve got admit and forsake all of your faults, deceitful justifications for doing what you’re doing. And then you have to replace that with *Truth*. You have to replace that with *righteousness*. It’s really quite and exercise for you to overcome.

“...but to counselors of peace *there is* joy. There shall no harm befall the righteous, but the wicked shall be filled with trouble” (vs 20-21). You think about what happens to all of those who are addicts:

- How many times do they get arrested?
- How many times do they go to jail?
- How many times do they post bail?
- How many times do they go to rehab?

All of that’s *mischief and difficulty* and the rehab, hopefully, will help. But for some people, the only way to get them off of it, is to do some jail time. However, even in jail you have to be careful, because they can smuggle drugs in there. It still gets down to your own decision.

How to Overcome:

Verse 22—let’s understand that this is important: “Lying lips *are* an abomination to the LORD... [quit lying to yourself, lying to others] ... but those who deal truly *are* His delight.” That’s what God wants you to do—His delight.

Let’s see the program on how to do it. God gives the ways. God shows how. And this is important Proverbs 16:1: “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, are from the LORD.” If you want to get your heart squared around, get your mind squared around, be able to overcome an addiction, you’ve got to have the preparations from God, which is *from His Word!*

Verse 2: “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirits.” God knows. You can trust Him all the time for everything.

- He’s merciful
- He’s kind
- He’s righteous
- He wants you to overcome
- He wants you to change

- He wants you to kick the habit

You've got to do this, v 3: "Commit **your works** unto the LORD... [That's how to do it. The *right works* develop *right thoughts*.] ...and your thoughts shall be established." Because if you're addicted to something, your thoughts are all helter-skelter, they're not established.

- they've got to be established *in Truth*
- they've got to be established *in righteousness*
- they've got to be established *in discipline*

All of that amounts to what you're doing is *building character!* That you can have the strength to say, 'no!' You can have the strength to resist! What will happen, the further and further space you give between yourself and your addiction, the more you're going to understand this. The more that you apply the Proverbs in your life and go through and learn them, think about them and pray about them: study the Proverbs on your knees in a prayerful attitude before God. Let that be correction to you directly from God with His Spirit, which He will do! It's going to take time to do it. Just take it as a project to go through.

Diligence & Discipline:

Let's look at *diligence*, because all of this is going to take *discipline*. *Discipline* is a synonym for *diligence*.

Proverbs 12:24: "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule..." Let's apply this in several ways:

- you have to rule over yourself
- you have to rule over your thoughts
- you have to rule over your lusts and your temptation
- you have to rule over sin

Remember what God told Cain when he brought the wrong kind of offering, God said, 'Sin lies at the door, but you shall rule over it.' Cain wanted to do it *his way* instead of God's way. So, if you're going to overcome: "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule..."

In going through these Proverbs and in setting out a course of overcoming addiction for yourself, you have to be diligent in it. Make yourself a list. Give yourself reminders. Set yourself out a pattern to do so, by using the different things that we have covered here and diligently do it. Then you will rule over yourself. When you rule over yourself, what's going to happen?

- ***You're going to be reliable on the job!***

No more calling in sick when you're not sick, but you're on drugs.

- ***You're going to work better at work!***

- ***You're going to work better at home.***
- ***You're going to treat people better,*** because you're off this addiction, whatever it may be
- ***You're going to have a clearer conscience,*** because you're fearing God and developing a conscience

But you have to do it *diligently!* "...but the lazy shall be under tribute" (v 24). What is the biggest tribute that drug addicts are under? *Paying for the drugs!* They're under tribute because they lose their jobs, they lose their families, they lose their children—all of those things happen. They follow one right after the other. So, you've got to be diligent in it.

They're going to be times when you're depressed. Everyone coming out of any kind of addiction is going to be depressed. Why? *Because they haven't used their minds correctly!*

Verse 25: "Heaviness in the heart of man weighs it down... [That's a way of saying *depression*. Ever been depressed? *Yes!*] ...but a good word makes it glad." How do you get out of depression? *You pray! You study! You get the words of God!* Let them be in your heart and in your mind, and that will lift you up!

What does Paul say? Philip. 4 is what you need to do in time of depression. Let's add to this to this also—let's add one more addiction. We won't really say it's an addiction but a *bad fault*—people who worry all the time that everything is going to go bad, and wonder about how the bad things are going to happen. Sooner or later they do happen—don't they? The way to get out of that kind of thinking, worrying and the way to get out of depression is to set your thoughts aright. Here we have it:

Philippians 4:6: "Do not be anxious about anything..." If you're anxious or have anxiety or you're worrying; what's the old saying? *A worrywart!* If you're a *worrywart*, stop worrying. Ask yourself this: How many of your fears and worry actually took place? *You'll probably find not very many!*

"...but **by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God** in everything." Whatever it is. God:

- help me out of this
- help me to overcome this
- give me mercy and grace
- forgive me my sins

And then begin focusing on the right things.

Verse 7: "And the peace of God..." This is what needs to happen. You need to have the peace of

God, the peace of mind, because all of those who are depressed do not have peace of mind. All of those who are *worrywarts* do not have peace of mind. You have to ask for the peace of God, which comes from God. Wiping out of the sins, cleansing of the heart, cleansing of the mind, all of those together.

“...which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever *things* are true... [that’s what to think on] ...whatever *things* are honorable, whatever *things* are just, whatever *things* are pure, whatever *things* are lovely, whatever *things* are of good report; if *there be* any virtue and if *there be* any praise, **think on these things**.... [that’s how you’re able to do it] Whatever things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, you do also; and the God of peace shall be with you” (vs 7-9).

That’s how to get your mind on that. And this is what’s so important in diligently keeping your heart and your mind and your soul. Because if you do that, God promises you success.

Stop and think for a minute: Every one of these men who teach successful living. I’ve been to some of Zig Ziegler’s things years ago. What does he do? *He goes right back to the Word of God—YEP! He says without God, without love and without Truth* you can’t be successful. He helps a lot of people succeed, and one of things He teaches is that you have to be *diligent!* That’s the key in overcoming.

Proverbs 13:4: “The soul of the sluggard desires and has nothing...” I don’t know what the circumstances are, so I’m not judging the heart. There’s a homeless man that I walked past him and I thought, Fred, you’re going over here to the hotel, it’s warm, it’s comfortable, and you’re going to have a nice bed to sleep in. I turned around and gave him whatever money I had in my pocket. I think it was \$20-25, whatever. He was thankful to get it. Then I asked him, ‘Do you have any place to take a shower.’ *Oh, yeah, I take a shower once a week.* He named the place where he goes.

Here he is, everything he had in his life was in this little cart in a couple of plastic bags, and he’s wrapped with a plastic hood over his head to try and keep the cold out. I said, ‘How long have you been homeless?’ *Twenty-two years!* That blew me away! Though I felt sorry for him, I had to think of this: In 22-years surely he could have come to a condition, if he would have applied himself just a eeny-teeny bit to get out of that situation. And I think that personifies this Proverb 13

Verse 4: “The soul of the sluggard desires and *has* nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be abundantly gratified.” That means to receive the

goodness of everything. That means you’re going to have the riches of everything.

Verse 5: “The righteous hate lying...” That’s what you need to do to quit lying to yourself.

Proverbs 15:19 tells us that a lot of the troubles we have in life are our own difficulties. With the help of God and with the help of the Word of God, and with the help of others *you can come out of it!* Proverbs 15:19: “The way of the sluggard is like a hedge of thorns...” Nothing but trouble in your life everywhere you turn. Nothing works out right. All kinds of problems. All kinds of difficulties.

Notice the contrast: “...but the way of the righteous *is* made plain” (v 19).

- You can see your way through it!
- You can overcome it!
- You can change!

I have gone through this series step-by-step with all these Proverbs to give you a pattern that now you can take that and you can use this to study:

- sit down and write out what you need to do
- sit down and think out what you need to overcome
- list your weaknesses and then give yourself a program:
 - ✓ how do I overcome weaknesses
 - ✓ how do I overcome temptations
- use the Proverbs, which will give you the answer

Proverbs 13:12: “Hope deferred makes the heart sick...” God always gives you hope. He *will* give it to you. It is there. You have to rely on it, but you have to be **diligent** to secure it.

“...but *when* the desire *is* fulfilled, *it is* a tree of life” (v 12). When you receive that hope of overcoming, it’s going to be like a tree of life!

- to restore your mind
- to restore your body
- to restore your heart
- to restore your spirit
- to bring you back to a semblance of normalcy in your physical life

And when you do that, now you are ready to begin seeking the spiritual things of God to help you with spiritual growth and change, because the hope that God gives is eternal life. Of course, that’s the next step.

I hope with this series that we have done on the addicted society **helps define the problem, look at it realistically and gives you some things that you can do to help overcome!**

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 15:3-4
- 2) Proverbs 10: 24, 27
- 3) Proverbs 14:2, 16, 26-27
- 4) Proverbs 16:6-7
- 5) Proverbs 10:8-9
- 6) Proverbs 11:27, 29-30
- 7) Proverbs 10:11-12, 21
- 8) Proverbs 12:15-16
- 9) Proverbs 14:9, 12
- 10) Proverbs 15:9-10, 31-33
- 11) Proverbs 12:1, 5, 17-22
- 12) Proverbs 16:1-3
- 13) Proverbs 12:24-25
- 14) Philippians 4:6-9
- 15) Proverbs 13:4-5
- 16) Proverbs 15:19
- 17) Proverbs 13:12

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 6
- Genesis 3
- Jeremiah 17:9

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Natural Cures—“They” Don’t Want You to Know* by Kevin Trudeau
- *Marketing of Evil* by David Kupelian
- *Occult Holidays or God’s Holy Days—Which?* by Fred R. Coulter
- *How to Know God* by Deepak Chopra

Article: *Erasing of Christianity in America*
by Jon Christian Ryter

Sermon: *The Spirit of God, The Spirit of Man, Seven Spirits of God* #s 1-2

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Nature of Mankind I

Fred R. Coulter

Now, let's come to the next section in the *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, (pg 5 throughout). As we did with the other ones, we'll read through it, we can make comments, questions, we'll look at the Scriptures. And this is really quite a thing here when we come to fully understand it.

The Elohim of the God Family Who later became Jesus Christ personally created Adam and Eve with His own hands. He created them in the image and likeness of God, or Elohim, but a little lower than God. Human beings are made of flesh and blood and do not have inherent immortality.

There's no such thing as an immortal soul. As we already covered, 'the soul that sins it will die.'

However, God has added to the human brain a spirit essence called the "spirit of man." This spiritual dimension in the human brain imparts reasoning power and intellect, and gives human beings the capacity to think, to speak, to learn, to write, to plan, to devise, to create, to build, to control, to teach, to choose, to worship, to build character, and to experience every emotion.

Now, let's look at the Scriptures concerning that. That's very important for us to understand. Let's first of all go to Zechariah 12. And this 'spirit in man' is what distinguishes between men and animals. They've analyzed just the brain-matter of different animals and they have found that the brain-matter is not much different from human beings. But why is it that human beings can do so much more than animals? I guess a whale is supposed to have the largest brain of any mammal in the world, but it can't get out of the sea. And it hasn't built any buildings down there, and it doesn't have any...well, I suppose you can say it goes along the superhighways of the currents of the ocean; but it hasn't built any roads, hasn't constructed anything.

Zechariah 12:1: "The burden of the Word of the LORD for Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches forth the heavens, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the **spirit of man** within him." Made specifically for the human mind. That is what gives man the real ability to think. Now animals have a certain capacity for doing certain things. The other night there was a show about dogs, showing how the dogs have a sense of humor; that if you look at them and understand they can smile and

they like to play games; but if you get angry with them, they get real drawn back and so forth. But that's about the extent of it. Same way even with the gorillas and the orangutans. There's a certain intelligence that they have up to a point. They can teach them certain basic little things—up to a point—but they can't go beyond that. The reason they can't go beyond that is because the animals do not have the 'spirit of man'—which God formed within man.

Now let's go to 1-Corinthians, the second chapter; and here's where the Apostle Paul shows how the 'spirit of man' then uniting with the Spirit of God puts us in a completely different category as far as our standing before God. But it is a spiritual thing, so therefore it's not necessarily just physically discerned. You may be able to see that there's something different about this person, or there's a different attitude that this person has; but just to see them walking down the road, you could not tell who has the Spirit of God and who does not have the Spirit of God.

1-Corinthians 2:11: "For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him?... [which God formed within] ...In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God." So this is important for us to realize, too. Once we receive the Holy Spirit of God then we can begin to understand the things of God. We can't necessarily understand them in the way that we ought to, without the Spirit of God. Now, people can understand certain things of the letter of the law—you shall not kill; you shall not steal—and those things are all derived from the laws of God. But to understand the deep things of God, you see, one of the deep things of God is how Christ came to be Who He was. And the world doesn't understand that. They cannot even comprehend that.

And also, there's another power—which happens to human beings, which can come along—called the *spirit of this world*. Verse 12: "Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God... [*of* in the Greek is 'ek'—means it comes *from* God; not just *of* but *from*; because it is a gift. You repent and are baptized and you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit—it comes *from* God.] ...so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God... ['ek'] ...which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by *the* Holy Spirit *in order* to communicate spiritual things by spiritual

means” (vs 12-13). And that’s how then we’re able to understand the Word of God.

Now, God gave this ‘spirit in mankind’ to be *able to receive* HIS Spirit. That’s why mankind was made a little lower than God; made in the image of God, and then the whole plan and purpose of God as it unfolds.

Let’s come back here to our Belief’s booklet. There’s something else that God did with mankind that He did with no other animal, which is this:

God made male and female [that is mankind] with the capacity to express intimate, personal love for each other as husband and wife...

And of all the creation of God in expressing that physical love, they are the only creatures who are face-to-face. None of the other creatures are face-to-face. And I think that is to show the closeness that mankind will eventually have with God. But also think of it in terms of Christ and the Church, how close then we are going to be. Also He’s given us the unique ability as well as the other animals.

...and through this physical union to create children after their own kind and produce families, clans, tribes and nations.

This is why Satan likes to get in and disturb and tear apart the families. And that’s why every program of Satan the devil is designed to tear away and destroy the family. We’re living in such a world today that there are so many forces out there and the way that the laws are and the land and everything, that our children virtually have very little protection from it. And once they get involved in it there’s very little that even Christian parents can do with them. It becomes very difficult, even though you have good intentions and all of that.

But if we, and the world would know, which we’re going to help bring to the knowledge of the people in the Kingdom of God in the Millennium, the tremendous blessing that will take place because of being able to create children after their own kind. And I’m sure, at that time, that the curse of Eve will be lifted. And I’m sure that childbearing will not be what it is today. Childbearing becomes a very difficult thing in many cases.

Adam and Eve were created sinless but with a nature that was subject to temptation.

If they chose to yield—God did not make them sin. God did not force them to sin. God did not cause them to sin. They had to choose.

...God gave them freedom to choose between obedience and life, or disobedience and death.... [That’s the whole story of all the human race.] ...After they sinned by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God sentenced them to suffer the pain and sorrow of living with a sinful nature and finally to reap the penalty of death. This penalty of death was passed on to all mankind by the physical inheritance of sinful human nature.... [We are born with it!] ...Human nature is inherently and naturally hostile to God and is not subject to His laws and commandments. From birth, human nature is a mixture of good and evil, and all die in Adam. When a person dies, his or her conscious thoughts cease. The body returns to the dust of the earth, and the spirit of man goes back to God. Only through God the Father’s gracious and merciful plan of salvation through Jesus Christ is it possible for a person to be redeemed and saved from this sinful nature of death. God’s ultimate purpose for each human being is complete reconciliation with God the Father through Jesus Christ so that he or she may enter into the Family of God as a literal son or daughter of God, sharing the same eternal existence as God.

Now that, though it is a short statement, contains an awful lot concerning mankind and his nature.

Let’s go back to Genesis, the second chapter now, and let’s see how God set the format here; and how God left it in their hands to choose. And God gave every blessing. God gave everything that man needed. But this also shows the power of choice. God could have made us as robots. He could have made us as automatons. He could have made us as the animals, just to operate by instinct. But He didn’t; *He made us just a little lower than Him!*—and for tremendous purposes.

Now we know that out of the ground—Genesis 2:7: “Then the LORD God formed man *of the* dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” This also proves that the soul is mortal, because the soul was not living until he had the breath of life in him. This tells us quite a bit. Not only in v 26, as we read last time; this tells us God’s intimate relationship with mankind that He desired to have from the beginning. Not like we have today: Where is God? Who is God? How do we find God? And all of this. But a very close relationship. And notice, that’s why He made the Sabbath. And I’ve often thought about that first Sabbath. Boy! That must

have been something! Can you imagine that first Sabbath when God and Adam and Eve were together and God was teaching them and instructing them. That must have been something! They were created with a language already in their minds. We'll see that in just a minute and know why. God also made the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And He also made a garden. Not only did He create the world—"and everything that He saw, behold, It was good!"—now there're some people who believe that everything that God created was evil and it wasn't good; one of the most depressing religions in the world. No, *God made it good!*

Genesis 2:15: "And the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat... [no cost, no charge, no ATM, no banker, no bill at the end of the month] ...But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die'" (vs 15-17).

Now they didn't die that very day that they ate of it; but in dying they received the death sentence in them at that time. So what we find with the creation of Adam and Eve, they were created neutral. They were not against God. They didn't have a hostile nature against God at that time. God set the choices before them, and I firmly believe—sermon, *What the World Would have been Like if Adam and Eve had not Sinned*—I firmly believe that the plan of God would have been worked out in an entirely different way. And that Adam then would be the one to represent God. So we can think on that! All that is is just speculation, we don't know for sure. So the Hebrew here, 'you shall surely die' means 'in dying you shall die'—and we know that he lived to be 930-years-old, which is getting pretty close to about 18 percent of all time as we know in relationship to the revealed time of the Bible.

Verse 18: "And the Lord said, 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make an help suitable... [and that means *compatible*] ...for him.'.... [so it was a special creation]...And out of the ground the Lord formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them... [So there's how we know that he had a built-in language already. How could God instruct Adam if he didn't have consciousness, thought, capacity to choose and a language? *He couldn't have instructed him with anything.* That's why he could not have been like an infant. What can you instruct an infant? Oooooo, that takes a long time to grow to even begin to understand the language. So he was fully operational.] ...And whatever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof. And Adam

gave names to all of the cattle, to the fowl of air, to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help suitable for him" (vs 18-20). And that was part of the object lesson in God doing this; not only to name them, but for Adam to see of all the creation that God had, there was not one that was compatible and suitable for him.

So then, "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof" (v 21). That doesn't mean that men have one less rib than women. The question always comes up: Did Adam have one less rib all the rest of his life? *It's possible that it could have grown back if God did it in a certain way*, but that's not the question that we have here. He didn't take any of the ribs of the animals, but one of the ribs of Adam, and with that then He *built*—as the Hebrew is—a woman and brought her to the man.

Now, there's a great lesson in this—which we'll cover a little later, not at this particular time. In 1-Cor. 11 the man is 'ek'—*from God*; and the woman is 'ek'—*from the man*. And is still true to this day; the man determines the sex of the children. There's nothing anybody can do about it. No movement of any kind, no education of any kind, no thoughts to the contrary of any way—that's the order of creation and God made it that way, and that's the way that it is. After 6,000 years of men trying to do things differently, it's still that way. And there also is a great lesson in that with the Church, which we'll cover here in just a minute, and then we'll come back and finish this.

"And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.... [Whether God said this or whether this was put in there by Moses when he compiled the first five books of the Bible, we do not know.] ...Therefore, shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh.... [Well, obviously, God did not say that to Adam and Eve because He just created them. There was no father to leave, no mother to leave—He just married them. So this was put in there, undoubtedly, by Moses when he compiled the first five books of the Bible. And I think v 24 was *inserted* between 23 and 25.] ...And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (vs 23-25). So their nature was not the kind of nature that we have today.

Now let's look at the lesson we're going to have. Let's go to Ephesians 5:29: "For no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the Church. For we are members of His body—**of His flesh and of His bones**" (vs 29-30). Why is that listed that way? Why

isn't it 'of His flesh and of His Spirit'? Why 'of His flesh and of His bones'? Well, *I think that refers back to the creation of Eve*, that just like Eve was created from one of the ribs of Adam—in other words: from the inner most part of His being—so the Church, through the crucifixion of Christ of His flesh, are created from the innermost part of His being. That's why the reference there is to *the bone*.

Then He has the same thing here: “For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh” (v 31). And that is to give us the meaning of what it is going to be *one spirit*. And he said that this is a mystery he's speaking concerning Christ and the Church.

Oh, and by the way, what they're trying to do with this is to make Mary the *co-redemptrix*, they're trying to have it this way: Eve was the first Eve and Mary was the second Eve, just like Adam was the first Adam and Christ was the second Adam. So they're trying to work it that way.

Now then, we find something very important when we come to Genesis 3—and I know we have been through this time and time again. We won't necessarily go through everything here, except come to chapter three and let's see how God then changed the whole nature of His creation—at this point. There's a good lesson that we have in here, and that is: ***You don't go to Satan the devil to find out about God!*** That would be the basic lesson here. And Satan cannot give you what He [God] promises.

Genesis 3:11—after he said he was naked and hid himself: “And He said, ‘Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you that you should not eat?’ And the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.’.... [Now who's fault is it then? *God's fault*—because ‘You gave me this woman.’ NOT SO! And isn't that what people do? What is one of the first things that people do when there's sin? *They accuse God!*] ...And the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What *is* this you have done?’ And the woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’ And the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this you *are* cursed above all livestock, and above every animal of the field. You shall go upon your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed...’” (vs 11-15).

Which then comes down to Mary and Christ. “...He will bruise your head... [and when you bruise the head of a serpent, it is gone, over and done] ...and you shall bruise His heel” (v 15). So right here is the promise and prophecy of redemption; and here begins the story of the One Who was to become

Jesus Christ. And the One Who gave this was the One Who became Jesus Christ, because all things were made by Christ. So He made Adam and Eve. He gave this prophecy.

“To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly increase your sorrow and your conception... [And this means more than just pain at birth, this means the difficulties of childrearing and the agony of seeing them grow up and not do the way that they should. And that is the real difficult thing with all parents. We would all love that our children grow up and be more than respectable, that they would grow up and be baptized and be in God's Church—and all of these things; be wonderful! But that isn't how it turns out. It didn't turn out that way for Adam and Eve either.] —in sorrow shall you bring forth children. Your desire shall be toward your husband, and he shall rule over you.’ And to Adam He said, ‘Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree—of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat *of* it!”—the ground *is* cursed for your sake. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life. It shall also bring forth thorns and thistles to you, and *thus* you shall eat the herbs of the field’” (vs 16-18).

So the whole nature of everything was changed. I believe at this time the nature of the animals was changed, too. You're going to change the nature of the plants, you're going to have thorns, you're going to have thistles, you're going to have weeds. Boy! Can you imagine what it's going to be like in the Millennium to have a garden and no weeds? That's why it says that the ‘plower is going to overtake the reaper’ and say, *Get out of the way I am plowing!* And the whole world is going to be so vastly different than we understand it today. They'll still have the law of sin and death in them, but there won't be Satan around to stir it up.

“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return” (v 19). The question is: What about cremation, there's no dust going back to the earth. Well, remember when they arrested this guy out here in Discovery Bay here in northern California. He had the remains of what?—700-800 people, all the ashes that he was supposed to have sprinkled out over the ocean. It is/was dust; it's just dirt. The spirit goes back to God. God controls that. But just like with this cassette machine, if you do not have a cassette in it, the machine is worthless and the cassette is worthless. You have to have a live, living human brain in order for the spirit of man to have consciousness.

Now let's go back to Hebrews 12—we're pretty well done here in Genesis, because you could say, well, we're all waiting the resurrection. That is

true, but what happens to people who are cremated and are burned up? *They return to dust very quickly.* Whereas, when you're just put into the grave it happens rather slowly. And I suppose the ants and the maggots and, you know, all of that has something to do with it.

The question was brought up that there was a funeral recently and the wife's ashes were buried with the husband, but half the ashes were taken home by the daughter to put on the mantel at home over the fireplace. Now what is this? Is she going to be raised as split human being—half over here and half over there? And then the question comes up: What happens if you die at sea and they bury you at sea and then you become a shark-feast. Now what happens to you? And then you're digested and now what happens to you? It goes to the bottom of the ocean floor and crabs get that—now what happens to you? You could go on and on and on. And then along comes the lobster fisherman and he brings up the lobster and it goes to a restaurant and someone eats it—now what happens to it? Reincarnation! NO! You have to think about that; it's rather a gruesome thing. But nevertheless, God is greater than all of that. If that created problems for God, then God wouldn't be God, would He? Point is not to save your physical body, you want a new body; you want a new mind. What about cannibals, now what happens?

Hebrews 12:22 helps us solve the problem here: "But you have come to Mt. Zion... [that is in heaven above] ...and to *the* city of *the* living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; *to the* joyous festival gathering; and *to the* Church of *the* firstborn, registered in *the book of life* in heaven and to God, *the* Judge of all; and to *the* spirits of the just who have been perfected" (vs 22-23).

So when we die the spirit goes back to God, but there is no personal consciousness of that spirit—it's dormant, without a mind, without a body. When it's put into a new body, with a new mind, then your whole personality and everything will come into being, just like it would be if you were created like Adam was, and breathed into you the breath of life and to become as Adam was at that point. Only this time it will be spirit. So the spirit goes back to God, has to! because the circumstances under which people are and have lived and died. It would create many problems if you had to have the whole body buried just in one place. But that's no problem for God, because everything that you are is recorded on that spirit. That's why you need to have the grace of God, the forgiveness of God, the blotting out of sin; because that will then be erased from your spirit when you are resurrected. You will have none of that sinful nature, but human nature

now is quite the opposite; because of their sinning.

Now let's go back to Mark, the seventh chapter, and let's see what human nature is like—and it comes from within. And then you add to that Satan the devil and the demons and all of the evil that gets multiplied. That's why you have to have certain standards even in the letter of the law—and it does keep people from getting involved into too much evil. But now what we are seeing is the society going down and down and down and down and down and down and down—and there is not even a morality in the letter of the law, so more demonism and spiritism is running rampant.

There are certain things that God does not tell us. He brings us up to a certain point and that is it. We 'see through a glass darkly.' We always have to understand that. We can speculate on some of these things. You can think about some of these things, which is not wrong to do; but don't get carried off into the weirdoism of science fiction. God is greater than that!

Now here's what we understand concerning human nature. We're going to look at human nature, the evil side of it. There is good in human nature. There are emotions to do good, to help, to serve, to uplift; but all of these things are very temporary. They are for serving people in this life. If God did not give us the good side of human nature, this whole world would be so absolutely horribly wicked, that there would be no good, there would be no help, there would be nothing! And because God has given some good to human nature, does not mean that equates to salvation. God expects all human beings to live by the Ten Commandments. That's why He gave them. That's why almost all laws of human government have some things contained in the commandments of God. God expects that.

Mark 7:21: "For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts... [And these are going to be in degree, depending on how the children are reared. If they expose themselves to things like demonism and things like we have today. Not only the entertainment but even the video games get into some real deep, evil things—like *Dungeons and Dragons*—and have even caused children to lose their sanity. So it's from within. Now what he's talking about here is the human heart not puffed up by Satan the devil—just naturally.] ...go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders... [gets right into sex and life] ...thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man."(vs 21-23). Makes it worse!

Now when you couple that with the ‘prince of the power of the air’ (Eph. 2)—let’s add that to this point; because human nature becomes more evil. And especially when the standards, when even letter of the law righteousness in society have been broken down to where there is no standard, then Satan is given more of a free reign.

Ephesians 2:2: “In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world... [That’s why God says, ‘Don’t love the world neither the things in the world: *lust of the eyes, pride of life are all of the world*; and the world’s going to perish.] ...the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air... [That is a description of Satan the devil who can transmit thought waves; who can connect with the human mind] ...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things **willed by the flesh and by the mind**, and were by nature *the children of wrath, even as the rest of the world.*” (vs 2-3).

And a lot of those things are desires to do good, to be better, to be greater, to be faster, to be stronger, to be more beautiful. All of those are part of just human nature to be better, but not going to God to really find the true spiritual good. And there’s a vast difference. That kind of good is better than evil where they are killing and hating and looting and warring—that is true. But it’s still not going to result in anything long-lasting.

Now let’s go to the book of Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it.” So the question is: What do you mean desperately wicked? Why desperately wicked? Obviously, when we’re born we don’t start out *desperately* wicked. We have the ‘law of sin and death’ in us, without a doubt—but ‘desperately wicked’—how can it come to that point? This also shows that even any good that human nature would have by choosing even to do some good, it comes to no good in the end run. And I think human government is a perfect example of that. And even the good that we can do, which we could say is truly good even in the flesh lasts how long? *It’s all transitory! It’s all momentary!*

How can we have *choice* if the heart is deceitful this way? How can there be choice to choose good?—being desperately wicked? ‘Desperately’ here in the Hebrew means to be *frail, feeble, desperately sick, incurable*. What he’s really showing here is that the human heart cannot be cured *by itself*—that’s what he’s showing.

Okay, several comments were made concerning this that what it’s really describing is what happened when Adam and Eve sinned. When

they sinned they could no longer stand the presence of God—that’s why they went and hid themselves; and that then became the flaw of human nature which is passed on by inheritance, which means we are desperately and always weak. Flawed because of the ‘law of sin and death’ in it, and it is so deceptive that who can know it? People can think that they are doing a right and good thing, and even unto the pretense of doing something good they have an evil motive in mind. So no one can know it. And it can’t be cured by human beings, so the question is: Why then does God hold us responsible for choosing right and wrong if we have that? Human nature then would come from the *spirit of man*, which has then the ‘law of sin and death’ in it, and yet, there is still enough goodness in human nature in spite of its wickedness in the letter. Not goodness unto salvation—it can’t have goodness unto salvation—but it can still choose to do some good in the letter.

Human nature then has got to be a deficiency by inheritance—in other words, by creation. But we’re still held accountable to choose right and wrong even in the letter, in a carnal world. God has decreed that. He hasn’t made us totally evil to where there is no good at all. But all the good that human beings would do, their own righteousness cannot save them.

Human nature loves to have a righteous mask, but it’s deceitful. And I think the epitome of that is like Christmas and Easter, and that sort of thing. That it is desperately wicked! But I tell you what, you go out and try and tell some of the people in the world that those things are desperately wicked and they say, ‘Well, look at all of the good that we do.’ And it’s incurable for them to understand what you’re saying—they can’t comprehend it. That’s why God has to call us. That’s why God has to change us with His Holy Spirit by what is called *the circumcision of the heart*. There’s has to be a change, a removing of that human nature.

Now for people who are in the world their goal is to become good, even though they know that they have wickedness in them, they still try and be good. Our goal is to become righteous, which creates a greater and more difficult fight, as we find in Rom. 7, which we covered there in the series in Romans. You find that there is a greater battle in resisting evil in your mind, because the Holy Spirit is exposing that. Whereas, before the Holy Spirit is in your mind, there is no resistance to the evil, because there is no exposing it to the degree that the Holy Spirit does, unless you’ve had some sort of training even just in the letter of the law. But none of that leads to salvation unless you have the Holy Spirit. That’s why the struggle becomes more profound. That’s why Paul said that he wasn’t able to do the things that he wanted, though he desired to.

Now the book of Jeremiah is very instructive in the human heart. When it gives itself over to evil and gives itself over to Satan—Jeremiah 17:1: “The sin of Judah *is* engraved with a pen of iron... [So there are degrees of sin. That’s why there’s the unpardonable sin. That’s why there’s a ‘sin not unto death.’] ...with the point of a diamond; *it is* carved upon the tablet of their heart and upon the horns of your altars.” Here they just give themselves over to evil, and we are entering a time in this society, where because all of the letter of the law moralities are being broken down and not followed, coupled with the fact of increased occultism—which then includes all the things like magic and everything that goes along with that. We’re entering into a time of society that’s going to be like it was when Jeremiah was preaching.

When Jeremiah started preaching, it was after Manasseh died. They had 55 years of getting into as an occult society with familiar spirits, with demonism, with divination, with passing the children through the fire, with adultery, with fornication, with all kinds of wickedness, that when Jeremiah came on the scene, the die was already cast. That’s why He talks to Jeremiah the way that He did, and He said, ‘Don’t be afraid of them.’

Now let’s come to Jeremiah 2:11—this is what we are doing today. We did have God the Father and Jesus Christ in the letter, through Protestant Christianity, before it became subverted; howbeit, not perfectly. That’s not to say they necessarily had salvation, but at least they had some understanding. Jeremiah 2:11: “Has a nation changed *their* gods who are yet no gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.” And that’s what we are doing today. This society is changing its gods. Now they’re becoming more pagan, more pluralistic, more demonic—by degree—and as that happens, you’re getting into a generation then which more describes the end-time generation than say 25-years ago; because the evil is multiplied and increased.

So much so, v 12—and this is not the first time that Israel’s done it: “‘Be amazed, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be utterly desolated,’ says the LORD, ‘For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters... [Remember, this was within the letter of the law. So God would give some respect to the letter of the law.] ...and hewn out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that cannot hold water’” (vs 12-13). And I think the epitome of seeing this happen is to see the rise of Buddhism and the other religions here in America that are just plain purely pagan and demonic to the core. And we are doing that more and more and more; and that’s what this ecumenical movement is all about to do it here.

So what happens to a society when that takes place? We find down here in v 17: “Have you not brought this on yourself, in that you have forsaken the LORD your God, when He led you by the way? And now what profit is there in going the way of Egypt... [You can tie in there Rev. 11:8, because the world’s society is as Egypt and Sodom. That’s where we’re going back. And notice on all of the documentary programs how much they’re getting back to Egypt, to Egyptology, to Egyptian religion, Egyptian way of thinking, etc.] ...Your own evil shall correct you... [So God lets it come to a point, lets it boil on up] ...and your backslidings shall reprove you; therefore know and see that *it is* an evil and bitter *thing* that you have forsaken the LORD your God, and that My fear *is* not in you,’ says the Lord GOD of hosts” (vs 17-19). And we’re going to see society deteriorate even worse, because human nature then is programmed and trained to do evil. And so, you end up with greater evil than just, what we could say, normal human nature.

Question is: Does this happen with or without Satan? *I think it’s a step-by-step thing.* The more you go away from God, and God gives you a warning and you don’t turn back, then He let’s you take the next step and let’s Satan come a little closer—step-step-step, closer and closer, closer. Without the Holy Spirit, we’d be the same way, without a doubt.

Read Rev. 3 and look what happened to the Church even with the Holy Spirit, and that is because *they didn’t exercise the Spirit.* That led to great problems.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Zechariah 12:1
- 2) 1 Corinthians 2:11-13
- 3) Genesis 2:7, 15-25
- 4) Ephesians 5:29-31
- 5) Genesis 3:11-19
- 6) Hebrews 12:22-23
- 7) Mark 7:21-23
- 8) Ephesians 2:2-3
- 9) Jeremiah 17:9, 1
- 10) Jeremiah 2:11-13, 17-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 11
- Romans 7
- Jeremiah 1
- Revelation 11:8

Also referenced: Sermon Series:

- *What the World would have been Like if Adam and Eve had not Sinned?*
- *Romans*

Nature of Mankind II

Fred R. Coulter

We have been going into the situation concerning mankind—which is *The Nature of Mankind*; and we went into it quite a bit in detail. And what I want to do today is cover some other aspects of it, because the question is: If we are so inherently evil, because we have the ‘law of sin and death’ in us, ***why does God hold us responsible for our choices?*** Well, I think the answer is this: ***The ‘law of sin and death’ can also be magnified to do more evil within you by practicing evil***—a person giving him or her self over to evil.

Now, let’s go to Deuteronomy 30, because human beings were made to choose; and you can go to any place in the Bible—Old Testament, New Testament—beginning with Adam and Eve and you find this exact same principle that God has given to every human being. And one way or the other, with or without the knowledge of God, people have to come to this point of choosing.

Deuteronomy 30:15: “Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.” Now that’s almost like saying here’s the tree of life and here’s the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—correct? Very similar to it, isn’t it? *Yes!* And God sets this before every human being. Now what happens if they don’t have the law?

Let’s go to Romans, the second chapter, because this fits in and is very important for us to understand. God judges all of the nations, regardless of what their particular religion is, all nations are under the judgment of God. The more that they sin the more punishment that they receive. The more that they strive to do some things in the letter of the law, even though not having the law, which are correct, the more that God will bless them.

Romans 2:14—this becomes important. “For when *the* Gentiles, which do not have *the* law... [They were not given the law; God did not give them the Ten Commandments as He gave it to Israel.] ...practice by nature the things contained in the law... [And they have many of their laws based upon this. And this then reflects the good part of human nature, because it’s a mixture of good and evil.] ...these who do not have *the* law are a law unto themselves; who show the work of the law written in their own hearts, their consciences bearing witness, and their reasonings also, as they accuse or defend one another)... [Now God is going to take these things into account. Remember there’s the first resurrection for the elect. There is the second resurrection for those who have not committed the unpardonable sin, but have lived at least a decent enough life so that they can be in the second

resurrection—so they will have an opportunity for salvation.] ...in a day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel” (vs 14-16). Then it goes on and shows that God is no respecter of persons and so forth. We covered that quite thoroughly in the series on Romans.

God leaves the choice entirely within the hands of each human being. This is why you have the old saying—they refer it to horses but they apply it to people—‘you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make him drink.’ You can also drown the critter but he won’t drink; same way with human beings. You can lead them right up to the knowledge of God. You can give them the Scripture, but if they don’t want to open the Bible, and if they don’t want to follow God, and if they don’t want to do what is good, you’re not going make them do good. That’s why there are the civil powers to keep evil from running rampant. And all of this is how God views all the nations. You can get into evil two ways:

1. by choosing to sin and do evil and break the commandments
2. you can have your own way of righteousness which leads you into evil, but while you’re thinking you’re doing good—and that is the worst kind.

That’s why Christ said ‘beware if the doctrine of the scribes and the Pharisees.’ So with that then it becomes a deception and you’re blinded to the Truth, and then it gets to the point that you will not let the Truth come in, and that’s where the danger of that kind of thing comes along. Not only does God set before us life and good and death and evil, He also has given us His Word, and now today, in this generation, there are plenty of Bibles around the world that everyone can have it available just at the drop of a hat, or whatever. They can get it in the library; they can buy it; they can computerize it—whatever.

Let’s come to Deuteronomy 30:16—notice the first command, and this is the thing that’s important that God wanted with all human beings. God does not want just obedience, because obedience and law and order do not necessarily generate love. Love is a whole different attitude which is a choice that you must make. Deuteronomy 30:16: “In that I command you this day to love the LORD your God... [so He wants your love first—that’s what He wants foremost.] ...to walk in His ways... [and this is very profound] ...and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply....”

So even for people in the world who don't have Christ; or who have a form of religion; or have a form of Christ—which in the letter is fairly good—there's going to be certain blessings come because they obey to that point. That doesn't mean that they are called unto salvation. Called unto salvation is another whole different situation. But at least it keeps the society from running into total anarchy all the time, and that's what God intended here.

Verse 17: “‘But if your heart turn away... [and this is where He's then dealing with the heart and the emotions] ...so that you will not hear... [and that also is a choice] ...but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them. I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live, that you may love the LORD your God, *and* may obey His voice...’” (vs 16-20).

Now notice the priority that He has here. So love comes first, then obedience, because then you will desire to—and that's what God wants. **God wants, from your heart, to desire.** That's the important thing. When that comes, **then you have crossed over the bridge from 'being religious' to living God's way**—and that's the difference. Remember, there are the *religious* people and there are the *converted* people, and sometimes you can't tell the difference right off.

But the way that it is distinguished, as God brings out here, **first you love Him** then you *obey His voice*, v 20: “...that you may cleave to Him... [now 'cleave to Him' is like you're embracing with your arms and your legs—**cleaving! Holding tight!**] ...that you may cleave to Him, for He is your life.... [Letting you know everything you have comes from God. You can put right there: 1-Cor. 4:7, *that we have nothing we didn't receive.* And brethren, that's so important. Everything that we understand, **we have nothing we didn't receive.** God created everything that there is, everything that we have comes from God one way or the other—even though some people may have had a hand in helping get it to us—**we have nothing we didn't receive.**] ...for He is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob to give them.”

Now let's look at what happens when evil. as a whole civilization. is chosen. Let's go to Genesis 4 first, because *choosing* the way of evil and *knowing* that you're choosing the way of evil is quite evident. That's why we start out first with the

account of Cain killing Abel. Deliberate choice based upon knowingly sinning, having been warned of God, having rejected that warning, and then killing his brother. So that's what we have here in Gen. 4:7—we won't go through the whole thing; you can read the other verses.

Genesis 4:7: “If you do well, shall you not be accepted?... [That is true. People are accepted of God on the level that they are. If you have someone who is righteous in this society, God accepts them at that level; but that doesn't mean that they are called *to salvation*. Because being called to salvation is another whole different program of God.] ...But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.... [Cain knew right and wrong.] ...Its desire *is* for you... [it should read: *sin will have its desire upon you if you follow it.*] ...but you must rule over it!” So here it's showing that we have to rule over and put down the pulls of the flesh. Even people without God's Holy Spirit have to do that to a certain degree. There it is right there. Well, he didn't do it. You know what happened. He killed his brother Cain and was then exiled further.

Now, let's come to Genesis 6, because here we have a whole civilization given over to evil. And as we read this let's understand what Jesus said on the Mt. of Olives concerning the way that the society is going to be at the end. What did He say? ‘As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the coming of the Son of man.’ And we also have in Rev. 11:8 that the society is likened unto Sodom and Egypt. They have, generally on Discovery Channel, about these past civilizations. They have been getting a lot into new Egyptology, which they haven't been into before—and also into the Mayan civilizations down in Central America. And you can see how wicked and evil that these societies were. So what we have here in Gen. 6, with something so worthy of judgment that God destroyed all life. I mean, that's rather radical! You consider that! That is a radical solution, which means that the problem of evil corrupting was so widespread that there was no hope of even change in the letter of the law.

Genesis 6:5: “And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth...” And we're beginning to return to that kind of thing—**great!** And some of the greatest wickedness, brethren, is not as obvious as we would think. Some of the greatest wickedness going on right now is all of this high-tech genetic experimentation; and cross-species and cross breeding; and all of this. **That is gross sin!**—because you're actually in there tinkering with the very creation of God! So I'll give a sermon on this kind of tinkering, but that's one of the greatest evils.

Now, the whole perversion of everything is going on that they had here; "...and every imagination... [and that means every single thought; and 'imagination' means *the process of your thinking*—that's what it is when it talks about there in 2-Cor. 10, 'bringing down every vain imagination that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.' That is bringing down the process of human thinking. So here's the whole process of human thinking that is evil.] ...every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was only evil continually*" (v 5). So there comes a point in wickedness and evil that there is no repairable or reparation in this life—nothing that can be done.

That's why this whole thing of getting rid of the death penalty works to the reverse; because there's certain crimes that when they are done—especially like with pedophiles and murderers—that something happens to their minds that they should not live. When you let them live they destroy society even more. And so here the whole society—I don't imagine we can really conceive how barbarous it was, but it was so bad "And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart" (v 6). That's really quite a verse—isn't it? I mean, you think about it! God was so upset!

Notice what it was after He created everything there is, and man and woman. Genesis 1:31: "And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, *it was exceedingly good....*" ***It was very good!***

Now back here to Genesis 6:7: "And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them.'" With this statement here and having to kill all the animals is why I've said I suspect that they had an awful lot of cross-genetics between animals and people and so forth. Today they have already cloned sheep and cloned calves and now they're saying what a great and wonderful thing this is going to be. ***Every imagination of their thoughts was only evil continually.*** That's part of it in addition to the corruption and the murder and so forth. So God had to kill all the animals, all the creeping things, all the birds—except those that he [Noah] took in the Ark; so that there would be a pure genealogy from those animals.

Verse 8: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These *are* the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man and perfect in his generations... [This does not mean he was perfect in the letter of the law. This means he was perfect in his pedigree; he had no cross-genetics in his system, which then is telling us: Did all the other human beings? *I don't*

know!] ...for Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Now the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt—for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. And, behold, I will destroy them *with* the earth.'" (vs 8-13). And God gave the promise He would no more destroy the earth with a flood (Gen. 9) after it was over. But He is going to come and shake the heavens and shake the earth, which is what the Feast of Trumpets is all about. So that's what happens when you have individuals who give themselves over to evil like Cain. You have a whole civilization that gives itself over to evil like before the Flood.

Now let's come back to the book of Job, because here we have an example of a man who was, in the letter, perfect! But what it also shows us is this: You can only go so far in that perfection with 'the law of sin and death' in you and without the Holy Spirit. Two key things:

1. you can only become so righteous in the letter of the law
2. without the Holy Spirit you can't see that self righteousness.

That's the whole lesson of Job.

Now, we're not going to go through much of this. We'll just look at the beginning and the ending. Job 1:6: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD. And Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' Then Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.' And the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil?'" (vs 6-8). So there you have it, in the letter of the law, perfect. But what is the difficulty in perfect in the letter? ***You're not perfect in heart!*** And notice it was: "he fears God and shuns evil." That shows the highest level of righteousness that a person can do. They can do things in the letter. They can be honest, they can be forthright, they can help the poor, they can help the sick, they can do good works, they can do all of those things like Job went through and reiterate all of those. But all of those things haven't changed the heart. ***The change of heart comes from conversion.***

So then you know the story. Satan said, 'Okay, I'll take all that he has.' He took it, then destroyed his family. Job still didn't curse God. Smote him from head to toe with boils—so bad all he could do was just scrape it and flies and dust and

everything around. And then his three friends came and sat there, just looked at him seven days. Can you imagine how bad it was sitting there seven days looking at each other, not even saying a word? Sitting there trying to analyze, ‘Now Job, why did you get into this? Well, you must be a sinner, Job. Now come on, confess.’ Job couldn’t see that he had sinned and so forth.

The end of the matter is, and here’s the difference between the righteousness in the letter and righteousness in the spirit. Let’s go to the end—Job 42. Now I know this is a quick summary of it, but what this does, this shows us the two extremes of human nature without the Spirit of God. It can be good to a certain degree and horribly evil to a greater degree on the other hand.

Job 42:1: “And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘I know that You can do all things, and *that* no thought can be withheld from You. *You asked*, ‘Who *is* he who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have spoken that which I did not understand...” (vs 1-3). He finally came to the conclusion that though he was perfect in the letter of the law, and though he did all these things, he didn’t understand. And this is the experience that people have when God calls them—out of Protestantism or Catholicism or whatever—and they may have been quite righteous in that religion. Then they begin to understand, ‘Boy! I never understood, I never understood the Scriptures.’

Job continuing: “...*things* too wonderful for me; yea, which I did not know. Hear, I beseech You, and I will speak; *You said*, ‘I will ask of you, and you will declare to Me.’ I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear...” (vs 3-5). We can know about God, we can hear about God. It’s like all these people who go to Sunday school and go to church on Sunday. They hear about God. They hear the name of Christ. They hear all these good things; yet, they’re out there perpetually sinning every week; they’re out there breaking God’s law in that way. They’re not a lot of murderers and adulterers and things among them, so they have some righteousness just like Job.

“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You.... [there comes a point then that God takes away the veil across your mind and you begin to understand God. You begin to understand

- the greatness of God
- the love of God
- the calling of God
- the Word of God

all of those things together with it.] ...Therefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes” (vs 5-6).

So then all of this is to bring us to repentance. Now we have seen that aspect of it. We could also see another modern-day aspect of it if we would—you could put in your notes, Manasseh (2-Chron. 33)—perhaps one of the most wicked men in the world, **but he repented**. So the whole thing that God wants out of this thing is *repentance*—‘To this one will I look.’

I mean, even in the world with the kind of repentance that someone might have, not unto salvation—but at least repentance even in the letter of the law—God will accept. Again, we are not talking about salvation. When we are talking about salvation, here is what God looks to; and this, brethren, is something that we all need to strive for. I do, you do, all of it; and it’s a thing that we need to teach and bring to the brethren, too.

Isaiah 66:1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me?...’” And oh, if we could understand that! How important that is. Remember, David said, ‘I want to build You a house.’ And God said, ‘No, I’m going to build you a house. I’ll let your son build a house.’ But the important thing here is this: **No man is going to go to God and say, ‘God, I’m going to do a work for you.’** Isn’t going to happen! It is not going to happen! I try and keep that in mind all the time, brethren; because if don’t, then I could get off the track just like anybody else and think oh my, I can do this, that and the other thing. Nonsense—if I don’t constantly understand **I have nothing I didn’t receive**, and whatever is going to be done is what God wants done. So I need to yield to the will of God so that I’m doing what God wants me to do. Now in that, I can make mistakes and have made mistakes. In that, you can make mistakes and you do make mistakes. But in that there is repentance and there is latitude and there’s choice that God gives all of us.

But here is what we need to understand—v 2: “‘For all these things My hand have made, and these things came to be,’ says the Lord. **‘But to this one will I look, to him who is of a poor and a contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word.’**” You tremble at the Word of God and then God will lead you to His love. Has to start out with the ‘fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.’

What is the difference between Job and Paul? Job was doing everything in the letter of the law to try and be good, without the Holy Spirit; and I think there in Job 42 when he repented, that’s when he really received the Holy Spirit. What about Paul there in Rom. 7 where he has the ‘law of sin and death’ and he says the things ‘I want to do I can’t do’—why is so difficult for Paul? We can say US—

let's put our hands there. Let's go ahead and handle that question, because that's very important for us to realize. I'm sure he had the Holy Spirit with him. I think there are many people have the Holy Spirit **with** them. I think it is this: Before Job had the Holy Spirit of God in him, he could not see his own evil. That's the key, **he couldn't see it!**

When you have the Holy Spirit of God—because it is righteousness and comes from God—it will convict you of sin, and will point out sin, even in your mind before it's overtly done out here in action. And sometimes you end up with great struggles of mind. And that's what he was talking about here. And this is the whole purpose, this is the whole thing. We could also summarize Job's life with this, too. Job was trying to keep it in the letter. But he didn't understand. Paul was trying to keep it in the letter and then, after conversion, he understood.

Romans 7:7—we'll just cover the whole thing here; because this is the enigma of growing and overcoming; and this is why we need grace. That's why we need to stand in grace. And as I mentioned before, **walk in faith, live in hope, and dwell in love**. Those things do more to overcome the problem of sin than actually getting out there and beating it to death. Romans 7:7: "What then shall we say? *Is the law sin?*.... [And that's what every carnal person says—right? Isn't that what they say about Sabbath-keeping vs Sunday-keeping. 'Oh well, that ole law, you know, God changed that.' Well, what you're saying is, the law is sin.] ...MAY IT NEVER BE! But I had not known sin, except through the law. Furthermore, I would not have been conscious of lust, except *that* the law said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, having grasped an opportunity by the commandment, worked out within me every *kind of lust*.... [He began to see that evil originated in the mind. Evil was not out here someplace just going on, and the law defined the evil out here. If you take away the human mind there is no evil. That's what he's pointing out.] ...because apart from law, sin *was dead*" (vs 7-8).

(go to the next track)

Job was satisfied with his life and doing it in the letter of the law. And there are a lot of people who are satisfied in doing it in the letter of the law. In their minds, not having the Holy Spirit, do not go on to really understand the depths of evil, which may be in their hearts and mind because they haven't had the Holy Spirit in them to expose it.

"For I was once alive without the law... [He said, 'I was living.'] ...but after the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.... [So Paul ceased writing any more of the epistles—NO! This means

he died **spiritually**. How? *In the operation of baptism!* That's the way he died. **Self-died.**] ...And the commandment, which *was meant to result in life*, was found *to be* unto death for me... ['Because spiritually speaking, I couldn't keep it'—that's why he found it unto death.] ...because sin, having taken opportunity by the commandment... [Because the commandment defines the law. Commandment defines sin. So therefore, when you break it, there is a occasion of sin.] ...deceived me, and by it killed *me*" (vs 9-11). What he's really saying is, **'I deceived myself!** And the law by the demand of the 'wages of sin is death' was killing me.' That's what he's really saying.

"Therefore, the law *is* indeed Holy, and the commandment Holy and righteous and good.... [You've got to have that, otherwise there's no definition of good and evil.] ...Now then, did that which *is* good become death to me? MAY IT NEVER BE! But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin... [Now notice he expresses it twice here.] ...But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin..." (vs 12-13). In other words, **to show sin for what it really is!** Beginning this way, for example: we'll just use the example of hate—a lot of people have hate. I hate this one. I hate that one. I hate the other one. But they haven't murdered—in the letter of the law. And this hatred, to them, is a mental protection against the evil. We are to hate evil. But then they hate people. And they don't realize what is happening in their minds. Then when the Holy Spirit comes and convicts you, the hatred is the first step in murder. Then you begin to understand.

Now notice: "...But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin in me by that which *is* good... [the law is good because it defines sin, but the breaking of it brings about death.] ...was working out death; so that, by means of the commandment, sin might become exceedingly sinful" (v 13). And that's where it goes back to the thing right there in Gen. 6:5 that every thought was wicked. And that's where we have there, Jer. 17:9—that 'the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked'—without the Holy Spirit of God to expose this and give you desire to overcome it. That's why God does not let all carnal human beings know how evil they are because they have to have a desire to overcome it. Why show you how bad evil is if you just say, 'Oh, hooray! Let become more evil!' You see, you need something—God's Spirit—to change that; that you desire to overcome the evil. Then the ensuing battle goes on that people in the world do not have.

Verse 14: "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, having been sold *as a slave* under sin; because what I am working out

myself.... [It means *he doesn't want to.*] ...I do not know. For what I do not desire to do, this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do" (vs 14-15). So there is this inner battle going on that Christians have that other people do not have to this degree. And you look back and you see before God called you, did you know what evil was? *No!* You knew right and wrong to a certain degree, that's true; but did you realize how bad and evil and wicked the human mind can become? *No!* Had God exposed any of that to you? *No, because only the Holy Spirit of God can do that!* And that's what's important here. Then you realize that, 'Hey, unless I yield to God and love God I can't do anything on my own that's going to amount to anything spiritual.' And that's what he's talking about here.

"I do not know. For what I do not desire to do, this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do. But if I am doing what I do not desire to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good.... [The law is still good because it says 'you shall not' do this; 'you shall not covet'; 'you shall not kill'; 'you shall not bear false witness'; 'you shall not commit adultery'—all of those things are good! And it gives the motivation then.] ...So then, I am no longer working it out myself... [Why? *Because I 'ego' died in baptism.*] ...rather, it is sin *that is* dwelling within me... [This is where he's leading up to the 'law of sin and death' as we find in Rom. 8:2, the last sentence there, the 'law of sin and death.' That's what he's leading up to.] ...because I fully understand that there is not dwelling within me... [and this is the whole point of conversion. This is where Job came to when we read Job 42. 'I heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You.' *That's a point of conversion.*] ...—that is, within my fleshly being—*any* good...." (vs 15-18). Isn't that what Job had to learn? 'Lord, I did all this. Lord, I did all that. Lord, I did everything else.'

Let's go to Luke 17—and this is what the carnal mind does not comprehend. Now this principle we find right here. Luke 17:5: "Then the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' But the Lord said, 'If you had faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you might say to this sycamine tree, "Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea," and it would obey you. But which of you having a servant plowing or shepherding will immediately say *to him* when he comes in from the field, 'Come and sit down *and eat*'? Rather, will he not say to him, "Prepare what I may eat, and gird yourself, *and* serve me while I eat and drink; and afterwards you may eat and drink"? Is he thankful to that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not'" (vs 5-9).

Now there's a principle. Everything that Job was doing was required. And he did it, and it was

required. But of what account is that, by and of itself? Who gave the law? *God did!* Who made the requirement? *God did!* So why was Job getting so hoity-toity over himself?

Verse 10: "Likewise you also, when you have done all *the* things that are commanded you, say, "We are unprofitable servants, because we have done that which we were obligated to do."'" That's the whole difference there. It's our duty to do the things in the letter of the law. It doesn't ascribe any salvation to us. So that's why when we're over here, talking about the Spirit now, and changing—the conversion changes the source of the self-righteousness on one hand, and reveals the source of evil in the mind on the other hand. **Complete change!** And this is what must happen with everyone with God's Spirit. Sooner or later it's going to happen. God will intervene in their lives and work with them so it does happen.

Now let's come back to Romans 7:18—that's why he says: "Because I fully understand that there is not dwelling within me—that is, within my fleshly being—*any* good...." So you do everything that's required in the letter of the law.

- And what have you done? *Everything God expected!*
- Have you added anything to God? *No!*
- Have you added anything to yourself? *No!*
- Have you kept from sinning to a certain degree? *Yes!*
- Did you remove the origin of sin—the human mind? *No!*

That's what conversion does.

"...For the desire to do good is present within me... [the desire is there to good] ...but how to but how to work out that which is good, I do not find...." That which is *truly* good. And I find this, brethren, and I'll just tell you: There are times when I do things which are good, which are inspiring and I know that God has inspired me to do it and so forth. And I found this a couple of days later: I fall to the bottom. The reason is, is for me to know that no good thing dwells in me. Now, I don't know if you've experienced the same thing or not, but I'm sure you have. And if you haven't, you will, because God is working with you and God is trying to lead you to conversion.

We all go through this and the question is: Why does God *want* this? To say *allow* is not correct. Why does God *want* it? *Because I don't think, brethren, with the 'law of sin and death' in us we truly understand the greatness of righteousness of God—until we can get that comparison of how sin is right there in us. And lots of times the worst sins that we do are when we think we are right. Yes, that*

way God can teach us true humility and true love—because it doesn't come from within us, it's got to be from God *into* us. In other words, just like the Greek says: *from God: 'ek'—down, out to us from God.* Not from us up—'ek'—to God. We're the recipients of this, and in order for us to understand the great love of God and the great righteousness of God, He allows us to go through this exercise of fighting evil so that we understand sin is *exceedingly* sinful. It's what he's talking about here. We don't understand that until we go through it and fight it.

Part of this is the long-suffering and overcoming so that we realize that we have to yield to God in everything that we do. Oh yes, all of these things then will bring us to the desiring the fruits of the Holy Spirit, that's what it's for.

And So Christians are the ones who have this battle. Romans 7:18: "For the desire to do good is present within me; but how to work out that which is good, I do not find..."—that is from yourself. You can do certain things in the action and on the outside, but to do it really motivated from the love of God because you love God and that's why you're doing it, and not looking for anything for yourself is the whole converted attitude that comes from this.

"For the good that I desire to do, I am not doing; but the evil that I do not desire to do, this I am doing. But if I do what I do not desire to do, I am no longer working it out myself, but sin *that is* dwelling within me.... [That's why we have the 'law of sin and death' in us. It is just enough to show us the severity of sin. It can be trained to be greatly evil, like we saw earlier. Or it can be trained to be righteous like Job—but not righteous like God.] ...Consequently, I find this law *in my members*, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members" (vs 19-23).

And here's a truly converted attitude: "O *what a* wretched man I am! Who shall save me from the body of this death?... ['Deliver' means *who shall bring me salvation?*] ...I thank God *for His salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, on the one hand, I myself serve the law of God with *my* mind; but on the other hand, with the flesh, *I serve* the law of sin" (vs 24-25).

Now, let's look at how Paul progressed in what he did here. Let's see how Paul's conversion brought him to a greater understanding of himself. Let's go to 1-Corinthians 15, since we're dealing with human nature, the nature of mankind and what God is going to do with it. Let's see how Paul progressively understood this in Rom. 7 in greater

detail as he went on through his life, and as he got closer to the time when he was going to die.

1 Corinthians 15:6: "Then He appeared to over five hundred brethren at one time, of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen sleep. Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage.... [the Greek there means *one who had been aborted.*] ...I am the least of the apostles... [Now notice his attitude here. He had what? *He had a proper understanding and perspective because he was fighting the 'law of sin and death' within him*—and he could understand human nature as he never understood it before, and most greatly his own human nature.] ...For I am the least of the apostles, *and* am not fit *even* to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.

10. But by *the* grace of God I am what I am.... [That's how we stand in all this. We cannot possibly overcome without the grace of God.] ...and His grace toward me has not been in vain; rather, I have labored more abundantly than all of them; however, *it was* not I, but the grace of God with me" (vs 6-10).

Now notice Who he gives all the credit to. Notice the whole change of emphasis: not Paul, what I'm doing; but Paul, whom 'am less than the least of the apostles' and what God is doing. Let's come to 1-Timothy, the first chapter, and let's see how also Paul viewed himself and you will see a progressive understanding of Paul in seeing how bad human nature really is, or how carnal it really is—and he was seeing in himself. 1-Timothy 1:14: "But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with *the* faith and love that *is* in Christ Jesus. *This is* a faithful saying, and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (vs 14-15). The number one sinner! It's what he's saying. So that now he progresses from *least of the apostles* to *chief sinner*—and this is all a part of conversion. This is all a part of understanding the great depths and depravity of human nature.

Now let's come to Ephesians, the third chapter, and let's see his attitude just before he knew he was going to die. He was in prison. Ephesians 3:1—so we can get the thought-flow here: "For this cause I, Paul, *am* the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the ministry of the grace of God that was given to me for you; how He made known to me by revelation the mystery (even as I wrote briefly before, so that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of Christ)... [that is the plan of God, the secret plan of God] ... (even as I wrote briefly before, so that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the

mystery of Christ), which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men... [Now, that's a tremendous thing, brethren. I don't think we really grasp how great it is, the plan of God, and that we have been able to have it revealed to us through the Word of God and Spirit of God. Marvelous thing! Greatest plan of God revealed!] ...as it has now been revealed to His Holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles might be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel, of which I became a servant according to the gift of the grace of God, *which was* given to me through the inner working of His power" (vs 1-7).

Now notice v 8: "To me, who am **less than the least of all the saints**..." So what the Holy Spirit does in exposing the sin and bringing the humility, to understand that it all comes from God. So he went from being 'least of the apostles' to 'chief sinner'—now, that he is 'less than the least of **all** the saints' is this given. Why should it be given to him, he was saying? What a marvelous and fantastic thing it was. And then he wrote the rest of Eph. 3, which is one of the most inspiring sections of the whole Bible.

He said, "...that I might preach the Gospel among the Gentiles—even the unsearchable riches of Christ..." (v 8). That he had the blessing and responsibility of doing it. He was just saying, 'Look, here I am, this sinner, miserable and rotten; but he said, 'I am what I am.' And that's all by the grace of God.

Now, let's come back to the *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, (pgs 5-6 throughout):

This penalty of death was passed on to all mankind by the physical inheritance of sinful human nature. Human nature is inherently and naturally hostile to God and is not subject to His laws and commandments. From birth, human nature is a mixture of good and evil...

And we have seen, can be trained to be perfect in the letter of the law or trained to be perfectly evil on the other hand. There's that wide spectrum in between and it's by choice.

...and all die in Adam. When a person dies, his or her conscious thoughts cease. The body returns to the dust of the earth, and the spirit of man goes back to God. Only through God the Father's gracious and merciful plan of salvation through Jesus Christ is it possible for a person to be redeemed and saved from this sinful nature of death.

That is a key. What we just covered today was what this sentence says. It's only possible through Christ.

God's ultimate purpose... [which is greater beyond] ...for each human being is complete reconciliation with God the Father through Jesus Christ so that he or she may enter into the Family of God as a literal son or daughter of God, sharing the same eternal existence as God.

Let's see that this is so. One of the things that the different religions of the world say is that, anyone who says that you're going to be exactly like Jesus Christ is a heretic. Anyone who says you're going to be born in the Family of God is a heretic. Well, let's go to 1-John 3, very profound Scripture. And this is something, as I've mentioned before, when you get down and out, when you need help and encouragement, you come and you read 1-John 3:1-3—and this always encourages me, and also just inspires me, brethren, when we understand that what this says, what this says is so great! And reveals in these three verses some of the greatest things of God!

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love... [and this is why, when we get into the next section: *The Love of God*, it's very important for us to understand *what kind of love*.] ...the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!... [and there the Greek is 'tekna' meaning *His own begotten children*—not adopted, but HIS, His through His Holy Spirit.] ... For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God..." (vs 1-2). Why? *Because God 'calls the things that are not as though they already are.'* And that's a great point of faith. If we're going to walk by faith we have to believe that, like Abraham did. He said, 'In your seed shall the world be blessed.' And how long did it take? **But he believed!** Same way with us.

"Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know... [This is what we're to know, and let this sink deep into our hearts and mind, brethren.] ...that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is" (v 2). And I tell you, that just really takes away your breath when you understand that! And I think that through the whole experience of life, and the older we get, and the more frail we become, and the more we 'rust out,' the more we understand that that is a profound statement! And that is a tremendous thing!

Now notice, v 3: "And everyone who has this hope in Him... [*in Him*—part of your heart and mind and being and love of God.] ...purifies himself, even as He is pure." What is that? How are you purified?

- Through Christ
- Through the washing of the water of the Word
- Through all the experiences that we've just been talking about here

The book of Romans and overcoming human nature and all of that—that's how we're purified. Be just like Him.

And then, oh my! Let's come here to Philippians, the third chapter. This is why we are made in the image of God. There is a reason. And that's all a part of the nature of the way God created us. We're made in the image of God for two purposes:

1. That God could become a man.
2. That man could become God.

That's very profound!

Notice, here again Paul goes through and brings out his feelings on the whole thing. Philippians 3:10—and then we'll go on. After he said that everything in this life he counted as dung, he says, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection... [What is that moment going to be like for all the saints when they hear the voice of Christ? The hour is coming when all who are in the grave shall hear His voice.] ...and the fellowship of His sufferings... [Paul began to understand one of the reasons for his suffering was to learn the love of God; to understand the truth of God; to realize that everything comes from God.] ...being conformed to His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (vs 10-11). That is the hope that lies within us, brethren.

"Not as though I had already received...[because He was struggling, he was overcoming] ...or have already been perfected; but I am striving... [That's why when things come along where we have to change and repent and go ahead, we follow after. We don't dwell upon and we don't get discouraged, regardless of how bad circumstances may be.] ...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.... [he may attain it] ...Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained... [No, he knew that there was a lot to do.] ...but *this* one thing *I do*—forgetting the things that are behind... [and that's so important. You have to ask God, not only for the forgiveness, but for the forgetfulness] ...forgetting the things that are behind..." (vs 12-13).

What good is it going to do to dwell on it? Is it going to change it? *No!* I mean, if you want to know how futile it is to try and fix something that's already messed up, go out and look at a totally destroyed car. Don't dwell on it. You have to put it

behind you. You may need a new car, but you can't dwell on it. And you can apply this to anything.

- Your sins
- Your difficulties
- Your faults
- Your mistakes
- The good things you've done

Well, I did this and that and the other thing. So what! Look at Job! Remember Job!

"...forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are ahead... [Always having that hope. Always reaching out for that!] ...I press... [because it's difficult] ...toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (vs 13-14). It's a high calling! Great calling! ***To be called to be the very sons and daughters of God!*** Can there be anything greater? Can there be anything more perfect? Anything more wonderful? *No!*

"So then, let as many as *be* perfect... [so we can, in attitude and in heart] ...be of this mind... [by just what he said here—put all of these things out and then here's a promise]: ...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you" (v 15). So what is he saying? Who is revealing the sin within? *God!* So that we may change and grow and repent.

"Nevertheless, *in regard* to that which we have attained... [Whenever we've gotten to this point] ...let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, be imitators together of me, and bear in mind those who walk in this way, as you have us *for* an example. (For many walk *contrary*; I have often told you *of* them, and I tell *you* now *with* weeping... [we're living in that day again today, aren't we?] ...*they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame; *for* they mind earthly things.) But for us, the commonwealth *of God* exists in *the* heavens... [now this means *our politics*] ...from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform our vile bodies... [there's a beginning; there's an ending] ...transform our vile bodies... [what are our bodies compared like to what it's going to be the body that Christ is going to give us. And to take that hunk of old worn out junk, and to do what He's going to do here] ...Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself" (vs 16-21).

So brethren, that's the whole purpose of mankind—the whole purpose. And God and His plan and His way and His time is going to bring it

for all human beings. So that's, in summary, the nature of mankind; and the Bible is the whole story.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Deuteronomy 30:15
- 2) Romans 2:14-16
- 3) Deuteronomy 30:16-20
- 4) Genesis 4:7
- 5) Genesis 6:5-6
- 6) Genesis 1:31
- 7) Genesis 6:7-13
- 8) Job 1:6-8
- 9) Job 42:1-6
- 10) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 11) Romans 7:7-18
- 12) Luke 17:5-10
- 13) Romans 7:18-25
- 14) 1 Corinthians 15:6-10
- 15) 1 Timothy 1:14-15
- 16) Ephesians 3:1-8
- 17) 1 John 3:1-3
- 18) Philippians 3:10-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 4:7
- Revelation 11:8
- 2 Corinthians 10
- Genesis 9
- 2 Chronicles 33
- Jeremiah 17:9
- Romans 8:2

Also referenced: Sermon series: *Romans*

Resurrections

Fred R. Coulter

Now let's come to the next section concerning the *resurrections*: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 27-29 throughout).

The Bible reveals two distinct types of resurrection from the dead:

- 1) restoration to physical life as a fleshly human being, and
- 2) transformation to eternal life as an immortal spirit being.

The Scriptures record the resurrection of individual persons to physical life at various times by the will of God. In Old Testament times, a widow's son was restored to life through the prayer of Elijah the prophet. Jesus' raising of Lazarus from the dead is a well-known example from New Testament times.

And we might also add there, in Matthew 27 the saints that came back to life after was Jesus was resurrected to appear to many in the city of Jerusalem.

These were special acts of mercy by God which extended the physical life of the individuals. Those whom God has resurrected in this manner were not given immortality, and all again died.

Jesus Christ was the first to be resurrected to immortality by the power of God the Father. To become a human being, Jesus had divested Himself of His glory and power as the Lord God of the Old Testament. When He was resurrected, He was restored to His full glory, power and honor as God. Jesus Christ is called the Firstborn from among the dead because He is the first of multiple millions who will be resurrected to immortality. When Jesus Christ returns to the earth, all true Christians who have died...

And 'true Christians' means that they died in the faith.

...will be raised to eternal life as immortal spirit beings. Those Christians who are alive at the return of Jesus Christ will be changed instantaneously from flesh to spirit. This transformation to spirit is the new birth, when the saints of God—both dead and living—are truly "born again" into the Family of God. All the saints will be composed of spirit, as God is composed of

spirit, and will be full members of God's Divine Family. They will rule with Jesus Christ as kings and priests on the earth. This resurrection is described in the Bible as the first resurrection.

After the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ and His saints, there will be a resurrection to physical life of all who have died without having received the opportunity for salvation. During this second physical life, each person will have his or her first and only opportunity for salvation through Jesus Christ.

And I might just add: There is no such thing as a *second chance*.

Those who fully accept the salvation of God will enter into the Family of God as spirit beings. Those who reject salvation through Jesus Christ will be condemned to eternal death. They will be joined by all the incorrigible wicked who have died throughout history, who will be resurrected to physical life. All who have refused to accept salvation, and have knowingly and willfully committed the unpardonable sin—blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God the Father—will be resurrected to receive the final judgment of God. Their sentence will be to die in the lake of fire. This death is the second and final death, from which there is no resurrection.

Now, I'll just reference you to some of the references we have here:

- 1 Kings 17:17-24—shows the resurrection of the son by Elijah
- John 11—which shows the resurrection of Lazarus.

We will look at those people who were resurrected back to a *physical* life, but they would all have to die in the faith. Now, Lazarus was raised back to physical life, because he had not had an opportunity for salvation because Jesus had not yet died and ascended to heaven to send the Holy Spirit so that he could have that opportunity for salvation. So his death and his resurrection is the key to understanding that all of those who never had an opportunity for salvation, will be raised back to physical life to receive an opportunity for salvation.

Now, I just might interject here, since this is just an overview, please write for the sermons that we have concerning the seventh day of the Feast of

Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, because those two days are devoted to detailed study about the people who have never received salvation, that they will receive it just like Lazarus did in this particular case. And of course, the disciples and Mary and Martha (his sisters) were concerned that Lazarus was dead and did not have an opportunity to receive salvation.

Now let's pick up the story here where Martha goes out to meet Jesus—John 11:20: “And when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she *went and* met Him. But Mary was sitting in the house. And Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother shall rise again.’ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’.... [So she didn't understand that it was going to happen now.] ...Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he die, shall live *again*.... [and of course, Lazarus did believe in Him—didn't he? *Yes!*] ...and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall not die forever....” (vs 20-26). And that actually means *shall not see death forever*. That's quite different than never dying.

Now, let's see where He raised him from the dead, v 39—they came to the tomb, after all the weeping and wailing, and even Jesus wept, it says. “Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’ Martha, the sister of him who had died, said to Him, ‘Lord, he already stinks, for it has been four days.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not say to you that if you will believe, you shall see the glory of God?’ Then they removed the stone *from the tomb* where the dead man had been laid. And Jesus lifted *His* eyes upward and said, ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You hear Me always; but because of the people who stand around I say *this*, so that they may believe that You did send Me.’ And after He had spoken these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’ And he who had been dead came forth...” (vs 39-44). So Lazarus was resurrected.

Now, let's look another case of physical resurrection, or resurrection back to physical life. Let's come back to Matthew 27—and I've always wondered what sort of reaction would I have had if one of my dead relatives came back from the dead and knocked on my door. Well, I'm sure—speaking of Lazarus—that he was converted, received the Holy Spirit and died in the faith, and will be resurrected to eternal life when Christ returns.

Matthew 27:50: “And after crying out again with a loud voice, Jesus yielded up *His* spirit. And suddenly the veil of the temple was ripped in two

from top to bottom, and the earth shook, and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened... [would be a better translation, rather than ‘rent’; because that sounds like they're trying to lease a building or something.] ... and many bodies of the saints who had died arose. And after His resurrection, they came out of the tombs *and* entered into the Holy city, and appeared to many” (vs 50-53).

So there is a *resurrection from the dead back to a physical life*. That is **one type** of resurrection. The other type of resurrection is *being raised from the dead to be a spirit being*.

1-Thessalonians 4:13: “But I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep.... [When people die in the faith, God looks upon it as a sleep. Because their next memory, their next thought, would be the instant they are resurrected, and it will be just like coming out of a sleep—a deep sleep, howbeit.] ...that you be not grieved, even as others, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in exactly the same way also, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say to you by *the Word of the Lord*...” (vs 13-15).

Now, let's just interject right here: **Nowhere** in the Bible does it say that when you die your immortal soul goes to heaven. That is a false, pagan doctrine, taught by worldly ‘Christian’ churches, which have rejected the truth of the resurrection in the Bible. Now, if you don't believe that, check out the Bible a little more and see that that is true.

Verse 14: “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in exactly the same way also, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him... [which is His authority] ...For this we say to you by *the Word of the Lord*, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede those who have fallen asleep, because the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout of command... [same thing He did when He resurrected Lazarus—correct? *Yes!*] ...with *the* voice of an archangel and with *the* trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in *the* clouds for *the* meeting with the Lord in *the* air; and so shall we always be with *the* Lord” (vs 14-17).

Now then, let's go to Revelation 19, to show that we come back to the earth. When we meet Him in the air, the resurrection. Now you can write in for our sermons on *The First Resurrection* and *The Sea of Glass*. I won't get into all the details with it, but we will meet Christ in the air on the Sea of Glass; and after the pouring out of the seven last plagues, then all the saints will come back with Christ to the

earth—and as we saw earlier—to rule and reign with Him.

Revelation 19:11: “And I saw heaven open; and behold, a white horse; and He Who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war. And His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns; and He had a name written that no one knows except Him. And *He was* clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is The Word of God.... [and that goes right back to John 1:1-3] ...And the armies in heaven were following Him on white horses... [that army is the saints of God who then will fight with Christ. Now remember, we saw that since the Kingdom of God is not on the earth, His servants do not fight today. But at this time, when the saints return with Christ, they will fight.] ...following Him on white horses; and they were clothed in fine linen, white and pure” (vs 11-14). And as we saw, Rev. 20:6, we are on the earth and we will rule and reign with Christ a thousand years.

Now, let's come back to the Old Testament—Zechariah 14:4. This talks about the return of Christ. “And His [Jesus Christ] feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall split in two, from the east and to the west, and make a very great valley. And half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south. ‘And you shall flee to the valley of My mountains... [now, we're talking about the fulfillment of what we just read there in Rev. 19] ... for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.” And the LORD my God shall come, and **all the saints with You**” (vs 4-5). So we will reign on the earth! Not in heaven!

Let's continue on here, let's come to v 8: “And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them shall go toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea. In summer and in winter it shall be. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one LORD, and His name shall be one” (vs 8-9). **That is the first resurrection.**

The issue of life and death is very important, and all religions have some sort of explanation as to what happens to the body and what happens to the soul, so we'll just briefly touch on it here. So if you need to have a more in-depth explanation, write in for a sermon entitled: *The Spirit in Man*.

Let's, first of all, see that the Bible says that 'souls' are not immortal. Let's come to Ezekiel 18. And most of the religions of the world believe in an

immortal soul—which either goes to heaven or goes to hell; goes to heaven if you're good, goes to hell and burn forever if you're bad. Or they believe in reincarnation—that you have a soul that transmigrates from one species to another until you are perfected and hence then, you can eventually end up in nirvana. Now those teachings are not in the Bible. Those are teachings of other religions, which anyone can teach anything that they desire. However, if you want the Truth, then you need to stick with the Word of God.

Ezekiel 18:4—here's what God says, the Creator of heaven and earth and all human beings: “Behold, all souls *are* Mine. As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, they *are* Mine. **The soul that sins, it shall die!**” And we know the New Testament teaches: ‘The wages of sin is death.’ And ‘all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.’ The soul, in the Bible, really is the chemical life of the body, having nothing to do with immortality—and **the soul is mortal!** There is a section, there is a part of the human being which is called ‘the spirit in man.’

Zechariah 12:1: “‘The burden of the Word of the LORD for Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches forth the heavens, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him.’” Every human being has within his brain or connected with his brain what is called ‘the spirit of man’—which is the spirit which God gives, which makes you different from all of the animals of the world. This spirit cannot function without a body.

Let's go to James, the second chapter, and we will see. This, the body, cannot function without the ‘spirit’; and the ‘spirit’ cannot function without the body. It's very much like the cassette recording that you are listening to right now. You can hold it in your hand, you have another thing that is there, but you don't know what is in it because you don't have a machine to play it. So you can liken a body and mind to the cassette player and the cassette itself, the cassette tape, liken unto the ‘spirit of man’ which has your intelligence, which has your memory, which has everything that you are as a person. Now, James, the second chapter makes it very clear.

James 2:26: “For as the body without *the* spirit is dead...” So there's a spirit that gives life. We know from modern technology today that a person can be technically called, what in modern medical parlance is this: a person can be brain-dead, but they can sustain the physical life by keeping the blood moving through oxygenization and the heart continuing to pump. The spirit has left the brain. The soul—being the physical body—is still functioning by artificial means, because that is the

physical, chemical part of your being. If they stop the respirator on a brain-dead person, they die instantly. So we have it very clear. The ‘spirit of man,’ which is in him, must be in a physical body in order to function.

Now then, this helps us answer the question: What happens to that ‘spirit in man’ when a person dies? *It’s not the soul that goes to God. It is the spirit!* And remember, just like a cassette tape, contains everything on there that you are through your whole life, but it must have a body and it must have a brain in order to function.

Now, let’s come to Hebrews, the twelfth chapter, and let’s see what happens to the ‘spirit in man.’ Now when Jesus died—we read it—when He died, He said, “Into Your hands Father, I commend My spirit.” So when Jesus was resurrected, the spirit that He commended to the Father came back into His physical body and He was resurrected an immortal, spirit being, receiving again the immortal spirit life that He had before He gave it up to become a human being. So when all human beings die, in order for a resurrection to occur, there has to be a record of that individual kept somewhere—and God is the one Who does it. And that spirit that goes back to man is probably very similar to what we understand is the physical DNA and RNA of a human being. Because they know, through the process of physical cloning, that they can take the DNA and they clone an exact replica from that. So this gives you an idea of what God is going to do at the resurrection.

Hebrews 12:22: “But you are come to Mt. Zion... [in heaven above] ...and to *the* city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels.... [read Rev. 4 & 5 about the angels and so forth that are around God’s throne.] ...and to God, *the* Judge of all.... [Now, we’re going to get into the next section, when we finish this on the resurrection, concerning judgment.] ...and to *the* spirits of the just who have been perfected” (vs 22-23). So what appears and dies, the spirit goes back to God. Then when they are resurrected as a spirit being, they are given a spiritual body. When they are resurrected back to a physical life, they are given a physical body again, according to the pattern that is there in the ‘spirit of man.’

So we need to understand that the Bible nowhere teaches the immortality of the soul, or a spirit wandering off in ‘nether, nether’ land. ***God controls everything!***

Now, let’s come here to 1-John, the third chapter, and let’s see what John wrote about what we will be like when we are resurrected, at the return of Christ. 1-John 3:1: “Behold! What *glorious* love

the Father has given to us, that we should be **called the children of God!**.... [this comes from the noun ‘tekno’s’] ...For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is” (vs 1-2). And that is, we will be a spirit being.

Now, let’s come to Philippians, the third chapter, and let’s see this, again, by the Apostle Paul. So all the apostles knew and understood this. Philippians 3:20: “But for us, the commonwealth *of God*... [and the Greek there is ‘politeia’ which means *our governmental allegiance*] ...exists in *the* heavens... [because we’re not part of this world, as Christ was not part of this world. Obviously, we do not carry on conversations from heaven to each other—it’s directly to each other. So this is ‘politeia.’] ...from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself” (vs 20-21).

So the first resurrection will be through spirit. The ‘spirit in man’ will then be put into the spirit body and there we are as spirit beings—the sons of God.

Now let’s look a little bit more concerning the physical resurrection of people who never had an opportunity for salvation, because they were not called of God. Most people are under the mistaken impression that those in the Old Testament received salvation just like those in the New Testament—who are called of God; baptized and receive the Holy Spirit; and endure unto the end—will receive salvation. Such is not true! The covenant that God gave to Israel was a covenant for physical blessings, for obedience to the commandments of God in the letter of the law, and they were never promised eternal salvation. They were promised a physical land, blessings of physical life and God to fight their battles for them. They were never promised eternal life. Therefore, most of Israel—with the exception of the kings and the prophets—did not receive salvation. They all died, are in their graves and they will have an opportunity for salvation after the Millennium when the second resurrection takes place.

(Now again, write for day seven and eight concerning the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.)

Here we have the valley of dry bones, where Ezekiel was told to prophesy that they these bones would live—and they did. Let’s understand as we

analyze this: If you have bones what do you have? *You have the remains of human bodies*—correct? If you have the remains of human bodies, what does this tell you? *They lived once*—correct? So then this is going to be a second physical life, as we will see. Now some people, especially religionists—who believe that you either are saved now and go to heaven because you're saved, or go to hell and burn because you're not saved—greatly resent the mercy and grace of God; that He is going to resurrect all those that He never called to salvation back to a second physical life so they can have an opportunity for salvation. Now why would anyone resent that? Why would anyone be mad at God for giving His gracious mercy and loving kindness, to give them an opportunity for salvation.

Ezekiel 37:7: “So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise. And behold, a shaking! And the bones came together, a bone to its bone. And as I watched, behold the sinews and the flesh came upon them... [now this is not a resurrection to immortality—is it? *No!* To a second physical existence.] ...and the skin covered them above. But *there was* no breath in them. And He said to me, ‘Prophesy to the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain that they may live.’”’ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army” (vs 7-10). Now who are these people?

“And He said to me, ‘Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, “Our bones *are* dried and our hope is lost; we ourselves are completely cut off.”.... [That is leading sinful lives and not called to salvation.] ...Therefore prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, O My people, I will open your graves... [meaning *they died*] ...and cause you to come up out of your graves... [meaning *they’ll be resurrected to a physical life* (as we just saw)]. ...and will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I *am* the LORD... [which they did not before, even though He was their God] ...when I have opened your graves, O My people, and have brought you up out of your graves. And I shall put My Spirit in you... [that is *for conversion*] ...and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. And you shall know that I the LORD have spoken it and have done it,”’ says the Lord”’ (vs 11-14).

Now then, let's come to Matthew, the twelfth chapter, because we see that not only is it going to happen to Israel, but it's going to happen to all the Gentile nations—and then we will see the fulfillment of this in Rev. 20.

Matthew 12:41: “*The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment...* [Now, we'll get to the next section on judgment in just a minute] ...with this generation.... [So this shows Nineveh being a Gentile nation shall be raised with the same generation of the Jews during Jesus' time, that did not accept salvation] ...and shall condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah *is* here. *The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation...* [showing the second resurrection] ...and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here” (vs 41-42). So ***all those people will be raised to a second physical life in the second resurrection at the end of the one-thousand-year period***, as we see in the book of Revelation.

Now, let's go there and see that. Let's come to Revelation 20:4—this is talking about the saints who are raised to immortality when Christ returns; then it talks about the ‘rest of the dead.’

Revelation 20:4: “And I saw thrones; and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and those who did not worship the beast, or his image, and did not receive the mark in their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” These are the ones, as it says in 1-Cor. 15, that when Christ returns, those who are Christ's will be raised to immortal life.

Now then, what about the rest of the dead? Verse 5: “(But the rest of the dead... [who did not receive salvation in this life] ... did not live again until the thousand years were completed.)....” Now the first resurrection is when Christ returns. The second resurrection is at the end of the thousand years.

Now, let's come to v 11—this is called ‘The Great White Throne Judgment’—v 12: “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God; and *the* books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of Life.... [Now, we saw in Ezek. 37 that they already died once, so for whatever sins and the way that they lived their lives at that time, it is clear that they have not committed the unpardonable sin. So therefore, they are given an opportunity for salvation and they are] ...And the dead were judged out of the things written in the books...” Here's an opportunity for salvation. Let's read it again:

“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God; and *the* books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of

Life.... [showing an opportunity for salvation. Those who are Christians today have their names already written in the book of Life. So these are people who have not had the opportunity for salvation, so their names are not written in the book of Life for salvation.] ...and the dead were judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works” (vs 12-13). Meaning that they have a new life in which to live; to have faith; to have works; to be given the opportunity for salvation.

Now again, I encourage you to write for those two tapes that I mentioned, because it will talk much more about some of the other details, such as: how long they lived and so forth.

Now there is one more part to ‘the rest of the dead.’ The rest of the dead are those who have committed the unpardonable sin—and we cover that in detail on those other two tapes. But, suffice to show here, let’s come to v 14—so there are, as we could say, two parts to the second resurrection. The first part is those who were not given salvation, but have not committed the unpardonable sin. They are raised to a physical life, to receive an opportunity for salvation. The second part of the ‘rest of the dead’—or the second resurrection—is those who have committed the unpardonable sin, who will be cast into the lake of fire.

We’ll read that in v 14: “And death and *the* grave were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire” (vs 14-15).

Now, let’s come over here to Revelation 21:8—and this gives us a little more breakdown on the category of incorrigible wicked. “But *the* cowardly... [because they didn’t trust God] ...and unbelieving... [because they didn’t believe God] ... and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is *the* second death.” That is the judgment that God has upon the incorrigibly wicked, and from this death there is no resurrection—nor torture, nor suffering forever.

Let’s come back here to Malachi, just the last chapter in the Old Testament before the book of Matthew. Malachi 4 1: “‘For behold, the day is coming, burning like a consuming oven; and all the proud, and every doer of wickedness, shall be stubble. And the day that comes shall burn them up,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘and will leave them neither root nor branch.... [meaning *no life!*] ...But unto you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, and healing will be in His wings. And you shall go out and grow up like calves of the stall. And you shall trample the wicked, for

they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I *am* preparing,’ says the LORD of hosts” (vs 1-3).

So the incorrigibly wicked will not suffer forever. They will not be tormented forever. That is only reserved to Satan and his demons—not human beings.

Again, I encourage you to go through and look up all the Scriptural references that we have concerning the resurrections. Now, you see how these flow together.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 11:20-26, 39-44
- 2) Matthew 27:50-53
- 3) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
- 4) Revelation 19:11-14
- 5) Zechariah 14:4-5, 8-9
- 6) Ezekiel 18:4
- 7) Zechariah 12:1
- 8) James 2:26
- 9) Hebrews 12:22-23
- 10) 1 John 3:1-2
- 11) Philippians 3:20-21
- 12) Ezekiel 37:7-14
- 13) Matthew 12:41-42
- 14) Revelation 20:4-5, 11-15
- 15) Revelation 21:8
- 16) Malachi 4:1-3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Kings 17:17-24
- John 11
- John 1:1-3
- Revelation 20:6
- Revelation 4 & 5
- 1 Corinthians 15

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- on last day of Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day
- *First Resurrection*
- *The Sea of Glass*
- *The Spirit in Man*

Eternal Judgment

Fred R. Coulter

From the resurrections we come to the next section which is called *Eternal Judgment*. You will see how they tie together, and in fact, some of it will be repeated here: (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pgs 29-30).

God is now judging every believer who has been called at this time. God's judgment of each individual begins when God opens his or her mind to understand God's way of life. With His love, grace and mercy, God gives each one who yields to His Holy Spirit the strength and the power to grow in love, faith and grace and to overcome human nature, the world and Satan the devil. God the Father holds each believer personally responsible to grow in the knowledge of His Word and in the spiritual stature and fullness of His Son Jesus Christ. As the believer loves God with all the heart and is living in faithful obedience to His Word, he or she has the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to him or her as the gift of God. The believer is then judged as wholly righteous and blameless before God the Father. All who remain in this imputed righteousness of faith will be in the first resurrection and will receive eternal life at the return of Jesus Christ.

Those individuals through the ages who have had no opportunity for salvation during their lifetime will be restored to physical life in the second resurrection, which will take place after the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ and the saints. Everyone who is raised in the second resurrection will have the same opportunity for salvation as those who were in the first resurrection. Each one will be taught the way of salvation and will have the opportunity to repent and to accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the remission of his or her sins. Each will be granted the same period of time to choose God's way of salvation. This period, called the Great White Throne Judgment... [which we just read of previously] ...will apparently last for 100 years. During this time, all who learn to live in accordance with God's will, growing in grace and in the knowledge and character of Jesus Christ, will receive eternal life.

By the end of this period of judgment, all those who have chosen salvation will have entered into the Kingdom of God as spirit sons of God. At that time, all who have rejected their opportunity for salvation will be sentenced to the second death-their eternal judgment. All the incorrigible wicked from past ages who have committed the unpardonable sin, and have willfully rejected the salvation of God, will be resurrected to physical life to join the living wicked in receiving the sentence of the second death as their eternal judgment. God will destroy all the incorrigible wicked at the same time in the lake of fire. This is the second death, from which there is no resurrection.

Now, I've covered virtually most of it already, so I'll just refer you to the Scripture sections and you go through and study them. And this ties in to the section called *The Baptism of Fire*.

The Baptism of Fire

Fred R. Coulter

Now, in the world today, there are many Pentecostal people who believe that the ‘baptism of fire’ is the receiving of the ‘Holy Ghost’ by speaking in tongues and running around shouting and jumping and yelling and screaming in great confusion. Now we know that God is not the author of confusion, so this is not from God. And the truth about the ‘baptism of fire’ ties in with the second death. So let’s read that. Now no one who is a true believer wants the ‘baptism of fire’ because then you’re desiring the Lake of Fire, which is the second death. And that Lake of Fire is going to consume the whole earth—as Peter says. It’s going to melt all the elements on the earth. So you don’t want that.

If you think you want a ‘baptism of fire,’ think about the Lake of Fire by looking at any documentary on volcanoes and ask: Do you want to be thrown into that liquid lava and be burned up? Okay, let’s read the section on *Baptism of Fire: (Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God, pg 30)*.

The baptism of fire is not a baptism to be sought by spiritually begotten believers, as some teach, but a baptism that is reserved for the incorrigible wicked. The Scriptures reveal that the baptism of fire is the eternal destruction of the wicked by immersion... [that means *complete submersion*] ...into the lake of fire and brimstone. Those who are cast into the lake of fire will not be tormented forever but will be burned up. This is the second and permanent death and God’s final judgment for the unrepentant, incorrigible wicked who have committed the unpardonable sin and have willfully rejected His way of salvation through Jesus Christ. All who have hardened their hearts in their iniquities and their rebellion against God and who have committed the unpardonable sin by knowingly resisting and blaspheming the Holy Spirit, making it impossible for them to be led to repentance, are incorrigibly wicked and will be destroyed together in the Lake of Fire.

Now let’s look at just a couple of Scriptures here concerning that. Let’s come to Matthew, the third chapter, because this is where it is first brought to light, when John the Baptist was preaching repentance. Matthew 3:10—he’s talking to those who were onlookers walking by, yet wanting the blessing: “But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not

producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into *the* fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but the one Who *is* coming after me is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to carry His sandals; He shall baptize you with *the* Holy Spirit, and with fire; whose winnowing shovel *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather His wheat into the granary... [that is those who receive salvation into His garner] ... but the chaff He will burn up [incorrigible wicked] ...with unquenchable fire” (vs 10-12).

Now, let’s look at another Scripture here in Matthew 25. We have those who are the sheep—who enter in to receive eternal life because they followed Christ and they took care of even the least of the brethren. Now let’s come to Matthew 25:41—Then those that did not do it; those who did not live God’s way, who then are going to be separated: “Then shall He also say to those on *the* left, ‘Depart from Me, *you* cursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’” Now, the Bible shows that the devil and his angels will be tormented forever, because they are spirit beings.

Now, let’s come to Hebrews, the tenth chapter. Now, whoever commits the unpardonable sin will have it so hard there will be no remorse; there will be no concern about repentance; there will be absolutely nothing but hateful feelings toward God and His way, because they have rejected God; rejected His Spirit; have hardened their hearts; and there is no salvation for them.

Let’s pick it up Hebrews 10:26: “For if we willfully go on sinning... [that means with premeditated determination. Not because of weakness, not because of temptation, but with planned determination to *willfully* sin—reject the Holy Spirit of God.] ...after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of inevitable judgment and of fierce fire, which will devour the adversaries of God. Consider this: anyone who rejects *the* law of Moses dies without mercy under *the* testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, *as* an unholy thing, and has scorned the Spirit of grace? For we know Him Who has said, “‘Vengeance *belongs* to Me. I will recompense!’” says *the* Lord.’ And again, ‘*The* Lord will judge His people.’ *It is* a fearful thing to fall into *the* hands of *the* living God” (vs 26-31). So

quite a thing, isn't it? That's really something!

Let's come to Hebrews 12:29: "For our God *is* indeed a consuming fire." And that is to those who go against God's way.

I encourage you to go through and study those things, and write in for any other tapes that you would like to have concerning that, and we'll be happy to send them to you.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 3:10-12
- 2) Matthew 25:41
- 3) Hebrews 10:26-31
- 4) Hebrews 12:29