

WALKING IN THE
WISDOM
OF GOD

By: Bob Stewart
Begun: February, 2014

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD
BY: BOB STEWART
SESSION I

Introduction:

In our time we have a tremendous amount of information at our disposal. We have schools and colleges on every corner. We have people with fine intellects, lots of knowledge, power, influence and wealth. But the great void we have in the midst of all this, and even with the people whose cup is full with all this information, knowledge, power and influence is that the cup is empty of wisdom.

Look at our world, our nation, our government, our marriages, families and children. Look at the economy of the world and that of our citizens. People pride themselves on their education, knowledge, degrees, and success and yet they have made a disaster of their lives. Look at Hollywood, Washington DC, and take a look closer to home. With all the tools we possess, and all the things we seek to have, somehow wisdom gets left out of the mix.

Now there is a lot of scripture about the importance of gaining wisdom and living wisely, but not much scripture on gaining information, material goods, power, money, influence or most of the other stuff people strive their whole lives to possess. But the one thing scripture places at the forefront of our seeking is the one thing most people ignore, wisdom. Perhaps we have been deceived by the world as to what is important.

Charles Stanley said, “A growing number of people in our world fail to seek God for His wisdom. Instead, they strive to satisfy their passions and desires without regard to their futures or to the consequences of their decisions. This is a spiritually dangerous way to live. When we try to live apart from the counsel of God’s wisdom, we suffer disillusionment, fear, doubt, worry, and frustration. Our lives fall apart...”

So this study is to set wisdom back in its proper place in the things we seek and to make that wisdom the automatic resource for the questions and challenges life brings us.

Let’s create a general definition of how to be Biblically wise. “To be Biblically wise, one must gather both the instruction of God - and the experiences of others

who have applied the instruction of God - into our hearts and minds and then apply all we gather to the way we conduct our life in any and every circumstance.”

The wisdom books in the Bible are generally Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, and the Song of Solomon. But there are wisdom passages sprinkled all over the Bible and wonderful illustrations to help us.

Proverbs 19:8, “He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good.”

Proverbs 24:3, “By wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is Established.”

Proverbs 14:1, “The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.”

The words “wisdom” and “wise” are found about 400 times in the Bible and add to it the often corresponding or parallel word “understanding” and we are well beyond 500 uses of the terms. We frequently see the two together as in, **Proverbs 2:2**, “Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to Understanding...”

We will look at proverbs a lot but as proverbs go, I particularly like this one:

Proverbs 17:28, “Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise...”

Let’s ask and answer the following questions from whatever first pops into our mind.

Let’s consider our perception of what wisdom is. What is wisdom? 1. (What picture comes to mind when you hear the word “wisdom.”) 2. And, what definition comes to mind?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

WISDOM IN THE BIBLE

The Hebrew word for "wisdom" is חכמה (pronounced "hok-mah" with a guttural "h") and the root is “hahkam”, “wise.” “Wisdom” is the noun and “wise” the adjective.

Hebrew, like most near and far eastern written script is based in pictographs, like the familiar Egyptian hieroglyphics, but not as extensive. Each character has a picture attached to it. For example, we are familiar with Chinese "characters" and how a combination of characters comprises a concept and an accompanying spoken word.

As Hebrew developed (it is not an original tongue) it borrowed from Phoenician, Canaanite, Egyptian, Syrian, and Mesopotamian sources and little by little became a fixed tongue. The history of Hebrew is easy to track back to these early origins. Remember, Abraham for example, was not a Hebrew, but a Babylonian from Chaldea and spoke that tongue.

So the word "wise", the root of wisdom, like all Hebrew words had a pictographic origin. Here is the primitive picture. Each letter of the word “wisdom” portrays a simple image.

The ך “Het” equates to a wall, The כ “Kaph” to the palm of the hand, and the מ “Mem” to water. These primitive equivalents began to form a picture of a craftsman building a wall or a cistern (or something else from raw materials) with his hands that could hold water. It could have been a pot, a vase, a cistern, a bowl, a cup and so on. In time it came to indicate the picture "wisdom" giving us a picture of a craftsman taking raw material and working it into a finished product. The process is called "wisdom" and the product also called wisdom, and the person wise.

Raw materials came to include ore, hide, clay, stone, wool, timber, precious metals, and so on. A good illustration to use is a very Biblical one; The Potter and the clay.

A potter will dig out raw clay from the ground and take it to his work area. Then he will work all the rough impurities out of the clay and set out to make, say, a water pitcher. In so doing he has to select the amount of clay he desires to use, form a lump, place it upon a wheel and begin to form his pitcher. In doing so he will remove a specific amount from within the lump as well as from without. He will press, pull, shape and form the lump into the pitcher in his mind. Once formed, he may cut designs into it or add some type of color. Then comes the firing. Once the kiln is heated the potter will fire the pitcher and then finish the project with glaze, color and whatever he wishes. When it is all done and cool, he will check it over for flaws and if satisfied, he will sell it or give it away. If for the temple or the kings table, he will present it there.

The idea of the potter and the clay is found several times in Isaiah 29:16, 41:25; 45:9; 64:8. God is the potter and we are the clay.

So the process going from raw, rough material to a finished product fit for the kings table is called "wisdom".

For us, we would call this idea "experience" and that which is gained from it. But there is more to it than that. How one applies the experience and for what purpose is a key element. Having experience as a murderer or a sexual predator and so on is not included.

But the process, regardless of how hard, should be used to gain wisdom. In the Bible, the idea of "wisdom" is given to craftsmen, especially Oholiab and Bezalel who were principally responsible for designing and building the tabernacle and all its accouterments.

Notice in Exodus 28:3, the Lord says, "You shall speak to all the *skillful* persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of *wisdom*, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me.

The words "skillful" and "wisdom" are of the same root, "chakam" meaning wise, skillful, having expertise or experienced ability. In other words, someone who knows what he is doing and does it in a way that pleases the Lord.

Wisdom illustration: Oholiab and Bezelel Exodus 31:1-11. There, God places "wisdom" (verse 3) and "skill", "skillfulness" (verse 6) in these men. The word for wisdom is "hok-mah." But "skill", "understanding" and "knowledge" are all words that flesh out the word "wisdom."

1: Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2: "See, I have called by name Bezelel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *kinds of* craftsmanship, 4: to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, 5: and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all *kinds of* craftsmanship. 6: "And behold, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all who are skillful I have put skill, that they may make all that I have commanded you: 7: the tent of meeting, and the ark of testimony, and the mercy seat upon it, and all the furniture of the tent, 8: the table also and its utensils, and the pure *gold* lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, 9: the altar of burnt offering also with all its utensils, and the laver and its stand, 10: the woven garments as well, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, *with which* to carry on their priesthood; 11: the anointing oil also, and the fragrant incense for the holy place, they are to make *them* according to all that I have commanded you."

Note Exodus 35:30-35,

"30: Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezelel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 31: "And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship; 32: to make designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze, 33: and in the cutting of stones for settings and in the carving of wood, so as to perform in every inventive work. 34: "He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35: "He has filled them with skill to perform every work of an engraver and of a designer and of an embroiderer, in blue and in purple *and* in scarlet *material*, and in fine linen, and of a weaver, as performers of every work and makers of designs."

But the women are included as well.

Exodus 35:22, 25-29, “Then all whose hearts moved them, both men and women, came *and* brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and bracelets, all articles of gold; so *did* every man who presented an offering of gold to the LORD.”

25: All the skilled women spun with their hands, and brought what they had spun, *in* blue and purple *and* scarlet *material* and *in* fine linen. 26: All the women whose heart stirred with a skill spun the goats' *hair*. 27: The rulers brought the onyx stones and the stones for setting for the ephod and for the breastpiece; 28: and the spice and the oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. 29: The Israelites, all the men and women, whose heart moved them to bring *material* for all the work, which the LORD had commanded through Moses to be done, brought a freewill offering to the LORD.”

36:1-2, 1: "Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every *skillful* person in whom the LORD has put *skill* and understanding to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded." 2: Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every *skillful* person in whom the LORD had put *skill*, everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to perform it.”¹

The words “skillful” and “skill” are the word for “wisdom.” There are 153 times "hok-mah" is used and more for other forms of the word.

In terms of our point, it is we who are the raw material (often seen a clay) for our “wise” God (The Potter) to form, and we who are made into a beautiful, finished product. Then it is also we who become the potter, so to speak, and begin fashioning our family and others as God gives us, in the same pattern.

¹ Today in honor of Bezalel, there is a “Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design” in Jerusalem where they teach and create in multiple mediums of materials including fabric, wood, stone, leather, metal clay and so on. Contributed by RJ Marvin.

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD

SESSION II

In the last session we discovered that wisdom is seen as a developed skill brought about by God taking raw material (us) and working us into a finished and beautiful entity fit for His kingdom. The scripture compares this to a potter working with clay and fashioning it, firing it and decorating it until it is perfect. We are not told how long this will take but Paul puts it this way in Philippians 1:6,

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

This gives us a bit of a picture of how wisdom is accomplished. But how does one acquire wisdom as he goes along learning to walk in the wisdom of God so his or her life avoids the frequent stumbling blocks that trip us up?

Let's begin with the apostle James.

James 1:5-8, 1: “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6: But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7: For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8: *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Well, how does God do this? Is it some magic “wisdom dump” into one's brain that changes him from being a blithering idiot into Solomon instantaneously? Are we talking about some general one size fits all box of wisdom that is able to deal with every question and situation? Or is there a finer distinction?

James, is aware of the stories of how God gave wisdom to men. Bottom line, to ask for wisdom from God is to ask for a ministry of His Spirit in your life. We are not told how this occurs or how long it will take. As we saw last session, God places the specific type of wisdom in a person, "I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *kinds of* craftsmanship..." (Exodus 31:3) But this could have been a life-long development that God began years before so His purpose for this person could be fulfilled at the proper time. That is why “wisdom” corresponds with the words “experience,” “understanding”, and “knowledge.” There is a sense of time involved, and it is the

use of the time that comes into play. Paul wrote,

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Ephesians 5:15-17

Then he adds rather interestingly an example of a foolish walk,

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.” (18-21)

He goes on from there to teach about the relationship between a husband and a wife and the husband and God. All in the context of wisdom.

Speaking of Christ, Paul notes that “Christ is the wisdom of God.” (I Corinthians 1:24) His intention is that Christ displays the wisdom of God in His own person and work. In that same chapter, Paul contrasts the wisdom of God in the cross bringing opportunity for men to come to Him with the foolishness of the world. The “foolishness” of the world rejects Christ and His death on a cross and relies on its own “wisdom” Paul calls foolishness.

But as the living Word of God, Christ is the One from whom wisdom can be sought. This again becomes a spiritual quest. Jesus said,

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell--and great was its fall." Matthew 7:24-27

In I Corinthians 12:7-8 Paul writes about a different acquisition of wisdom that is often misunderstood., “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and

to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; ...” This is not the personal attribute of general wisdom but a special manifestation of the Holy Spirit on a specific occasion when such a manifestation is needed and God seeks to do so through one of His servants.² Some people think that because they have the Holy Spirit or have had a special experience in the Holy Spirit that somehow they are superior, wiser or more spiritual than others, and while they are looking down their nose at others I am thinking these are the most foolish of all.

But generally, wisdom from God will come in a variety of ways; from scripture, from life experience, from others who have life experiences and have handled them according to the “Way of the Lord,” and from His Holy Spirit. Walking in the “Way of the Lord” from one’s youth or teaching the way of the Lord to one’s children or grandchildren is vital in achieving wisdom as an adult.

Note a few examples,

Judges 2:21-22, 21: “I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22: in order to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk in it as their fathers did, or not.”

II Kings 21:22, “So he (Amon) forsook the LORD, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD.”

Proverbs 10:29-30, 29: “The way of the LORD is a stronghold to the upright, But ruin to the workers of iniquity. 30: The righteous will never be shaken, But the wicked will not dwell in the land.”

And then in Psalm 19:7 we have,

“The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making *wise* the simple.”

But note in James 1:6-8, that there is a condition. In asking God for wisdom, a person...

² See: “A Brief Word Study Concerning The Gifts Of The Holy Spirit” online at www.bibleclassroom.org.

“...must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surfer of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

“Doubting” is from a root word that means a “split judgment” or “undecided.” Those who come to doubt God in their thinking do so generally because of some difficult or tragic circumstance where God seems to have abandoned them or did not answer their prayers. So to receive wisdom from God, one must have already grown past this thought and come to understand what God is doing in the midst of these kinds of things and why, or at least trust God to the extent he is not blamed or doubted in these situations. Many have fallen into doubt and disillusionment due to faulty teaching that is prevalent in the church. I have heard so many times phrases like “Why did God do this (or allow this) to happen to me” (or someone else), or “How come God didn’t prevent this from happening?” When this kind of thinking takes root, gaining wisdom from God won’t occur because we don’t trust Him or believe Him. We have come to believe a lie or at best, a distortion of the truth.

To be spiritually wise means to take the Word and promises of God, the experiences of life, or those from a wise person and come to a place of using them in faith and trust in the Lord in spite of the circumstances that afflict. Each affliction needs to be brought into (or used to build) the understanding of life and one's place in it as he moves closer to God in the midst of them, not further away.

Another problem with most people is that they disregard God’s counsel for much of their lives and then in a desperate moment cry out for wisdom. I doubt much wisdom can be acquired in that manner without third party help. And though one might ask God for wisdom, he does not open their head and dump in the wisdom of Solomon instantaneously. In fact, wisdom is a process and there are specific steps to take to acquire it. As we have seen, God is the Potter and we are the clay. We need to be willing to be pliable in His hands even though that may take us through the kiln or smelter of life.

Let’s examine some Biblical guidelines in how to acquire wisdom and look at what wisdom does and doesn’t do.

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD

SESSION III

I realize that many are eager to begin practical application of God's wisdom to specific situations. We will get to that in just a short time. But before we try and build a house on the sand for a quick shelter from the storms of life, we are instructed to lay a good foundation on the rock which is the Word of God. Also, it is the content and nature of the biblical "heart" that needs transformation as all things begin within. It is from the heart that the life is conducted. So we will work on the internal before we begin to practice what we learn.

In the first session we saw that becoming wise is a process much like that of a craftsman taking raw material and turning it into a finished product. In our case God is the potter and we are the clay. In the second session, we saw that it is appropriate to ask God for wisdom but at the same time one must unequivocally determine to walk in the way of the Lord.

So today, we are going to look at Biblical guidelines as to how to acquire wisdom and look at what wisdom does and doesn't do. (Brief review)

First, Wisdom begins with "the fear of the Lord."

Comment. The "fear of the Lord" is not "terror" of God alone. The word "fear" in the original does indicate a range of responses all involving strong emotions akin to terror. And though we do not walk in terror of God, there is a mandate to recognize and not ignore the overwhelming power of God. The unbelieving world, needing the "fear" of the Lord doesn't have it and doesn't care. But for His believing Children He is indeed a "consuming fire."³ and created the universe with a word. Phenomenal power!

How do we understand our relationship with our God? As people, we know we are loved by God. The world was forgiven and redeemed by the blood of His Son. And as His children in Christ we know we are secure and have an solid hope for eternal life. Again, those who are not His do not fear the Lord at all then they should fear Him the most.⁴ So the counsel to "fear the Lord" is primarily to His children. This is not some continual terror, but much like the relationship with a holy, loving, righteous and just father, one needn't fear until one decides to

³ Deuteronomy 4:24, 9:3; Hebrews 12:29.

⁴ As Carl Ulbrich noted (a member of the study group), "They do not fear the Lord because they are not wise."

dishonor, disobey, disrespect or dismiss father's counsel, rules or teaching.

The world is described by scriptural passages like, II Kings, 17:34-35, 34: "To this day they do according to the earlier customs: they do not fear the LORD, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances or the law, or the commandments which the LORD commanded the sons of Jacob, whom He named Israel; 35: with whom the LORD made a covenant and commanded them, saying, 'You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down yourselves to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them.'"

Proverbs 1:23-33, 23: "Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. 24: "Because (or "but")I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; 25: And you neglected all my counsel And did not want my reproof; 26: I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, 27: When your dread comes like a storm And your calamity comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. 28: "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me, 29: Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD. 30: "They would not accept my counsel, They spurned all my reproof. 31: "So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way And be satiated with their own devices. 32: "For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them. 33: "But he who listens to me shall live securely And will be at ease from the dread of evil."

Second, willingness to accept reproofs, discipline, correction and rebuke (develop humility).

Proverbs 1:20-23, 20: "Wisdom shouts in the street, She lifts her voice in the square; 21: At the head of the noisy *streets* she cries out; At the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings: 22: "How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing And fools hate knowledge? 23: "Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.

In Proverbs 6:23, we read, "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life."

Proverbs 15:31-32, 31: "He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise. 32: He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding."

Proverbs 9:8-9, 8: “Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, Reprove a wise man and he will love you. 9: Give *instruction* to a wise man and he will be still wiser, Teach a righteous man and he will increase *his* learning.”

Proverbs 28:23: “He who rebukes a man will afterward find *more* favor Than he who flatters with the tongue.”

Proverbs 19:20, “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days.”

At the time one comes under a disciplinary action God chooses appropriate to bring us back into line we can be assured it is from His love. Hebrews 12:3-13,

Hebrews 12:3-11, 3: For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4: “You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5: and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; 6: FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." 7: It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? 8: But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9: Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10: For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. 11: All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

So like our earthly father, when we become disobedient and unruly, God, for our own good takes steps to correct and discipline us. Peace comes with obedience. Fear comes naturally when disobedience is considered or acted upon. Unlike much of the world, God’s discipline looks to the future and what is best for the child as any good parent’s should. It is not unlike a procedure used in forming clay into a pot or ore into a precious pure metal. It looks to our best when much of the world’s discipline is just simply vengeance for a past act with little view to the future. In the scriptures, “discipline” is “training for the future” and we get our word “disciple” from it. We hear the term used when one undertakes the “discipline” of

study to become something he or she desires in the future. We use the term self-discipline and it is always used in a good sense.

God is gracious, but at the same time righteous and just and wishes His children to be the same way. Thus we walk in the fear, that is in obedience to the Lord. And in that walk with God there is benefit. So wisdom begins when one submits him or herself to God in humility, honor and “fear and Trembling” as Paul noted in Philippians 2:12-13,

12: “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13: for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.”

It is the working of God in us that gives us awe and the sense of fear and trembling. Wisdom begins there.

Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

Proverbs 15:33, “The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor *comes* humility.”

Proverbs 22:4, “The reward of humility *and* the fear of the LORD Are riches, honor and life.”

Third, compliance with His word and His commandments.

For the Jew this was often distorted into a legalistic system of self-righteousness by the teachers of Israel. For the Christian, not under Law but grace and to be led by the Spirit and not by the flesh, we are still not to take our freedom to walk contrary to the Commandments. Wisdom teaches us not to just freely disobey the commandments. Just because we are not under the Law doesn't give us permission to commit idolatry, commit adultery, steal, lie and so on. If we were free from the penalty of all traffic laws, wisdom would teach us how unwise it is to just race carelessly through a red light.

People who claim freedom under grace and say, “Now I can do whatever I want and thus wallow in sin and unrighteousness without fear of condemnation or judgment” reveal the true nature of their heart. Martin Luther was right when he

said, “Love God and do what you wish.” But the test comes in the true desire of the heart. Paul put it this way,

“Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?” II Corinthians 13:5

The fear of the lord is demonstrated by a desire to walk obediently in the way of the Lord. Not in the bondage of the Law, but under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only places the law of god in our hearts but frees us from the condemnation of violating it. The Holy Spirit never leads us into violations of the law. But the law cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit, a higher and more revealing demonstration of the persons of God and Christ both inwardly and outwardly. This includes the fruit of: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. Sheer obedience under the Law can never produce these things of the Spirit.

Still, the Old Testament saints delighted in the goodness of the law.

Psalm 112:1, “Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights 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.”

Ecclesiastes 12:13, “The conclusion, when all has been heard, *is*: fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to* every person.”

Returning to Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path” we have,

Proverbs 6:23, “For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life”

2Pe 1:19 *So* we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

Fourth, accompanying that, there is another aspect to acquiring wisdom. One must turn away from evil. To turn away from evil is to (of course) comply with the will and word of God. The other side of the coin of obedience is of course avoiding disobedience

Job 28:28 "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.'"

Proverbs 8:13, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate."

Proverbs 3:5-7, 5: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6: In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. 7: Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil."

Proverbs 1:8-16,

8: "Hear, my son, your father's instruction And do not forsake your mother's teaching; 9: Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head And ornaments about your neck. 10: My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent. 11: If they say, "Come with us, Let us lie in wait for blood, Let us ambush the innocent without cause; 12: Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, Even whole, as those who go down to the pit; 13: We will find all *kinds* of precious wealth, We will fill our houses with spoil; 14: Throw in your lot with us, We shall all have one purse," 15: My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path, 16: For their feet run to evil And they hasten to shed blood."

Fifth, It is to be sought after.⁵

Proverbs 2:3-6, 3: "For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; 4: If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; 5: Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. 6: For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding." (all of this chapter is vital)

And in Proverbs 8:17, wisdom speaks out, "I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me."

⁵ See also Isaiah 1:1-20; Proverbs 2:1-22;

Ecclesiastes 7:25, "I directed my mind to know, to investigate and to seek wisdom and an explanation, and to know the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness."

Speaking of the benefit and the seeking of wisdom, Jesus noted,

"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Matthew 6:31-33.

Sixth, it comes both from God's written word and from those who teach it.

Proverbs 1:1-9

- 1: The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:
- 2: To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding,
- 3: To receive instruction in wise behavior, Righteousness, justice and equity;
- 4: To give prudence to the naive, To the youth knowledge and discretion,
- 5: A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel,
- 6: To understand a proverb and a figure, The words of the wise and their riddles.
- 7: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- 8: Hear, my son, your father's instruction And do not forsake your mother's teaching;
- 9: Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head And ornaments about your neck.

Proverbs 22:17-19, 17: "Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your mind to my knowledge; 18: For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, That they may be ready on your lips. 19: So that your trust may be in the LORD, I have taught you today, even you."

Proverbs 11:14, "Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory."

We are familiar with the verse, "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. Psalm 119:105. Otherwise we walk in darkness and we will not find wisdom there.

(See also Proverbs 4:1-27)

Seventh, there is great benefit.

Proverbs 14:26-27, 26: “In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge. 27: The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death.”

Isaiah 33:5-6, 5: “The LORD is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. 6: And He will be the stability of your times, A wealth of salvation, wisdom and knowledge; The fear of the LORD is his treasure.”

Proverbs 22:5-6, 5: “Thorns *and* snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards himself will be far from them. 6: Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs 6:20-22, 20: “My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother; 21: Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck. 22: When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you.”

Great time last night! Attached above are the notes from the last two sessions. Proverbs 1:5-6 tells us,

"A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel, To understand a proverb and a figure, The words of the wise and their riddles." With this in mind, for next week, please read Proverbs chapter 8. Then, read it again for depth. Underline anything that stands out to you and be prepared to tell us why.

Also, note the style, how "wisdom" is presented. Note the structure of the phrases. Note any special literary devices and interesting features. (Pro. 1:5-6 above) Share them with us. I will ask about these and hope you will be prepared to share (or "teach") what you have gained with us - (your learned wisdom). Why? The Word of the Lord indicates that this is a part of our privilege.

Pro 22:17, ‘Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your mind to my knowledge;

Pro 22:18 For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, That they may be ready on your lips.

Pro 9:9 Give *instruction* to a wise man and he will be still wiser, Teach a righteous man and he will increase *his* learning.

Exo 35:31 "And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship; ...Exo 35:34 "He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.

Psalms 34:7-11, 7: "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them. 8: O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! 9: O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him there is no want. 10: The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing. 11: Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD."

As we saw, we learn wisdom from each other.

Pro 11:14 Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory.

Homework: Proverbs 8.

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD
SESSION III HOMEWORK
PROVERBS 8

Proverbs 1:5-6 tells us,

"A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel, To understand a proverb and a figure, The words of the wise and their riddles."

With this in mind, for next week, please read Proverbs chapter 8. Then, read it again for depth. Underline anything that stands out to you and be prepared to tell us why.

Also, note the style, how "wisdom" is presented. Note the structure of the phrases. Note any special literary devices and interesting features. (Pro. 1:5-6 above) Share them with us. I will ask about these and hope you will be prepared to share (or "teach") what you have gained with us - (your learned wisdom). Why? The Word of the Lord indicates that this is a part of our privilege.

Pro 22:17 Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your mind to my knowledge;

Pro 22:18 For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, That they may be ready on your lips.

Pro 9:9 Give *instruction* to a wise man and he will be still wiser, Teach a righteous man and he will increase *his* learning.

Exo 35:31 "And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship; ...

Exo 35:34 "He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.

Psa 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them.

Psa 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

Psa 34:9 O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him there is no want.

Psa 34:10 The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.

Psa 34:11 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

As we saw, we learn wisdom from each other.

Pro 11:14 Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory.

See you next week! Oh, and I will offer an interesting thought based on Proverbs 8 as well. Controversial for sure.

Proverbs 8 Help

Group,

In answer to an inquiry, about how to best approach and understand chapter 8, I am sending this to you all.

I have reproduced the chapter below. Notice where I made the breaks.

Pro 8:1 Does not wisdom call, And understanding lift up her voice? (introduction)

Pro 8:2 On top of the heights beside the way, Where the paths meet, she takes her stand;

Pro 8:3 Beside the gates, at the opening to the city, At the entrance of the doors, she cries out:

Pro 8:4 "To you, O men, I call, And my voice is to the sons of men.

Pro 8:5 "O naive ones, understand prudence; And, O fools, understand wisdom.

Pro 8:6 "Listen, for I will speak noble things; And the opening of my lips *will reveal* right things.

Pro 8:7 "For my mouth will utter truth; And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

Pro 8:8 "All the utterances of my mouth are in righteousness; There is nothing

crooked or perverted in them.

Pro 8:9 "They are all straightforward to him who understands, And right to those who find knowledge.

You will see that each two verses make up the proverb. The first strophe (verse) is repeated in the second verse in a different way but expressing the same thought, continuing the same thought or defining the first phrase. This is called a "parallelism." Two verses parallel to each other in meaning. Some call this a "couplet."

Now:

1. Go back and look at the "couplets" and see how they complement each other. When you get to verse 4, for example, it begins, "To you oh men..." Verse 5 is intended to parallel that and begins, "O naive ones..." So "men" and "Naïve ones" then the next little remark in verse 4 is, "I call..." and parallel to that is "understand prudence." The best part is at the end, for in verse 4 it says, "sons of men" and verse 5 parallels that with "O' fools." The point is of course that men who disregard the call of wisdom are fools.
2. Go down the rest of the chapter (feel free to use this form) and divide the parallelisms. Sometimes they may actually be three to four verses or more. Or even a lengthy passage with one theme but still in parallelisms (such as 22-31). So watch for that. Sometimes a verse stands alone without a parallelism. One parallelism does not necessarily have to agree with the next one or others in the chapter.
3. Now, beginning at the top, notice the gender of "wisdom". This is called "personification." Personification is taking an inanimate thing and giving it human characteristics or the characteristics of an animal or other living thing.

In this case "wisdom" is portrayed as a _____.

4. Now, after you have done that, see if you can find a statement that you like or that stands out to you.

Pro 8:10 "Take my instruction and not silver, And knowledge rather than choicest gold.

Pro 8:11 "For wisdom is better than jewels; And all desirable things cannot compare with her.

Pro 8:12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And I find knowledge *and* discretion.

Pro 8:13 "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate.

Pro 8:14 "Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine.

Pro 8:15 "By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice.

Pro 8:16 "By me princes rule, and nobles, All who judge rightly.

Pro 8:17 "I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me.

Pro 8:18 "Riches and honor are with me, Enduring wealth and righteousness.

Pro 8:19 "My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, And my yield *better* than choicest silver.

Pro 8:20 "I walk in the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice,

Pro 8:21 To endow those who love me with wealth, That I may fill their treasuries.

Pro 8:22 "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old.

Pro 8:23 "From everlasting I was established, From the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth.

Pro 8:24 "When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no springs abounding with water.

Pro 8:25 "Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills I was brought forth;

Pro 8:26 While He had not yet made the earth and the fields, Nor the first dust of the world.

Pro 8:27 "When He established the heavens, I was there, When He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep,

Pro 8:28 When He made firm the skies above, When the springs of the deep became fixed,

Pro 8:29 When He set for the sea its boundary So that the water would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth;

Pro 8:30 Then I was beside Him, *as* a master workman; And I was daily *His* delight, Rejoicing always before Him,

Pro 8:31 Rejoicing in the world, His earth, And *having* my delight in the sons of men.

Pro 8:32 "Now therefore, *O* sons, listen to me, For blessed are they who keep my ways.

Pro 8:33 "Heed instruction and be wise, And do not neglect *it*.

Pro 8:34 "Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts.

Pro 8:35 "For he who finds me finds life And obtains favor from the LORD.

Pro 8:36 "But he who sins against me injures himself; All those who hate me love death."

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD
SESSION IV

Proverbs 8 review.

As one seeks wisdom, wisdom teaches the greatest temptations to avoid.

1. The enticement of sinners and the wicked and violent who seek to do others harm for their own benefit.

Psalm 1:1-6, 1: “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2: But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3: He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. 4: The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. 5: Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6: For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.”

Proverbs 13:20, “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

Psalm 50:16-20, “But to the wicked God says, "What right have you to tell of My statutes And to take My covenant in your mouth? 17: "For you hate discipline, And you cast My words behind you. 18: "When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, And you associate with adulterers. 19: "You let your mouth loose in evil And your tongue frames deceit. 20: "You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother's son.”

(And Proverbs 1:10-19 as quoted in session III)

2. Gossipers, flatterers and smooth talkers.

Proverbs 20:19, “He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip.”

II Corinthians 12:20, “For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps *there will be* strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances;...”

Proverbs 11:13, “He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.”

Proverbs 26:20-28, 20: “For lack of wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down. 21: *Like* charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife. 22: The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body. 23: *Like* an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross Are burning lips and a wicked heart. 24: He who hates disguises *it* with his lips, But he lays up deceit in his heart. 25: When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, For there are seven abominations in his heart. 26: *Though his* hatred covers itself with guile, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly. 27: He who digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him. 28: A lying tongue hates those it crushes, And a flattering mouth works ruin.”

Romans 16:17-18, 17: “Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18: For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.”

Psalms 12:2-3, 2: “They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak. 3: May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaks great things; “

Proverbs 7:21, 21: “With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him.”

Ezekiel 12:24: "For there will no longer be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel.”

I Thessalonians 2:5 “For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed--God is witness--”

Jude 1:16: “These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their *own* lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of *gaining an* advantage.”

3. Sexual temptations.

Proverbs 2:6-22, 6: “For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding. 7: He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; *He is* a shield to those who walk in integrity, 8: Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones. 9: Then you will discern righteousness and justice And equity *and* every good course. 10: For wisdom will enter your heart And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; 11: Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you, 12: To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things; 13: From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness; 14: Who delight in doing evil And rejoice in the perversity of evil; 15: Whose paths are crooked, And who are devious in their ways; 16: To deliver you from the strange woman, From the adulteress who flatters with her words; 17: That leaves the companion of her youth And forgets the covenant of her God; 18: For her house sinks down to death And her tracks *lead* to the dead; 19: None who go to her return again, Nor do they reach the paths of life. 20: So you will walk in the way of good men And keep to the paths of the righteous. 21: For the upright will live in the land And the blameless will remain in it; 22: But the wicked will be cut off from the land And the treacherous will be uprooted from it.”

All of Proverbs, chapter 5.

Proverbs 6:23-29, 23: “For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress. 25: Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her capture you with her eyelids. 26: For on account of a harlot *one is reduced* to a loaf of bread, And an adulteress hunts for the precious life. 27: Can a man take fire in his bosom And his clothes not be burned? 28: Or can a man walk on hot coals And his feet not be scorched? 29:

So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her will not go unpunished.”

All of Proverbs 7.

4. Laziness

Proverbs 6:6-7, 6: “Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, 7: Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, 8: Prepares her food in the summer *And* gathers her provision in the harvest. 9: How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 10: ‘A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest’—11: Your poverty will come in like a vagabond *And* your need like an armed man.”

Proverbs 21:25-26, 25: “The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, For his hands refuse to work; 26: All day long he is craving, While the righteous gives and does not hold back.”

Proverbs 22:13, “The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside; I will be killed in the streets!"

5. Lying

Proverbs 10:18, “He who conceals hatred *has* lying lips, *And* he who spreads slander is a fool.”

Proverbs 12:19, “Truthful lips will be established forever, *But* a lying tongue is only for a moment.”

Proverbs 12:22, “Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, *But* those who deal faithfully are His delight.”

Proverbs 21:6, “The acquisition of treasures by a lying tongue *Is* a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.”

Proverbs 26:28, “A lying tongue hates those it crushes, *And* a flattering mouth works ruin.”

Psalm 31:18, "Let the lying lips be mute, Which speak arrogantly against the righteous With pride and contempt.""

Ezekiel 13:17-19, 17: "Now you, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who are prophesying from their own inspiration. Prophecy against them, 18: and say, "Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe to the women who sew *magic* bands on all wrists and make veils for the heads of *persons* of every stature to hunt down lives! Will you hunt down the lives of My people, but preserve the lives of *others* for yourselves? 19: "For handfuls of barley and fragments of bread, you have profaned Me to My people to put to death some who should not die and to keep others alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies."

6. Seven Abominations

Proverbs 6:16-19, 16: "There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: 17: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, 18: A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, 19: A false witness *who* utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers."

Proverbs 26:24-26, 24: "He who hates disguises *it* with his lips, But he lays up deceit in his heart. 25: When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, For there are seven abominations in his heart. 26: *Though his* hatred covers itself with guile, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly."

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD

SESSION V

Introduction:

We don't know exactly what the day holds for us. Or tomorrow for that matter. So we need wisdom to help us know best how to handle whatever may come our way. If you ask the average person on the street what he or she wants for their life how many will begin with, "I want wisdom for my life?" They will likely begin with answers like, "I would like wealth," "health," "popularity," "success," "security," "good friends," "looks," "my children to have those things" and the list goes on. People want a lot of things but how many would say, "What I want above everything else is I want to be wise?"

Here is the reason why. The world does not run on the basis of wisdom, but on the basis of man's human desires and self-interest. We are constantly barraged with what we ought to want. Inundated with the stimulus to self-interest. Seeking for me. Even though God says we must seek wisdom. How would you have answered that question what do you want most for your life.

There is a difference between Godly wisdom and the world's wisdom. I like Charles Stanley's definition. "Godly wisdom is the capacity to see things from God's point of view and respond according to the principles of scripture."

Worldly wisdom is grounded in the viewpoint of oneself and responds according to one's own self-interest, often expressed emotionally.

One thing is common in each and every day where we need wisdom is that we will probably find ourselves in many relationships both at home and away. Wisdom from the Word will help us make those relationship encounters successful and profitable for all involved.

ROLE RELATIONSHIPS – RELATING TO AUTHORITY- EXERCISING AUTHORITY AND HOW TO HAVE SUCCESS IN RELATIONSHIPS

The Bible places before us the way in which we must relate to authority and exercise authority. Other terms for “authority” include, “rule,” “power,” “lord” (as in lord it over) “lead,” “guide,” “preside,” “control,” “administrate,” “manage,” “in charge,” and so on.⁶ Authority figure terms include “king,” “queen,” “prince,” “pharaoh,” “Lord,” “master,” “owner,” “ruler,” “sovereign,” “Caesar,” “government” and so on. The term “authority” is an English translation of many different Biblical words which we will get to in time.

When we think , in general terms, of someone who has authority, that means one who...???

Answers proffered:

1. Exercises leadership
2. Is responsible
3. Tells others what to do or not do.
4. Has power over others
5. Dictates
6. Has knowledge
7. Is a provider
8. Gains authority through wealth

Now, one of the major problems we have in understanding how to know who has authority, when and how to properly act in a given situation. How this works to bring about success is little understood by many people. So here is a brief questionnaire to get us on track.

1. When you go to a restaurant, who is in charge of what you buy and how it is prepared?
2. When you go into a grocery store, apartment store, home improvement store, or any store, who is in charge?
3. When you get into a taxi, who is in charge?
4. How about when you go to the doctor or dentist?

⁶ These terms are used some 400 times in the Bible.

5. When you sign a contract with someone regarding services or work to be accomplished, who is in charge?
6. When you go to another person's house, who is in charge?
7. When someone comes to your house?
8. When you drive a car, who is in charge?

This question opens the topic of both exercising authority and being under authority simultaneously.

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD
SESSION VI

Let's look at the five types of authority (in our culture):

1. Earned authority.
 - A. Purchased authority.
 1. Ownership of home, land or business.
 - B. Informational authority.
 - i. Teachers, coaches, salesmen etc.
 - ii. Guides (rafting, expeditions, hiking etc.), pilots, drivers, etc.
 - iii. Pastors, counselors, doctors, lawyers (the professions)
2. Assigned or appointed authority from a higher authority due to training and compliance with a higher authority or standard.
 - A. Job promotion
 - B. Military promotion
 - C. Political election or appointed authority – (the highest in our land: The Supreme Court).
 - D. Civil - Law enforcement, Fire fighters, Paramedics, etc.
3. Authority by threat or force. Coercion, gunpoint, blackmail, hostages etc.
4. Delegated authority. Power of attorney, military assignments, babysitter, etc. May be full or limited delegated authority.
5. Ultimate authority
 - A. Self
 - B. God

THE WORLD'S VIEW OF THE LEADERSHIP ROLE

Dictates

Governs

Reigns

Produces and enforces law

Commands/Directs/Decides

Controls

Judges

RELATIONSHIP TYPES - MODELS

- 1) Tyranny
- 2) Chain of command
- 3) Role relationship
- 4) Unification

Seeks to be served

THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE LEADERSHIP/SUBMISSIVE ROLE

Moving from the worldly view of headship and submissiveness to a Biblical model that develops a transition from the “chain of command” to a role relationship to oneness (unity).

(SEE BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS)

First, the Biblical “chain of authority.”



[Non-gender specific except in childbirth and dysfunctional marriage.]

Chain of command model based on I Corinthians 11:3

“But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.”

ALSO DEFINED AS:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Service, sacrifice, love, understanding Gives: blessings, promises, security, blessings, instruction, guidance, etc. etc.</p> | <p><u>INITIATOR</u></p> <p>Exercises faith, trust, confidence, honor, gratitude and respect and receives: gifts, promises, security, instruction, guidance,</p> |
|--|--|

OR:

DOMINANT

SUBMISSIVE

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

| | |
|---|--|
| Matthew 20:20-28 II Corinthians 8:9 John 13:1-17; Mark 10:41-45; Luke 22:24-30 Philippians 2:1-18 Ephesians 5:25-33 | Romans 13:1-7 Ephesians 5:15-24 I Peter 2:13-3:16 Matthew 22:16-22 Titus 3:1 |
|---|--|

DEFINITIONS

Role - To assume the character, attributes, attitudes and actions of a model. (Imitator: I Corinthians 11:1; Hebrews 6:11-12)

There are only two possible roles a human being can assume. (A role only becomes active in a relationship with another human being, creature or thing. Outside of a relationship, no role exists.)

- 1) The role of a Servant/Leader – Supplier, also defined as the dominant or “in charge” role.
- 2) The role of a Receiver/Helper – follower, also defined as a submissive or compliant role.

All people play at least one role at all times they are in a relationship with another entity and often both roles simultaneously. For example, a driver of an automobile assumes the “in charge” role while behind the wheel while at the same time complying with the traffic laws. Successful relationships depend on understanding one’s role in a given situation and knowing how to appropriately express it.

For example, a flight attendant, though serving the passengers is fully in charge of the passengers and all passengers are under his or her authority at all time while on board the aircraft. The flight attendant is fully responsible for the passengers comfort and safety and in a critical time, every passenger must comply with and be submissive to the instructions of the flight attendant. But the flight attendant is under the full authority of the those on the flight deck. The passengers have no authority at all.

Success in relationships is found in adopting the proper role at the proper time. Recently, in a home improvement store, I was behind a man who insisted in receiving ten dollar bills in his change for his purchase. He had given the cashier a hundred dollar bill for a small purchase. The cashier explained to this man that she had no tens and that the store seldom carried them preferring to give change in twenties and fives. The man was irate and wondered out loud what was wrong with the store, the cashier and the world. He demanded to talk to the manager. The manager came to the register while I stood waiting my turn with my small purchase. The manager explained to the man the same policy and then the man was asking all kinds of the “why” questions until grumbling, he finally took his change and left the store. The store did not claim to be a bank, a check cashing enterprise or a credit union. Those institutions were just down the street. The man’s own lack of understanding of the proper role to play in a given situation caused an unnecessary displeasure and dissatisfaction in the store, the people and in himself about the store and its people.

This is what happens when a role reversal is initiated. The person who should adopt the subordinate role takes on the authority role at the improper time and this always messes up the relationship.

THE ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN THE LEADERSHIP ROLE

FAITH, AUTHORITY, RESPONSIBILITY, FREEDOM, LOVE, TRUTH, WISDOM. This comes from first exercising Role 2.

1. Faith. This means first placing oneself under the authority of the Lord and trusting Him fully.
2. Authority. Leadership assumes authority, but authority as the Lord defines and pictures it.
3. Responsibility is endemic to authority. There are few things more frustrating than being given responsibility but no authority to carry it out.
4. Freedom. Those given authority must also have the freedom to carry it out as the Lord has taught.
5. Love. Essential to exercising authority in the manner taught and demonstrated by the Lord.
6. Truth. Essential in exercising authority in the manner taught and demonstrated by the Lord. We are to speak the truth in love.
7. Wisdom. The very first thing a person in authority must seek. This often means having a select number of advisors to assist in one's management process, not to mention Biblical and spiritual guidance as well. Jethro, Moses' father in law advised Moses to select able men to assist in the decision making and rendering judgments for the people. This was of the Lord and Moses did so. The Lord also had Moses select seventy elders from the people that were spiritual men to assist Moses in his work. This type of wisdom is key to being an effective leader.

In Romans, chapter 13, Paul lays out the role of government as well as the role of its citizens. Government is to control evil and punish it.

However, a problem exists if those who are appointed to keep evil and corruption in check are as (or more) evil and corrupt than those they are to keep in check.

Examples: Politicians, law enforcement officers, teachers, religious leaders, military personnel, etc.

In this case the believer must not conform to the evil or be afraid of it but conduct him or herself with Christ like character and display good and caring works.

For the believer, there may also be two relationships employed simultaneously if he or she has a responsible role regarding another person, creature or thing. There is first the submissive role to His or Her Lord and Savior and at the same time there may be a servant leader role to another.

SOME BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF AUTHORITY MODELS

(Ultimate authority directing someone to submit to the appointed or earned authority of another.)

Genesis 16:8-9, 8. "He (the Lord) said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." Then the angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority."

(Ultimate authority directing someone to grant delegated authority of another.)

Numbers 27:18-20, 18: "So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 19: and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. 20: "You shall put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey *him*."

(Appointed authority delegating authority to another.)

II Chronicles 23:18, "Moreover, Jehoiada placed the offices of the house of the LORD under the authority of the Levitical priests, whom David had assigned over the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses--with rejoicing and singing according to the order of David."

"Earned authority recognizing the abilities of the ultimate authority and submitting to it."

Matthew 8:8-9, 8: "But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does *it*."

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD
SESSION VII

AN EXPANDED BIBLICAL VIEW - SERVANT/LEADER-SUPPLIER'S FIRST STEP:

- Places oneself under another authority (model) (Adopts Role 2)
- Becomes a willing learner or disciple and does research
- Provides/supplies to those over whom he is held responsible
- Protects/shelters those over whom he is held responsible
- Guides/leads those over whom he is held responsible
- Listens to/understands those over whom he is held responsible
- Establishes rules for the benefit of those over whom he is held responsible.
- Trains/disciplines those for whom he is held responsible
- Seeks to serve rather than to be served

NOTE THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ROLE-MODEL WILL SOLVE ESSENTIALLY EVERY PROBLEM ON THE MAJOR PROBLEMS LIST.

THE RECEIVER/HELPER-FOLLOWER ROLE (SUBMISSIVE OR COMPLIANT ROLE)

Allows him/herself to be served, humbly acts on it, and is thankful to God for His grace and for the service rendered. Imitates the Lord after receiving from Him (Ephesians 5:1-2).

ROLE 2

But sometimes we only play Role 2. And here now, we need to learn how to recognize the situations in which only understanding and adapting to the proper role will result in successful, harmonious relationships. Most don't know. These examples will begin to help you know when you are to adapt to one role or the other. As you do so, you will learn to adapt to the proper role in marriage and family and begin to move into harmony and unity and hopefully where the "I" is absorbed into the "We".

Are we getting to know who is in charge and when? Here is a quiz. Who is in charge, responsible, and has authority in the following situations and how are you to conduct yourself (or what role do you play?)

In your home when a guest is present? On an airplane? In a restaurant? At the grocery store? At the doctor's office? In someone else's home? In the classroom? As a teacher in the classroom? At your place of business? When on the highway driving a car? When the policeman/woman comes to your door? When the police flash red lights as they come up behind you as you are driving your car? As a passenger in a car? At home with the children? With your spouse?

For a unsuccessful relationship, simply reverse the roles! Same in marriage. Attack the server/leader-supplier or the receiver/helper-follower in how they carry out their responsibilities. When I retired Donna became the Servant/Leader-Supplier as she kept working for another year and a half. She wanted to do so. So I had to learn to step back and play role 2.

As a couple moves from the chain of command into a role relationship with the goal being unity and harmony in the marriage, there will be conflicts over issues as well as whose will gets accomplished. Here are some guidelines in a few areas to assist especially for the husband:

- A. Determine that the house is the wife's. Just let her do what she wishes with decoration, arrangements, storage, colors, and all of that. Here's why. Generally she is the one who will maintain the home and spend more time there than the husband, especially if there are small children at home. Second, why should the husband care about all that stuff anyway? Pick the important matters and let her have the whole thing and only ask for areas to do things he needs or wants to do. His role as the leader supplier requires he do so in terms of his wife's needs and comfort. When he does so, her response will be positive and supportive.
- B. When there comes a disagreement and the matter is not so critical to cause a disruption in the marriage or household, who is to give first? It is the husband. Remember, a leader is to serve and to consider the needs of the other above his own as well as know that in the long run happiness is brought about more by giving than getting his own way.
- C. When a matter of disagreement occurs that could disrupt, be a challenge to core values, or to the future welfare for the family, the wisest thing to do is to get a third party (or more) engaged in the discussion whom both respect and gain thought and opinion about the options and circumstances of any critical decision.
- D. Know when to step into the role of leader and when to step into the subordinate role. In a marriage, these roles will become normal and practically automatic. They can occur back and forth rapidly. An example might be that your wife comes home tired from work and you the husband either have made the dinner and cleaned up or decided to give your wife a break and take her out to dinner. You have taken her role as leader in the kitchen and if she is smart, she will let you do it by happily taking your normal role as the one who is served.

Recently, I have been working hard to refresh and renew our bedroom at home. Donna's role as a helper has been good but I have done the brunt of the work. Seeing my weariness one morning, she went out and mowed the grass which needed doing as I was bushed at that time. She saw my need and moved to help by taking the role I normally exercise. We do this for each other all the time. It is almost automatic. When we think, "Let's go out to dinner on such and such night" we almost always think of going to the same preferred style of restaurant. Sometimes we are more concerned about where the other person wants to go than what we want in eating out. Any argument that might ensue is in trying to please the other when both wish to do so. If one doesn't wish to do this or that then the other will not insist for themselves but seek an acceptable alternative. After all, it's just food. But if one really wants to do something the other will comply. Neither of us approaches any challenge or difference in desire simply to get what we want. We always approach these things as to what will be best for each other, the family and the future and or course, the Lord's will and work.

It took years to come to this place but we have become wiser as we have struggled along over the obstacles of life until the obstacles are minimal and seldom. When they occur, we follow the principles noted above.

For example, when we recently bought a new car, we asked Mike for his recommendation for what we were looking for. He follows this kind of stuff and has more knowledge and insight than we do. We followed his advice. When it came to picking out the model, I did research and took the lead. When it came to picking out the color, I went with what Donna wanted. When it came to making the payments the cardboard sign with "God bless" on it works at the freeway intersection.

The point is to seek to serve each other but first to be sensitive to the needs other so the service will be spot on, and the husband ought to be first to step out in this regard.

One more story. Last Easter Sunday we had the family over for dinner. Donna had worked hard to make a fine meal which we enjoyed. My role, which I thoroughly enjoy, is to clean up and wash the dishes for Donna. But Sunday I was obviously exhausted. The kids noticed and said, "Dad, you stay right there. We well clean up and take care of it this time."

There you go.

UNDERSTANDING ONE'S ROLE

I. DEVELOPING ONE'S ROLE

As defined above, finding a model who properly understands his role and behaves accordingly is essential for developing one's own pattern of success. A model doesn't have to be a single person. It can be a set of principles or truths

If one finds him/herself in the role of a Servant/Leader - Supplier, his development of that role will depend on the goal he has in mind for himself, and upon the model he chooses who has succeeded in reaching that goal. For example, if one's goal is to achieve material wealth, he might choose to emulate the model of Bill Gates rather than Ghandi.

As Christians, we would look to the Scriptures to help us understand God's goal for us and to find models worthy of emulation.

Along the same vein then, goals will be subject to values. If a person values money over people, and sets his primary goal to accumulate money, he will be willing to expend people for the sake of gaining (or not losing) money. The issue is, what REALLY has value and what doesn't. This question is grounded in truth. Those seeking truth will find, in God's Word, what has real, lasting value and what doesn't. When one sets his goals based on these values, and finds a model to emulate, then he is ready to begin understanding how to behave in a manner consistent with that which defines his roles and thus be assured of success.

R. Niebuhr is said to have spoken these profound words;

“God made two orders in creation. He made persons and He made things. He made persons to be loved and things to be used. The great sin man commits is that he reverses God's order. He loves things and uses persons.”

Another proverb from an unknown source states, “Never sacrifice the eternal on the altar of the immediate.”

These kinds of principles can aid in establishing values and then setting goals for one's conduct in life.

II. SUCCESS IN A RELATIONSHIP

Properly expressing one's role at the proper time.

Chaos in marriage and all relationships - with people or with things - comes when roles are reversed or unclear. Let's go back and understand that everyone expresses both roles simultaneously much of the time, even at home, switching back and forth depending on the situation.

We never only express Role 1. Only God does that.

The secret to success in relationships is knowing clearly under what circumstances and within what relational situations one adapts to one of the two roles

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD
SESSION VIII
MAJOR CAUSES WHY MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS FAIL

**1) SELF CENTEREDNESS/SELF ABSORPTION/SELF INDULGENCE/ SELFISHNESS/
SELF**

A. Normally based in fear and insecurity.

Comment: A degree of this is intrinsic to most people. It begins with the need for care as an infant, and is rooted in the instinct for survival. It is the brother of fear, initially also rooted in the instinct for survival. It finds itself in the drive to avoid pain and delay death. It is to the degree this comes under control and offset by other realities that determines one's mental, physical, spiritual and relational health. But generally, self-centeredness automatically places the needs of one self above the needs of others and sees others as a means to satisfying one's own needs or desires. This is using people rather than loving and serving people. If the fears increase, self-centeredness and other symptoms will also normally increase.

Self-centeredness/fear reveals itself in the feeling that something of value might be lost. The loss may be of a variety of descriptions and often includes, one's safety or security, loss of love, loss of having a sense of value or worth, monetary loss or fear of not having what is needed to survive, loss of time or fear of not completing a task or responsibility on time, fear of what "others might think", spiritual apprehension or fear of not being good enough for God, loss of key relationships, etc.

Other manifestations that appear from fear and self-centeredness are jealousy, envy, greed, covetousness, anger, outbursts of anger, hate, having a bitter spirit, being a gossip, pessimism, chronic negativity, depression, discouragement, disillusionment, confusion, doubt in God or the future, worry, anxiety, neurotic behavior, withdrawal, isolation, and even thoughts of suicide among many more. Fears may be real or imagined but the effect is the same. The solution is to know one is loved and secure above all else freeing the person from anxiety and fear. (I John 4:7-19)

At the same time if a Christian is fraught with these matters, along comes Jesus who said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34) and in Luke 9:23-25 He added, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?" This is a massive challenge. Few are up to the task. Yet he also said, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." (John 14:1) And, "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows." (Matthew 10:31) "Do not be afraid, only believe." (Mark 5:36)

This takes courage, commitment and faith, not fear, self-centeredness and doubt. Too often spouses are faced with a partner who is insecure, confused, looking for a better situation, discontented, controlling and will often run at having to face responsibilities, commitments, or challenges.

Later we will look at those who establish or invoke expectations. This is also a symptom of self-centeredness and can begin to occur even before marriage. One “expects” something of his or her partner and when that fails to be fulfilled, criticism, judgment, or disappointment and frustration are some of the reactions. Thinking or planning they will be one thing, and loving that expectation rather than loving who they really are (or turn out to be) is quite common. So placing expectations on one’s partner will cause a rift in the relationship and is another symptom of self-centeredness.

B. Self-centeredness normally has a part in all the rest of the “causes”

2) **FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY**

A. Taking time to listen and give undivided attention.

B. Failure to share

C. Failure to interpret correctly

D. Failure to be understanding.

3) **IRRESPONSIBILITY (COMMONLY FINANCIAL)**

A. Failure to plan

B. Failure to see the future consequences of present action. "For they are a nation lacking in counsel, And there is no understanding in them. Would that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would discern their future! Deuteronomy 32:28-29

C. Failure to understand Godly values

4) **FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND ONE’S ROLE IN A RELATIONSHIP**

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi,

Philippians 2:1-4, “Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Additionally but not in any specific order:

5) **CONFLICTS OVER RELIGIOUS OR VALUE RELATED MATTERS**

6) **MENTAL/VERBAL/PHYSICAL/UNFAITHFULNESS – (The “trust” issue)**

7) **TAKING ONE’S SPOUSE FOR GRANTED**

A. Ignores needs

B. Attempts to manipulate

- C. Establishes or invokes expectations. This is a foolish thing to do because it sets the stage for criticism, judgment, condemnation, complaint, disappointment, and a host of other responses if the expectations are not fulfilled. Further, it binds the one upon the expectations are placed to comply, not out of love and joy, but out of servitude and fear of failure. This will build resentment. It also puts the one issuing the expectations in a superior attitude and, rather than lead to harmony, leads to division. A spouse ought to feel motivated to serve and care out of love and freely do so, not be compelled to do so in fear of repercussions if the expectations are not met.
- D. See the seven “A’s below.

8) LACK OF SELF CONTROL

- A. Emotions based in fear. Outbursts of anger or complaint, feelings of discouragement or depression, worry, anxiety, a sense of worthlessness, and so many such negative emotions are generally based in fear, whether that fear is real or imagined.

Remember, marriage can be defined as, “A voluntary transfer from one divine ordained reality, that of being single - looking out and responsible for oneself to another divine ordained reality, that of being married - looking out and responsible for someone else.”

We have to get this into our hearts and minds. But the point is to move marriage from the realm of “I” to the realm of “we” which includes God our Father, Jesus our Savior and brother, our spouse and children, and even others in the body of Christ. This is the “we” that marriage should include.

THE SEVEN “A’s” Where are you in relationship to your spouse? What of the items below do you freely offer? Or do you take your spouse for granted?

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. ACKNOWLEDGMENT | 5. AFFECTION |
| 2. ACCEPTANCE | 6. ADMIRATION |
| 3. APPRECIATION | 7. ADORATION |
| 4. APPROVAL | |

Numbers 1-4 can be received by a person in nearly every retail outlet, restaurant or place of service in the country. These establishments will welcome you, accept you by seating you or allowing you to shop around, say thanks for the business, and even approve your menu choices. Home improvement stores do this as a matter of course, for example.

But sometimes it is difficult to get even one of these at home from your spouse and you might as well expect to jump across the Grand Canyon if you expect your children to ever do so.

To acknowledge your spouse when they enter your presence after a prolonged absence saying something nice is almost unheard of anymore.

Acceptance should be without thought of how they look, or if they are pleasing you in some way.

How often do you say a word of appreciation to your spouse for things he or she does commonplace around the house. “Thanks for taking care of things everyday around here.” “I appreciate the faithful effort you put in to make our lives better.” “Nice dinner, good job.” Or something. One might even go as far as to help with the dishes, or the house keeping or just

picking up one's own shoes or clothes or the spouses without a comment. Every person needs to have appreciation for their existence or effort expressed to them. Some husbands and wives have taken their spouse so much for granted they expect them to slave for them without so much as a word they would at least get at Home Depot.

The same goes for approval. "Very nice work." "A great achievement." "Wow, you did a terrific thing." And so on. At any restaurant you may well hear the words after your selection, "Nice choice." And these people don't even know you. In fact, your dog might well give you more of the 7 "A's" than you spouse or family.

Numbers 1-4 need to be a regular thing. Numbers 5-7 should be done at irregular times but often. Take number 3 and put it in a note with a memento and leave it on your spouse's pillow, for example. 5-7 need to be a special thing and just not on the expected days like anniversaries, Valentines Day and birthdays. We all need these things to feel like our lives count for something positive and we have worth in this world. Too often we hear the complaints, criticisms, and rejections without any of the reinforcements of our value, work and worth.

I have always had a problem with teachers marking papers with the red pencil pointing out all the mistakes. Why not blue pencil all correct things and commend the student for that? The same at home. Even with kids, we as parents sometimes ignore what they do well and get on their case for what they do wrong. As a child I came to the conclusion that I could never do anything right. Everything I did was wrong. And, that was close to the truth as I recall now.

But please, at home with your spouse? "Let him or her who is without fault among you cast the first stone."

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD

SESSION IX

THE MATTER OF “LOVE”

The term “love” must be the most frequently used word in the world used to describe a multitude of feelings and perceptions. Even in the Bible, the English word “love” is used over 500 times to translate six different Hebrew words and two different Greek words. These words cover everything from lust and desire, to brotherly love, to sacrificial love and more.

When we talk of God’s love, the terms used reflect the highest caliber of commitment, care and sacrifice possible. This rises above common emotion and hormonal responses. One can hardly imagine God as feeling the giddiness of emotion and infatuation, or the heat of desire and physical lust as the basis of His actions on our behalf. I doubt His love is like that of the school boy or school girl crush that overtakes the mind and glands of a person in such a state. The Greek gods all had human emotions. Of course, they were created in the image of man. No, I doubt that God’s love is like that at all. It is far higher and deeper than that I’m sure.

We are familiar with the two New Testament Greek words translated “love”, “agape” and “philehoh”.⁷ Philehoh is an attraction or admiration that includes emotions or gaining personal gratification emotionally. Though often thought of as brotherly love, that is a misleading idea. The prefix “phil” is attached to many things, brothers being only one of them. Philandros, for example, is the love of a man (or one’s husband) and we get our word “philanderer” from this one. Philadelpia is brotherly love and used five times in the New Testament. “Philoteknos” is love of one’s children, philanthropia love of mankind, and we get our word “philanthropist” from this word. All these are in the New Testament. But philehoh is also used in Matthew 6:5 where Jesus says, “When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.” And in Matthew 23:6-7, Jesus comments about the scribes and Pharisees, “They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men.” So philehoh has a broad, general application and would be used in our phrases like, “I love that car” or “I loved the book”, and dozens of ways we often use the word “love.” The word, however, normally reflects one’s own pleasurable response gained from the association with whatever has prompted the statement.

However, the word “agape” is used far more in the New Testament than philehoh. In fact “agape” is used 144 times where “philehoh” is used only 25 times. “Agape”, often defined as the giving sacrificial love only God possesses, is also not quite accurate. It is used to define God as love, no question, but the word has application in many human relationships. It is the word used of a relationship and carries with it the idea of the way God would have it be. The major difference in the use of the two terms is in who is benefitting. In philehoh, it is the self that is benefitting from the association, but in agape, it is the other that is benefitting from the

⁷ The word “eros” often defined as erotic love is not found in the New Testament.

association. Agape only is used in relationships with living beings, whether divine or human. Philehoh is used in any association whether people or objects.

When it comes to one human being “loving” another human being, complexities arise that may be difficult to cope with. For example, both ideas in the Greek are included and many more that these two words do not approach, including: “lust,” “attraction,” “desire,” “a crush,” and so on. Another example is a person may be completely self-centered, even narcissistic or sociopathic. This person is incapable of love except where it satisfies him or herself. This isn’t really “love” of course, but animal lust and gratification. This type of person says and does things for the sole purpose of self-benefit and will lie, deceive, manipulate, be very charming and accommodating, and even giving. But the goal is always what is best for himself. This type of person sees others to be used for their own benefit. They feel superior and think they deserve everything good at the expense of others. This, of course is the total opposite of true love.

Another matter that tends to derail true love is that the motivation or focus may be on the other person as an object of love and one’s “love” for the other person depends largely on them. If they change, then “love” for them may also change or diminish. There is no question that the first attraction to another may well be physical or a quality of their character or personality. We do “love” others because they are “lovable” in our sight. In other words, often our “love” is conditional, and if the conditions change, love fades. Expectations of the relationship may not be fulfilled and so love fades. All of these are examples of the manifestation of self-centeredness from which true love can never spring or be received.

But this is not the reason why God loves us. The scripture tells us that He is Love⁸ and that even though we are sinners, He proves His love for us in that Christ dies for us.⁹ He “loved the world so much” we are told, that He gave His Son as the sacrifice for our sins.¹⁰

So God loves us because that is the way He is. We love often because of the way the other person is. We must move from this motive in the direction of God’s if we are to be a truly loving person.

But there is more. It seems that, in our wicked and confused world that “being” loved unconditionally is almost never the case. People seek to be loved more than they seek to love. In counseling couples planning to be married we ask the question, “Do you want to have a wife (or husband) or do you want to be a wife (or husband)? And, “Do you want to have children, or do you want to be parents?” Few, if any have ever thought of it in those terms.

So for one to move to being a loving person, the scripture speaks of knowing that one is loved unconditionally and can absolutely rest in that fact without fear or concern for one’s well-being. Only then can one focus less on his or her own needs and begin to take the needs of others into consideration. To support this idea, the scripture notes, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.” I John 4:10 And....

“We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us,

⁸ I John 4:8

⁹ Romans 5:8

¹⁰ John 3:16

so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us.” I John 4:16-19

This lovely passage speaks to the truth that we love because we are loved and that God’s love releases us from all fear. Thus, if we are released from fear and know we are loved, we can begin to love in a manner that is pleasing to God because it is unconditional like His love. This takes time. That is why I appreciate John saying above, “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us...” He admits that there is a process, a period of time that it takes to actually arrive at this belief and that when one arrives there, it is a place of abiding and peace.

Unfortunately, many churches teach that this is not the case at all. They teach that God expects all to earn their way into His favor. That salvation is not based on faith, mercy and grace, but on works, liturgy and church membership. That it is all conditional. There is little to distinguish these churches approach from ancient Judaism.

To be a person who loves without seeking something in return is a worthy pursuit. And conversely, we also need to know how to graciously receive a gift without feeling we need to do something in return. This is often difficult when raised in a society or a church where we feel we must return a favor or recompense a gift giver to avoid guilt. An appropriate thank you note is all that is necessary. To recompense a gift is to rob the gift giver of the blessing of giving. On the other hand, not to at least be thankful or gracious in receiving a gift or ignoring a gift giver is inappropriate and rude.

I Corinthians 13 speaks of the “agape” kind of love and the importance of “love” being a genuine work of the Spirit. If you look closely at this chapter, you might see a correspondence between the two roles we play (servant-leader-supplier / receiver-disciple-follower) and the two loves (agape: selfless-other centered-sacrificial / philehoh: receiving-pleasured-fulfilled). The attributes of “agape” described by Paul mostly, and appropriately, fit the servant-leader-supplier role as they describe a person taking the initiative or a prominent role in most of the discussion.

As to be clear and avoid misunderstanding about what the “love” he speaks of is to be understood, Paul uses “agape” and then describes it’s attributes.

1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2: If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3: And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”

But in case one’s view of love is other than what Paul envisions, he describes its attributes and behavior.

4: “Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, 5:

does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, 6: does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7: bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8: Love never fails;...”

Then Paul notes the lasting power of love.

“...but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away. 9: For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10: but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11: When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12: For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13: But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

1. Looking at verses 4-8a in more detail, we have first that love is “patient.”

The word used here is “mahk-roh-thu-mia” from two words, “makros” meaning length either of time or of distance and “thumos” meaning “heat”, “fierceness”, “storm”, “passion”, “anger”, “temper”, and so on.

So the idea is that “patience” is the ability to withhold all that for the sake of another. Obviously there is an element of self-control, compassion and understanding that accompanies the patience.

2. Next, love is “kind.” The word here is “cres-teu-o-mai” meaning to care about another and be available to give to them whatever they need at the moment. It also is used in the context to forgive a debt.
3. Next, love is not “jealous.” “Jealous” (zay-lah-oh) means to boil over or be incensed at another’s fortune assuming you are more deserving than the person who received some benefit.

Verses 4 through 7 go together and have to do with viewing oneself as superior to others.

4. Love does not “brag” (per-per-eu-oh-mai) means to boast or brag to tell another the accomplishments you have made. Also includes vanity.
5. Love is not “arrogant” (phu-si-ah-oh) and means to “puff up” or “inflate”.
6. Love does not act “unbecomingly” (ahx-eh-moh-neh-oh) and means to act indecently, improperly, or out of the design that is appropriate for the situation or of that which is intended by God.
7. Love does not “seek its own” – two words here, (“zay-tay-oh” and “hof-tou”). Together these indicate a seeking for one’s self, for getting one’s own way or simply selfishness.

Love is the opposite of self-centeredness and the ear from which self-centeredness finds its cause.

Verses 8 and 9 also go together.

8. Love is not “provoked” (par-ox-uno) meaning a reaction from being poked with a sharp object and be prompted to poke back with one of your own. To be irritated and react in retaliation.
9. Love does not take into account a wrong suffered. This is a four word phrase, (ou) (loh-gid-zeh-tai) (tah) (kah-kone). It keeps no record of those things others do to wrong you. It holds no grudges nor seeks to get back at someone. Thus, there is no need of forgiveness if there is no offense. Love is not offended.

Verses 10 and 11 go together.

10. Love “does not rejoice in unrighteousness.” (ou) (kai-ray) - (epi) - (tay) - (ah-dih-kiah). Simply put, “unrighteousness” is acting in a manner that is not truthful or right and deemed wrong by the community. It stands in contrast with “truth” in the next phrase. It is not necessarily “sin” and is not defined as breaking God’s law. But it still is behavior that is deemed inappropriate and corrupt in the eyes of God’s people. It might be the use of the tongue in an inappropriate, foul or damaging way including gossip, slander and the such. Or behaving in an offensive or rude manner. Or plotting an evil deed. Or engaging in drunkenness, foolishness, vandalism, and general disturbances of the community. It sets forth a proposition or behavior whose genuineness is questionable. One does not rejoice in this kind of behavior.
11. “but rejoices with the truth.” The word “truth” stands in contrast to “unrighteousness.” “Truth” is defined (“ah-lay-thea”) – the “ah” being a negative and so defined by words like: “unhidden,” “without deception”, “without dissimulation or subterfuge”, “undisguised”, “not dishonest”, and so on. In metaphors “truth” is likened to “light” and “light” is the opposite of “darkness.” “God is the “Father of light(s) and in Him is no darkness at all.

The conclusion.

12. Love “bears all things.” “Bears” is (ste-go) and clearly conveys the image of a roof covering a room or structure. So it is not so much a picture of endurance or strength (as we will see further on with “endures”) as it is a picture of keeping a confidence or protecting someone who is vulnerable. It may include covering someone’s sin whether against you or another. It does not reveal it or spread the gossip around. In that manner it bears it without having others know about it.

Another aspect in the context of this passage is that it keeps dear and protected in the heart the precious things of God and does not allow anything to touch them.

13. Love “believes all things.” Love has faith in all things. This does not mean that all things are to be believed even if they are false or deceptive. It isn’t “love is gullible and

foolish.” In this context the faith will be limited to all things pertaining to what God has said and done and to those who reflect the same. One trusts those whom one knows to be truthful and faithful.

14. Love “hopes all things.” This word (“el-peeze-ay”) is from the root “el-peeze” which is a noun and a primary word. Hope is more than wishful thinking (such as I hope I win the lottery) and not based on a possibility but an assurance. It is our “treasure,” and our solid foundation as Paul says,

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:1-5

“Hope” is confidence that prompts our hearts to look ahead at the fulfillment of the blessings promised by god to His faithful.

15. Love “endures all things.” Here we have the matter of perseverance and strength under whatever the world, the flesh and the devil may throw at us. The word “endure” is (“hupo-meno”), a term made up of two words, “under” and “remain.” So “to remain under.” But without collapse, in complete trust and faith in our Savior.

16. Love “never fails.” Literally to “fall” or “collapse.” Some think it might refer to falling from flight. We may fall or collapse at times, but love never does.

The first way to understand this passage is to put God’s name (or Jesus’) in the place of “love.” Then we can place our own name there just to see where we stand. Then we can be thankful that the passage describes God’s love for us and that it is solid. We also know, as first stated, that to be this kind of person one must be given this capacity from God alone.

Paul then goes on to note the superiority, lasting power and indestructibility of love.

“...but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away. 9: For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10: but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11: When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12: For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13: But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Love’s superiority will cause it to remain long after everything else has passed away. Verses 11 and 12 are Paul’s way of comparing ones growth from childhood to manhood as like the present prophecies, tongues and all the rest which are just a partial part (as a child’s experience and environment) of the full spiritual reality awaiting us. He likens them, in analogies, to setting

childhood aside and moving into manhood as we grow. In other words, all the present things we are so enchanted with and think so wonderful are nothing but “childhood” things compared with what awaits us “then” when we are fully “mature” and in God’s presence. But for now, faith, hope and love are ours to cling to, but one day faith and hope will be fulfilled and the reality will be purely God’s love which lasts forever.

Bottom line, to be a person of love is a spiritual decision. It is not based in emotion, hormonal stimulus, only found in the way we feel about another, or in another’s ability to please us. It is a reality within us as we make a decision to seek to love in the way God loves and work toward achieving that with the help of the Holy Spirit. The first fruit of the Spirit is love (Galatians 5:22) and it is the “agape” love...a word used also to describe God’s love for us.

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD
SESSION X

THE MATTER OF “MONEY”

We have heard that, “Money is the root of evil.” This of course is not quite accurate when quoting the Bible. The verse referenced is from I Timothy 6:10 and actually reads, “For the *love* of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

The Bible has quite a bit to say about money. The first reference of money in the Bible is found with the onset of the life of Abraham, about 2000 B.C. Gold and silver in measured weights was used in transactions. The Bible translates these silver ingots as “money.” Silver ingots were in use as “money” before Abraham (and sometimes gold) though the barter system was also functioning. In both cases, a value is placed upon a commodity or upon labor and an agreed upon exchange takes place between people when goods or labor are needed by one and supplied by another.

So what is money? “Well, it’s not everything, but it is way ahead of whatever is in second place” someone said in jest...maybe. But money is a symbolic token of value representing a person’s work that all agree upon as a fair means of exchange or barter. Manufactured goods, livestock, produce and the like all involved human labor. In ancient times, there were items that had considerable value to people before coinage was created. Precious stones (especially onyx), pearls, certain spices, livestock, raw gold, and silver were all accepted as a fair exchange for labor or goods.

Gold and silver became very desirable, and around a thousand years before Christ and a thousand years after Abraham’s time, China began setting standards by establishing coinage using certain quantities of gold, silver, bronze and copper to represent the value of labor and imposed that all abide by the standard in their business. By 700 B.C. the Greeks and many other countries followed suit and began stamping the image of an ruler on a coin, and assigning it a value, gave the coin authority and backing of the ruler or nation in power. The first mints were established as well during this period. So it came to pass that in normal business transactions rather than give you ten head of cattle for a plot of ground, it is agreed that a certain amount of coinage will represent the value of each. Historically,

coinage was made of gold, silver, copper or bronze, and valued in that order. But money has always basically represented the value of a person's labor.

Again, it is not money that is the source of evil, it represents a person's work and work is always commended in the scripture. Money itself is never thought of as evil. Again, I Timothy 6:10 reads, "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." So the issue is, again, a person's heart, values and motives.

The term "love of money" here is only used once in the New Testament and it is actually a single Greek word, "Phil-ahr-gru-ia" from phil-eh-oh and "ar-gu-rohs" "love' and "silver."

Ecclesiastes 5:10 agrees with Paul. "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance *with its* income. This too is vanity."

At the same time, having money itself is a good thing according to Ecclesiastes 7:11-12 and, of course by most people,

11: "Wisdom along with an inheritance is good, And an advantage to those who see the sun. 12: For wisdom is protection *just as* money is protection, But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.

In sarcasm Ecclesiastes 10:19 states, "*Men* prepare a meal for enjoyment, and wine makes life merry, and money is the answer to everything."

This follows verses 16-18,

16: Woe to you, O land, whose king is a lad and whose princes feast in the morning. 17: Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of nobility and whose princes eat at the appropriate time--for strength and not for drunkenness. 18: Through indolence the rafters sag, and through slackness the house leaks.

One sense is that the use of money for all these pleasurable priorities will allow the real needs to go unmet. And, if referring to royalty only, the money comes from taxation and the people's money, rather than go to help the needs of the people, go into revelry and waste in the royal house.

In either case, money needs to be set aside for future important needs and not just

squandered in the moment. Such we see in Proverbs 30:24-28,

24: Four things are small on the earth, But they are exceedingly wise: 25: The ants are not a strong people, But they prepare their food in the summer; 26: The shephanim¹¹ are not mighty people, Yet they make their houses in the rocks; 27: The locusts have no king, Yet all of them go out in ranks; 28: The lizard you may grasp with the hands, Yet it is in kings' palaces.”

And,

Proverbs 27:1 “Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.”

On the other hand, Solomon, who is attributed to be the author of Ecclesiastes Wrote in 2:1-11,

1: I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself." And behold, it too was futility. 2: I said of laughter, "It is madness," and of pleasure, "What does it accomplish?" 3: I explored with my mind *how* to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding *me* wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives. 4: I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; 5: I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; 6: I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees. 7: I bought male and female slaves and I had home-born slaves. Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. 8: Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men--many concubines. 9: Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me. 10: All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. 11: Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.

But in 1:16-18:

¹¹ The “Hyrax”, a small rabbit like animal that lives among the rocks.

16: I said to myself, "Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge. 17: And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind. 18: Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge *results in* increasing pain."

The problem is not that wisdom and knowledge in itself brings pain, but the seeking after human pursuits and the world's wisdom. Human pursuits, even that of human wisdom, without seeking the Lord and His wisdom are futile. Life lived outside of God is meaningless and futile. There is no purpose and when one is old, nothing has been gained and, as chapter 12 so beautifully illustrates, one's life is seen as a waste and useless because it has not brought eternity into the picture.

We come, we go, and everything we stays the same after we leave. As the old rhyme goes. "Tis only one life, twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."

Paul writes similar words in I Timothy 3:1-7,

3:1-7, 1: It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*. 2: An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3: not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. 4: *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5: (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), 6: *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. 7: And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

And, in 6:6-12,

6: "But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7: For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8: If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9: But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into

ruin and destruction. 10: For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11: But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness. 12: Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

Hebrews 13:5-6, 5: “*Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," 6: so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

II Timothy 3:1-5 notes,

1: But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2: For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3: unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4: treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5: holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

A little understood parable by Jesus closes with the sentence, “Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.” The parable is found in Luke 16:1-14,

1: Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this *manager* was reported to him as squandering his possessions. 2: "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' 3: "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4: 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.' 5: "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he *began* saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6: "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7: "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of

wheat.' He *said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8: "And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.

9: "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings. 10: "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. 11: "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the *use of* unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true *riches* to you? 12: "And if you have not been faithful in *the use of* that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? 13: "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." 14: Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him."

SELECTED PASSAGES ON WEALTH AND MONEY

Proverbs 22:1, "A *good* name is to be more desired than great wealth, Favor is better than silver and gold."

Proverbs 3:13-18, 13: "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding. 14: For her profit is better than the profit of silver And her gain better than fine gold. 15: She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her. 16: Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. 17: Her ways are pleasant ways And all her paths are peace. 18: She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast."

Proverbs 16:16, "How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver. "

Proverbs 20:15, "There is gold, and an abundance of jewels; But the lips of knowledge are a more precious thing."

Simon Magus

Acts 8:18-22, 18: "Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19: saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may

receive the Holy Spirit." 20: But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21: "You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22: "Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you."

Ananias and Sapphira

5:1-2,

1: "But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2: and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet."

1: A contrast to Barnabas (4:36-39), in both heart and action. Ananias (Hananiah – "God has favored") with his wife Sapphira ("Sapphire" or "Lapis Lazuli"), conceived what they thought was a clever deal. The apostles took responsibility for a collection of goods and money, distributing them as needed among the congregation. Those who had nothing or those who gave everything could draw upon the resources as needed. The heart of many in the church was to sell everything and give it all for the benefit of the poor and become "poor themselves" simply drawing as need arose.

2: Ananias and Sapphira thought they could sell a tract of land and give part of it to the apostles claiming they had given all and then still draw upon the collection as well. In this way they could feign poverty, as well as be recognized for their generous heart. That way they could live as before and recoup their gift. They had the freedom to retain whatever they wanted and only give some to the Lord's work. But they chose the deception.

5:3,

3: "But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land?"

3: We are not told how Peter became aware of Ananias and Sapphira's plot. It is very likely that someone known to be reliable found out about it. As far as Ananias and Sapphira go, we do know that Satan's target is the "heart". (Note: John 13:2; I Peter 5:8) The heart must be guarded and alert to these schemes (I Peter 5:9). We are reminded of Genesis 6:5, "Then the LORD saw that the

wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”, and of Jeremiah 17:9-10, "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? ‘I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.’”

We can probably assume Ananias and his wife were believers as Peter knew them personally by name. Their opening to this evil idea would have never happened if they were not schemers in the first place, much like Simon Magus in Acts, chapter 8.

“...lie to The Holy Spirit”, is the same as lying to God (verse 4).

5:4-6,

5:4: "While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." 5: And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. 6: The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

4: They were under no obligation or compulsion to give. So why did they? This is Peter’s question. They could have given a part, and the apostles would have been grateful. But they apparently wanted recognition as well as the ability to pay Peter and then rob his pocket while he was not looking. Peter is heartbroken but once again points to their heart as the source of the sin. In this case, verses 3 and 4 suggest that there was a battle in their hearts before their choice was made.

Once again we are brought back to Genesis 3 where the “serpent” motivated Eve and Adam to disobey God and then while trying to avoid blame were cursed and sentenced to death. Ananias and his wife hadn’t learned that lesson. In desiring recognition (if that was the case and it seems so) they apparently weren't aware of Jesus teaching, "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full." Matthew 6:4

5: Ananias, after hearing these words, fell dead. Peter neither caused his death nor was responsible for it. Further, there is no indication that God caused his death or his wife's as some assume. Many ask “Why this punishment?” The answer

probably lies in the fact that these acts were public and that the entire community would be affected if Ananias and Sapphire were able to get away with this scam.

What Ananias heard in his heart the instant before he fell, we may never know. But his hypocrisy (appearing as a generous giver to the church but as a liar to God) did not go unnoticed. Often, the fear itself of being discovered having committing a deliberate fraud could overcome a person when indeed they are found out. Believing a lie often leads to fear for the one believing it. Both likely being Jews, this would have been exacerbated due to their tradition.

LOANING AND BORROWING MONEY – PERSONAL, NOT CORPORATE

We live in days of financial chaos. Our money has no intrinsic value, and the federal reserve notes are backed only by the solvency of the U.S. economy and the productive work of the people. We used to have silver and gold certificates in our paper money and you could actually exchange the notes for a comparable quantity of gold or silver. Our coins used to be made of real gold, silver, nickel or copper. No more.

The lending and borrowing activities are one of the largest industries in the country. Going into debt and making payments, sometimes at extraordinary interest rates is at an all-time high.

The scripture says nearly nothing about corporate or government lending or borrowing practices, but limits its counsel to the personal. There are basic principles taught, and wise people will adhere to them.

Ezekiel 18:5-9, 5: "But if a man is righteous and practices justice and righteousness, 6: and does not eat at the mountain *shrines* or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman during her menstrual period—7: if a man does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge,¹² does not commit robbery, *but* gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing, 8: if he does not lend *money* on interest¹³ or take increase, *if* he keeps his hand from iniquity *and* executes true justice between

¹² Basically a down payment or “earnest money” or perhaps collateral.

¹³ Usury, profit, or takes advantage of a debtor.

man and man, 9: *if* he walks in My statutes and My ordinances so as to deal faithfully--he is righteous *and* will surely live," declares the Lord GOD."

Psalm 15:1-5, 1: A Psalm of David. "O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? 2: He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart. 3: He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; 4: In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the LORD; He swears to his own hurt and does not change; 5: He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken."

Proverbs 20:16, "Take his garment when he becomes surety for a stranger; And for foreigners, hold him in pledge." (collateral)

Proverbs 11:15, "He who is guarantor for a stranger will surely suffer for it, But he who hates being a guarantor is secure."

Proverbs 22:26-27, 26: "Do not be among those who give pledges, Among those who become guarantors for debts. 27: If you have nothing with which to pay, Why should he take your bed from under you?"

Proverbs 17:18, "A man lacking in sense pledges And becomes guarantor in the presence of his neighbor."

Proverbs 6:1-3, 1: "My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, Have given a pledge for a stranger, 2: *If* you have been snared with the words of your mouth, Have been caught with the words of your mouth, 3: Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, Go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor.

Among these words of wisdom we can draw several conclusions. (1) In loaning money, holding collateral is fine but charging interest on top of that is not approved by the Lord. The collateral must be returned upon payment of the debt. (2) Do not become a co-signer, especially without collateral. Do not guarantee the loan of another person. (3) Do not borrow money if you do not have the means to repay it. Do not make an oath to pay if you cannot do so. In other words, do not sign a contract of debt without the means to fulfill it. (4) Do not loan any money

you cannot afford to give away. Better to give it and forget it than to expect repayment.

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD
SESSION XI

MONEY AND GOD

Luke 16:13, "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

A. The tithe. Used only 21 times in the Bible plus about 6 more times where The term "tenth" speaks of an offering. The "tithe" or "tenth" of a person's crop, spoils of war or money was first mentioned in Genesis 14:20 where Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils of a battle to Melchizedek, the king of (Jeru) salem. This was a voluntary offering, but likely based in a tradition.¹⁴

In Genesis 28:22, after a personal encounter with God, Jacob vowed a tenth to be given to Him.

After the Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites gathered at Mount Sinai and received the commandments and Law of God through the mediation of Moses. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are the primary record of these laws, statutes, requirements and ordinances. The formal "tithe" offering was established after the Exodus and after the Law was given on Mount Horeb (Sinai). At that time The Lord established a tent of meeting or Tabernacle which was the spiritual center of the community. The tribe of Levi was chosen to be the ministers of the tabernacle and of the spiritual worship of the people according to God's instructions as to how everything was to be done.

The details of the first offerings were first published in Leviticus, chapter 5 and first, the tithe was a simple offering for one's sin and representing both the recognition of one's transgression of the Law, his repentance and the cost of committing sin against God's Law of righteousness and holiness He established for His people. The cleanliness, righteousness and holiness (meaning: "Set apart to God") was the foundation of both the identity of the people belonging to God and the foundation for the laws, ordinances and statues explaining what was permissible and what was not from God's point of view and why. In this instance, the offerings in Leviticus, chapter 5, were for the sins of uncleanness required even though the sin may have been accidental.

¹⁴ Hebrews 7:4.

Leviticus 5:1-7, 1: 'Now if a person sins after he hears a public adjuration *to testify* when he is a witness, whether he has seen or *otherwise* known, if he does not tell *it*, then he will bear his guilt.' 2: 'Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether a carcass of an unclean beast or the carcass of unclean cattle or a carcass of unclean swarming things, though it is hidden from him and he is unclean, then he will be guilty. 3: 'Or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever *sort* his uncleanness *may* be with which he becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know *it*, he will be guilty. 4: 'Or if a person swears thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, in whatever matter a man may speak thoughtlessly with an oath, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know *it*, he will be guilty in one of these. 5: 'So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that in which he has sinned. 6: 'He shall also bring his guilt offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin. 7: 'But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD his guilt offering for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.'"

The purpose of the tithe was not simply only a means where people could express obedience and faith in God, but the principle means of livelihood for the tribe of Levi, ... the Levites. The Levites were given no portion in the land as a territory because they were chosen by the Lord to do all the work of the tabernacle and conduct the worship of the people including the sacrifices, holy convocations, setting up, caring for and taking down the tabernacle, toting it to the next camp and so on.

So they had no portion in the land once Canaan was conquered. You will find no listing for Levi among the tribal lands on any map.

Deuteronomy 18:1-2, 1: "The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the LORD'S offerings by fire and His portion. 2: "They shall have no inheritance among their countrymen; the LORD is their inheritance, as He promised them."

However, each tribe was required to let Levitical families use a portion of their land for farming or grazing at no cost to the Levites. A tenth of designated herds or crops were designated for the families of the tribe of Levi as well, so

they could survive.¹⁵ The “tithe” was actually a tax imposed upon the nation for those who did the very hard work of caring for the spiritual part of Israel’s worship.

Numbers 18:20-31 tells us about this as does Numbers 31:28-30. Numbers 18:20-31,

20: Then the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel. 21: "To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting. 22: "The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bear sin and die. 23: "Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance. 24: "For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, "They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel." 25: Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 26: "Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and say to them, "When you take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe. 27: "Your offering shall be reckoned to you as the grain from the threshing floor or the full produce from the wine vat. 28: "So you shall also present an offering to the LORD from your tithes, which you receive from the sons of Israel; and from it you shall give the LORD'S offering to Aaron the priest. 29: "Out of all your gifts you shall present every offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the sacred part from them." 30: "You shall say to them, "When you have offered from it the best of it, then *the rest* shall be reckoned to the Levites as the product of the threshing floor, and as the product of the wine vat. 31: "You may eat it anywhere, you and your households, for it is your compensation in return for your service in the tent of meeting.

Numbers 31:28-30,

¹⁵ Hebrews 7:5

28: "Levy a tax for the LORD from the men of war who went out to battle, one in five hundred of the persons and of the cattle and of the donkeys and of the sheep; 29: take it from their half and give it to Eleazar the priest, as an offering to the LORD. 30: "From the sons of Israel's half, you shall take one drawn out of every fifty of the persons, of the cattle, of the donkeys and of the sheep, from all the animals, and give them to the Levites who keep charge of the tabernacle of the LORD."

31:37, 31: "...and the LORD'S levy of the sheep was 675; 38: and the cattle were 36,000, from which the LORD'S levy was 72; 39: and the donkeys were 30,500, from which the LORD'S levy was 61; 40: and the human beings were 16,000, from whom the LORD'S levy was 32 persons. 41: Moses gave the levy *which was* the LORD'S offering to Eleazar the priest, just as the LORD had commanded Moses."

There were also "appraisers" or "tax assessors" (Levitical priests) that were assigned to place a value on your offering, crops or herds and then assign you an amount to bring as an offering (Leviticus 27).

Under certain conditions, money could be brought rather than the produce or livestock:

Deuteronomy 14:24-29, 24: "If the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring *the tithe*, since the place where the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you, 25: then you shall exchange *it* for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. 26: "You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. 27: "Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you. 28: "At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit *it* in your town. 29: "The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do."

So tithing was in actuality a tax mandate for the support of the Levites who were prohibited from owning property (with some exceptions). Over the centuries after

Christ, the teaching of the Rabbis in the Talmud extended the Mosaic Law, with most burdensome minuteness, even to the smallest products of the soil. Of these, according to some, not only the seeds, but, in certain cases, even the leaves and stalks had to be tithed.¹⁶ But is God actual interested in the offering itself? Does

He need the offering? Amos 5: 21-22 notes, 21: "I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept *them*; And I will not *even* look at the peace offerings of your fatlings." Jeremiah 6:20 likewise states, "'For what purpose does frankincense come to Me from Sheba And the sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable and your sacrifices are not pleasing to Me."¹⁷

If God has cause to reject and despise the offerings He Himself demands in the Law, then, in what is He actually interested?

¹⁶ Written over a period of roughly three hundred years (200 C.E. – 500 C.E.) This is a two part discussion and debate over the interpretation of the law in the everyday life of the Jew. It is over 6000 pages in length.

¹⁷ See also Hebrews 10:5-8; 4:1; 3:18-19; Psalm 40:6-8; Isaiah 1:11.

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD

SESSION XII

THE OLD COVENANT AND THE NEW AND HOW WE NOW SEE THE MONEY ISSUE

Perhaps the greatest error in the theology of the church since the first century is the failure to distinguish the differences between the Old Covenant and The New. Included in this mistake and confusion is the timing of the commencement of the New Covenant, the resulting application and disposition of the Old Covenant, where the ministry and teachings of Jesus fit into to both, the matter of forgiveness of sin and all that entails, the effect of each on the world and on people of faith to name a few. Few can name the provisions of either covenant (especially the New) or the stipulations attached thereof. Paul wrote Galatians and directly and angrily addressed this issue.

In our focus on money, there is a clear picture of how the Christian (under the New Covenant) is to view money and its disposition. But until one clearly understands the relationship between the Old and New Covenants will this matter will not be resolved. Meanwhile, the church generally mixes the two covenants together, ruining the intent and purpose of each and rendering the Christian in a state of confusion to say the least. We must move carefully here as so many believers are entrenched in tradition and doctrine that actual Biblical truth is difficult to grasp (Acts 13:40-41).

Each week the church regularly asks for the “tithes and offerings” from the congregation even though, strictly speaking, such requirements are not only inappropriate but not mandated nor even mentioned for believers under the New Covenant. These are Old Covenant terms and have no place in the thinking of the believer. Mention of “tithes”, “offerings” or a “tenth” is not used even once as a practice or requirement for Christians, and in the New Testament these references are always in the context of the Old Testament practices under the Law or in reference to Abraham’s offering to Melchizedek.

The reason for this is partly explained in the previous section. In addition, Christ’s sacrifice on the cross eliminated the need for a temple, an altar of sacrifice, a sacrificial system, a Levitical priesthood to administer the same, and therefore the

mandate to support such a system through the tithe requirement. (Hebrews 8:13, and chapter 10)

First, let's look at the nature of the Old Covenant (the Law) and its provisions from both the Old and New Testaments.¹⁸

1. "The Law of The Lord is perfect." Psalm 19:7-8
2. "Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole Law...." Deuteronomy 4:8
3. "So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good." Romans 7:12, 16
4. "For we know that the Law is spiritual...." Romans 7:14
5. "But we know that the Law is good." I Timothy 1:8
6. It is "The Law of Moses" and "The Law of The Lord" – Luke 2:22-23

Second, let's look at the purpose of The Law (Old Covenant)

Romans 3:19-22, 5:19-21, 7:7-13; I Corinthians 15:56-57, (I John 3:4); II Corinthians 3:5-9; Galatians 3:10, 17-25

Third, we see that the Law is temporary.

Galatians 3:16-19; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:13-17; Hebrews 8:7-13, 10:1, 8-10.

Fourth, we see the weakness of the Law.

Acts 13:38-41; Romans 8:1-5; Galatians 2:15-16, 3:11, 4:8-11; Hebrews 7:18-19, 8:6-7, 10:1; Colossians 2:20-23

Fifth, the Christian's relationship to the Law.

Romans 6:14-15, 7:4-6, 8:1-6; I Corinthians 9:19-22; II Corinthians 3:12-17; Galatians 2:21, 3:1-9, 3:22-25, 4:21-5:1, 5:18, 5:25; Colossians 2:13-23; Hebrews 8:13.

¹⁸ The Old Covenant is also referred to as the "Law," especially by Paul and the New covenant is often referred to in the term "grace."

THE NATURE AND PROVISIONS OF THE NEW COVENANT

Summary:

- A. The inauguration or institution of the New Covenant. This took place at Jesus' death on the cross.

The coming of the New Covenant is announced in the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah some 600 years before Christ. And so, 600 years later, Jesus sat with His disciples at the Passover feast and, "while they were eating, Jesus took *some* bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to his disciples, and said, "take, eat; this is My body." And when he had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it all of you, for this my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28) Luke's rendering is, "...this cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood." Paul repeats the phrase in 1st Corinthians 11:25..."This cup is the New Covenant in My blood". It was at this moment that Jesus announced that The New Covenant would be instituted in His blood on the cross. At that moment, when Jesus died on the cross, the Old Covenant ceased to exist, and The New Covenant went into effect.*

- B. What effect it had.

1. The Old Covenant (The Law) ceased to exist or have any effect on mankind, Jew or Gentile.

"Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who has made us adequate as servants of a New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." II Corinthians 3:5-6

"When He said, 'a New Covenant,' He made the first obsolete."
Hebrews 8:13

2. All the sin of the world was eradicated, past, present and future.

"The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29

"For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time. I Timothy 2:5-6

“For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;” I Peter 3:18

“...and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world. I John 2:2

“Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, Hebrews 10:11-12

3. This means universal forgiveness for all mankind, past present and future. (The church often rejects this truth and lessens the magnitude and work of Christ on the cross. We’ll explain more afterwards)

“...for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” Matthew 26:28

"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; or you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; To give to His people *the* knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,..." Luke 1:76-78

“...and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” Luke 24:46-47

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace...” Ephesians 1:7

(And most important) "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," *He then says*, "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE." Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin.” Hebrews 10:16-18

Equating forgiveness with salvation, the church determines that Christ's death on the cross is incomplete. People still have to do something other than place their faith in Christ to achieve the full benefit of God's grace. Of course, it then becomes no longer limitless grace, but limited grace until we do something such as go to mass or church, confess our sins, do penance, give tithes, and so on.

We must add our little bit in order to receive forgiveness and blessings because both God's grace and Jesus death were not quite sufficient. This, of course is sarcasm. A couple of points. 1. When Jesus was being nailed to the cross He said, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." We're they forgiven? Yes, absolutely. The first to be so blessed - His crucifiers. We're they saved? Absolutely not for, "without faith, it is impossible to please God. 2. As far as limited grace goes, Paul explodes that when he says in Romans 5:20, "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,..." 3. As far as "doing something" to gain God's favor or forgiveness, we are told it is an insult to Christ, and His FINISHED work on the cross. "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?"

Hebrews 10:12 says, "but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD..." This means it was done and there is no more to be done either by God or by man.

4. We notice that the promise of the New Covenant is not external by nature, but internal. It is not a work of the flesh, but of the spirit of God. Therefore, no work of the flesh can add to or detract from the power and authority of God who said clearly that it is done. The Scripture refers to this internal, spiritual reality as a matter of the heart.

The law was not meant to be a means of righteousness by the works of the flesh (Galatians 2:21) but to reflect the unrighteousness of the heart.

Paul writes an entire chapter on the establishment of the New Covenant and mentions this internal work. In chapter three of II Corinthians he writes: "Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets

of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who has made us adequate as servants of a New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

The spiritual nature of the New Covenant includes for the believer a new birth, a new life, a new family, a new way of living, a new heart, a new identity, a new residence, a new hope and, rather than a temporary respite from the wages of sin, no recognition of sin ever again and a fulfillment of the Law for us and in us forever.

5. There is considerably more and for that, see the attached document entitled, ‘THE NEW COVENANT.’”

Now, the money matter. Augustine said to a believer in Christ wishing to know God’s will for his life, “Love God and do whatever you please: for the soul trained in love to God will do nothing to offend the One who is Beloved.” His point is that a new born believer now begins to have completely different desires than an unbeliever and that what he now wishes to do is live his new life in the Spirit and not the flesh. Therefore, what he wishes to do is to walk with God and whatever he chooses to do will be in agreement with the Spirit’s leading. He is now led by the Spirit and not by the flesh or by the Law. His motivation grows to come from love and not the desires of the flesh or the self.

Therefore, the simple principle of giving money is to do it as the Spirit leads, based in love, and not under the compulsion of the Law. The clearest statement of this is found in II Corinthians 9:7, “Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” Granted, this was counsel to the church at Corinth regarding the collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem. But the principle holds throughout the story of the developing church. For example, in Acts 2:43-47 after the Day of Pentecost we read,

43: “Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44: And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45: and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46: Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47: praising God and having favor with all the people.

And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Even some time later in 4:32-37 we see again,

32: “And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one *of them* claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. 33: And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. 34: For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 35: and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need. 36: Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), 37: and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.”

In Romans 12:6-8 Paul wrote to the church saying,

6: “Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7: if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8: or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Speaking about the churches in Macedonia, Paul encouraged giving to the needy with these words in II Corinthians 8:1,

1: “Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2: that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. 3: For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord, 4: begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, 5: and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.”

He wrote about the Macedonians in his letter to Rome as well (15:25-27)

25: but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. 26: For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. 27: Yes, they were pleased *to do so*, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.”

The church has normally supported its pastors and ministers financially. This is not contrary to Scripture at all. But not all avail themselves of this support. For example, Paul and his associates refused support for their work so that they would not be held in debt to anyone for the support nor subject to the criticism that he was claiming apostleship so he could gain financially. He did receive gifts from time to time¹⁹ but worked as he traveled as a tent maker and craftsman to remain self supported. He wrote about this in I Corinthians 9:1-18,

1: Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2: If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. 3: My defense to those who examine me is this: 4: Do we not have a right to eat and drink? 5: Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? 6: Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? 7: Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? 8: I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? 9: For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? 10: Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*. 11: If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? 12: If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. 13: Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the *food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? 14: So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. 15: But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one. 16: For if I preach the gospel,

¹⁹ Philippians 4:10-20

I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. 17: For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. 18: What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.”

Regardless of the situation, the offerings and gifts were voluntary and freely given without any stipulation or demand of rule, ordinance or law. People gave as they were able, felt led to give or wished to give.

Paul encouraged the church at Corinth to give liberally to the offering for the saints in Jerusalem and used the generosity of the poor Macedonian churches as a means of motivating them. He urged them with a promise that they would also reap liberally. “But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared; otherwise if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we--not to speak of you--will be put to shame by this confidence. So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness. Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart,not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”
(II Corinthians 9:4-7)

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD

SESSION XIII

THE MATTER OF "MONEY"

WHOSE MONEY IS IT?

Does the money we earn actually belong to God? Or, is it ours to do with as we please? Or does it belong to Satan as the one who is now the ruler and owner of this world? The answer is not as easy as it might first appear.

On the one hand we have the clear teachings in scripture about what belongs to the Lord.

I Corinthians 10:26, "FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS." This is a quote from Deuteronomy 10:14 "Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it."

Exodus 19:5, "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;..."

Job 41:11, "Who has given to Me that I should repay *him*? *Whatever* is under the whole heaven is Mine."

Psalm 24:1, "A Psalm of David. The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it."

Psalm 50:10-12, 10: "For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. 11: "I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. 12: "If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains."

I Timothy 6:17, "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy." This points to god as the source of everything we have and need.

Then there is the matter of the firstborn and the tithe.

Leviticus 27:26, "However, a firstborn among animals, which as a firstborn belongs to the LORD, no man may consecrate it; whether ox or sheep, it is the LORD'S."

Leviticus 27:30, "Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD."

Exodus 13:1-2, 1: "Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.'"

On the other hand, God gave the world it to mankind,

Genesis 1:26-30, 26: Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28: God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29: Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; 30: and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given* every green plant for food"; and it was so.

Genesis 9:1-2, 1: "And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. 2: The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given."

Genesis 12:7, "The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him."

Genesis 13:14-17, 14: "The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; 15: for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. 16: "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. 17: "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."

Genesis 15:18, "On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:'"

Genesis 26:3, (To Isaac) "Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham."

Psalms 8:4-8, 4: "What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? 5: Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! 6: You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7: All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field, 8: The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas."

Leviticus 27:16: 'Again, if a man consecrates to the LORD part of the fields of his own property, then your valuation shall be proportionate to the seed needed for it: a homer of barley seed at fifty shekels of silver.'

Leviticus 27:28 'Nevertheless, anything which a man sets apart to the LORD out of all that he has, of man or animal or of the fields of his own property, shall not be sold or redeemed. Anything devoted to destruction is most holy to the LORD.'

Nehemiah 11:3, "Now these are the heads of the provinces who lived in Jerusalem, but in the cities of Judah each lived on his own property in their cities--the Israelites, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants."

Matthew 22:4-5, 4: "Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, 'Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are *all* butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.'" 5: "But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business,..."

Luke 14:33, 33: "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

I Thessalonians 4:11, "...and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,..."

I Corinthians 9:7b: "... Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?"

But then, we have Satan telling Jesus at Jesus' temptation,

Matthew 4:8-9, 8: "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9: and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." There was no objection on Jesus' part as to the ability of Satan to do so or of his ownership of the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And we are affirmed in this in:

Ephesians 2:1-2, 1: "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2: in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

John 12:31: "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."

John 14:30: "I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;..."

I John 5:19: “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of the evil one.*”

This came about because mankind submitted to Satan and by default gave dominion to him. Paul wrote,

Romans 6:16: “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?*”

So, what is the answer? First, we have been redeemed out of the power and authority of Satan as we have turned our obedience back to God in Christ. Thus and second, based on this, my opinion is that since we are one with Christ, indeed the “body of Christ” in the world, but sit with Him in heavenly places and since the concept of all this can be summarized as oneness and family, my thought is that the money we make and all we have is “ours.”

I Corinthians 3:21-23 says, 21:“So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, 22: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, 23: and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.”²⁰

All things are both God’s and ours and He has set us as managers of it in His household (of which we are children) to do with as we see fit but hopes that our motives for using it are based in love and care for others as much as for ourselves.

The management idea comes from Jesus parable in Luke 16, the unjust manager or steward and in Luke 12:42. Paul also uses this term in:

I Corinthians 4:1-2, 1: “Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2: In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.”

Titus 1:7: “For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

And Peter uses it in:

²⁰ See also Acts 2:43-47 and 4:32-37

I Peter 4:10, “As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

The word is “oikonomos”, meaning “a manager” and is the most common word used for this person. However, we are not “hired” managers, but co-owners and our role as managers has a great deal more authority than a hired person. So you can do anything you want. What you want to do may be looked at as well as your motives for doing so, but you are under no law determining what you are to do. We are in this matter as in all of the conduct of our life to be led by the Spirit.

WALKING IN THE WISDOM OF GOD

SESSION XIV

BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT

We are instructed to be led by the Spirit and not by the flesh.

“Galatians 5:16-18, 16: But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17: For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18: But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.”

The question is, how do we go about sure we are being led by the Spirit? Do we just go on the whim of thought or emotion now? No. Does the Spirit lead us in every direction and decision of life? No. This is a misnomer as people, wishing to be obedient to God, pray for God’s will and leading as to whether they should buy Crest or Colgate, sell their house or not, and a thousand other matters for which they have already been given experience, wisdom, and the ability to think through issues and the consequences so these things can be decided upon.

Jesus spoke of the coming of the Spirit and His purpose in a clear way.

John 14:16-17, 16: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17: *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”

John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

John 15:26: "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me."

John 16:13-15, 13: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14: "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. 15": "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you."

John 6:63: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

Speaking of the flesh and the Spirit, Paul writes

Romans 2:28-29, 28: "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29: But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."

Romans 7:4-6, 4: "Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. 5: For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were *aroused* by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6: But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter."

Romans 8:1-17, 1: Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3: For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4: so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5: For those who are according to the

flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6: For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7: because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, 8: and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9: However, *you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit*,²¹ if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10: If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11: But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 12: So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—13: for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14: For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15: For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16: The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17: and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*."

The gist of all this is that;

1. One must not fall under the idea that he or she is still under the Law to obey its statutes, regulations, commandments, or ordinances to have a right or righteous relationship with God. Therefore this compulsion must be set aside. Paul wrote in Galatians 5:1-6,

1: "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 2: Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3: And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 4: You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. 5: For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. 6: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love."

²¹ Italic underline mine.

2. The Spirit of God is that which gives us spiritual life elevating us from the sure death of the flesh and giving us eternal life. This is called being “born again” as Jesus points out in John 3:1-12;

1: Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2: this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God *as* a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." 3: Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4: Nicodemus *said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" 5: Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7: "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8: "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9: Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?" 10: Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? 11: "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. 12: "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

3. The Spirit, by giving life to our mortal bodies as well, enables us to begin to put off the “deeds of the body”²² and the “works of the flesh.”²³ The important matter is that of the spiritual, not the fleshly. Both Paul and John see the works of the flesh or body in two ways. But both describe that by which the flesh is driven to do both, first to achieve some sort of righteousness standing before God by the works of the Law and second, to act out the desires of the flesh in a manner contrary to both the Law and the Spirit, such as in immorality. How this happens is that our desires begin to be redirected from satisfying self or some distorted religious effort to be righteous (self-righteous) before God to genuinely

²² Romans 8:11-13

²³ Galatians 5:16-25

realizing that we really want to walk with God even though the “old man” hangs on.

4. The Spirit of God teaches us and guides us into all truth. If we wish Him to. Too many want to guide the Spirit into agreement with our point of view. This was the root of several heresies in Paul’s day and they are still with us. First and foremost, our attention is drawn to Christ in deep gratitude and faith. This is the start. Second, the Lord was correct when He said that the Spirit would recall to mind the things He had said. Years after the ascension of Jesus, the gospels began to be written and Paul’s works as well. The apostles were given the memory and inspiration to write what He had said and done and now knew the meaning and truth of it.
5. There is a point at which each believer must arrive in my opinion in order to be led by the Spirit. It is to understand that he or she no longer belongs to him/herself, but to the Lord.

We are citizens of a different world now, a spiritual world. We are members of a new household. We are under a new covenant. The one who is our Lord is not of this earth. We are part of God’s kingdom, not Satan’s or the world’s. Whether we live or we die in this existence, we are secured in another reality, not in this shadow, but in the true substance.

Too often believers are caught up in the temporal, corporeal things of life rather than the spiritual matters of the Spirit. The focus is often on circumstances and concerns over where God is in all of it and takes more attention than it ought to. We define ourselves and our existence in earthly, temporal terms. This is understandable, but not a complete picture.

One hears believers speak of life as God allowing this or God not allowing that in the daily events, circumstances and tragedies of this life. Believers wonder what God’s will is for their lives. But rather than wonder about what God allows or doesn’t allow²⁴ which are normally

²⁴ There is very little in the scripture about God “allowing” or “not allowing” things to happen or in answering prayer. Frankly, it is clear in the scripture that God refrains from man’s free will simply because of the events pictured for us in the first few chapters of Genesis where God gave rule and dominion to mankind and never revoked it. We do what we do, good or evil. We submitted to Satan’s words and be default transferred our

fleshly and circumstantial concerns, perhaps Christians ought to think more about what they will allow God to do in their lives and allow Him to use them as a vessel of His love for others rather than for themselves. Love is a decision to open one's life to the love, mercy and grace of love and then allow that to be expressed outwardly for the benefit of others. (Galatians 5:6) Love is not an emotional joy and happiness one feels when one is loved. That is self-directed and temporary.

Nor is happiness the goal for oneself in any enterprise that cloaks itself within the world's view of "love" which is obviously for one's own benefit. That is not true love, nor will happiness be derived from it for very long. True happiness comes from serving others with true love even as Jesus said, "It is more blessed (happiness is achieved) to give than to receive." Love always considers the best interest of another as Jesus noted, "Greater love has no man that this, that he lay down his life for his friend." Paul agreed when it came to marriage, "Husbands love your wives and Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her."

To be led by the Spirit is to open oneself to the Spirit and allow Him to use us as vessels of His love, word and power. And as the fruit of the Spirit develops, we also both possess that and share it to the glory of God.

Conclusion:

We are not to be led by the "letter" (the Law) but neither are we to violate it. It stands as a part of our conscious in our heart, much as a barricade surrounds a race track or an "out of bounds" marker surrounds a playing field. But we don't conduct our lives on the barricades or lines staring at them fearful we might miss the mark. But we also don't conduct our lives willy-nilly crossing the lines just to show we are free.

I had a friend once who wanted to demonstrate that he was truly free in Christ, so he allowed the worst of his flesh to rule his life. He was no longer under the law so he often used occasions to use profane language, drink heavily, lust after women

dominion to him by free choice. The consequences our ours alone and God does not, and cannot, interfere without breaking His own word and covenant. This results in a clear demonstration that man is the source of evil and in dire need of salvation. By His mercy, God has provided it in Christ. As Paul writes, " For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ..." Colossians 1:13.

and so on. But that is not freedom. That is bondage to the flesh. It is certainly not being led by the Spirit of God. As Paul wrote twice to the church at Corinth, “All things are lawful but not all things are profitable” (I Corinthians 6:2) Or in I Corinthians 10:25, “...not all things edify.”

For example, I received a discount coupon from a local psychic. She promised guidance in matters of love, marriage, business and health. Am I free to go to her? Sure. But is being led by the Spirit? No! Why? Well first, it is clear in the Law that,

"When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you." Deuteronomy 18:9-12

I Samuel 28:7-9 makes it clear that no one was to consult such a person as well. But then in addition, Paul wrote, “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.” I Corinthians 10:23.

The Spirit, therefore, never leads us into that which is contrary to scripture which is proclaimed as truth within its own pages and by the apostles who saw it to be true and testified to it. Therefore those who state something like, “God told me to take the gun and shoot the abortion doctor” to those who said that “The Spirit or God led me to do this or that” are usually incorrect. The Spirit’s leading is exclusively spiritual as we saw in Revelation. If God’s Spirit is leading you, in what way would you think your life ought to be conducted? What is foremost? Whom is he most concerned about? Why?

Thus, being led by the Spirit is to be open to His presence and allow Him to use us in every part of our lives for the benefit of others. To be led by and motivated by the Spirit’s power within us and this means to exude the truth, grace, mercy, love, and power of God as the Spirit infuses us and to reject being led by legalism, the fleshly lusts and human pride and self-centeredness.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

* Excursus - Jesus and the Law,
His teachings and their application to believers.

It is known by many teachers that certain teachings of Jesus are amplifications of the Law directed at those self-righteous individuals – often Pharisees and “lawyers” - who saw keeping the law by works of the flesh as a means of righteousness while disregarding the heart, mind, soul and motive.

The intent of Jesus’ teachings are clear in the Parable of the tax collector and Pharisee in the temple as recorded by Luke in chapter 18:9-14 of his gospel.

9: And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11: "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12: 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13: "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14: "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The failure of many to come to this point was apparent in their anger at Him and their ultimate decision to rid themselves of this bothersome creature. But the question remains, do many of these teachings apply to believers and are believers required to once again, come under the conviction of His poignant instruction?

To answer this question, it is critical to note that Jesus was born under the law and kept the law as it was intended to be kept. His teachings were largely an application of the Law and its intentions. Note Galatians 4:1-11,

1: “Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, 2: but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. 3: So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. 4: But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5: so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6: Because you are sons, God

has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7: Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. 8: However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. 9: But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? 10: You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11: I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain."

"At that time" in verse 8 refers to the time prior to the redemption provided by God in Christ at the cross. Jesus' taught under the Law and most of what He taught applied the Law to its fullest intent to the lives of the people He confronted, especially the self-righteous religious leadership of Israel. He did not come "to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it" (Matthew 5:17). And He did so through His life, teachings, death, burial, resurrection and ascension. He was circumcised, kept the Sabbath, and all the feasts and holy days because He was born under the Law. To underscore His conformity to the Law, He said to the healed leper,

"See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Mark 1:44

If all of Jesus' teachings are for the Christian, then what about this command? His teachings for the most part, therefore, do not apply to the Christian since it is the work of The Holy Spirit to stamp the parameters and nature of righteousness on the heart. Empty ritual is not what God wants. This was the gist of Jesus' teachings. The issue is not one of outward obedience, but obedience that comes gladly from a changed heart, desire and mind. Those who produce outward righteousness without regard to inner righteousness have missed the intent of the Law.

An example of how His teaching is properly understood is found in Matthew 6:5-15, the "Lord's Prayer". In verses 14 and 15, Jesus makes an application to His hearers. "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." Is this true under The New Covenant of Grace through faith in Christ? Paul answers this in Ephesians 4:32. "And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven you". So when did our forgiveness occur? In chapter 1 verse 7, Paul writes, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to

the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us.” Also in Colossians 3:13, Paul notes, “...forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”

Another example of Jesus contrasting the outward obedience with the true condition of the heart is found in Matthew 5:27 and 28. “You have heard that it was said, ‘you shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for has committed adultery with her already in his heart. If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.” Here there is no mistake. Lustful ogling results in the destruction of the person. Adultery is a capital crime under the law. Further, how many are ripping their eyes out over this common sin? None. The application of the severity of the Law is made clear here. But even Christians who think they must abide by every word of Jesus balk at this one.

Those who believe that all of Jesus’ teachings apply to the Christian are inconsistent. For example, Jesus told the man He healed from leprosy to, “Go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” Yet Christians admit that this is actually not required. Why? Because they divide the Old Covenant into sections, “some of which we are supposed to keep, and some of which we are not supposed to keep.” They make a distinction between “ceremonial law” and “the moral law or the commandments”. However, Christians are not under the “Law”, which includes everything. It is clear that a violation of one point is a violation of all (James 2:10) and that if one comes under any of it he is required to keep all of it (Galatians 5:3). The above account in Luke, chapter 5 makes it clear that Jesus was still under the law and instructing the proper application of the law to all peoples. There are many such examples.

In Galatians 4:21-5:6, Paul makes the case for those who still want to be under the law even after Christ has fulfilled it in His own blood. Paul concludes, “You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” This does not mean that a born again believer has lost his salvation. What it does mean is that his life has tumbled from the blessings, freedom and leading of grace down to the bondage, guilt and condemnation of the law again. When Christ fulfilled the law, it means that every demand of the law was met and the ultimate sacrifice to satisfy the law’s demand for every sin was made and was infinitely applicable to all peoples, past present and future.

“Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’” Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Luke 24:44-47

Tithing, Sabbath keeping, and all of the commandments etc. all fall under the law. It is not as if the law is now awful or horrible. We have already seen that it is perfect, holy, good and righteous. But once one is born by the Spirit through faith in Christ, the law has done its work by bringing us to our knees in recognition of our own unholiness, corruption and need of a savior. It is not able to produce life, righteousness, joy, love or any of the fruit of the Spirit, etc. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. So the Christian must let go of the hand of the law which can bring us only so far, and grasp the hand of The Holy Spirit who will lead us further on.

But, returning to Jesus’ teachings, how are, as believers, we to view them and learn from them. The following are a few thoughts to help the believer learn from and apply to his or her own life.

1. There is no question that Jesus is focused on the heart and mind as the core of a person’s life and conduct. He said clearly,

“When he had left the crowd *and* entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. And He *said to them, ‘Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?’ (*Thus He* declared all foods clean.) And He was saying, ‘That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.’” Mark 7:17-23

Thus the believer can know that his heart and mind must be the focus of the continual work of the word of God and the Spirit of God.

2. Jesus came preaching “The Kingdom of God” and told dozens of parables about it. To understand the nature of the kingdom, these parables can be studied carefully and with great pleasure.
3. He both taught and demonstrated the righteousness and justice of God in which we can have confidence.
4. He made it clear that it was faith from the heart and humility, like a little child, that was the key to salvation, not fleshly works or self-righteousness.
5. He demonstrated the presence and power of the kingdom of God over the elements, evil, illness and disease, all aspects of life and even over death.
6. Jesus spoke of the persecution those who followed Him would encounter and encouraged perseverance. This is important. He also spoke clearly of the commitment and cost of being His follower and disciple.
7. Jesus spoke of the love of God for all mankind, and the foolishness of those who turned away from Him and His words. He demonstrated in His life, death and resurrection both the love of God and His power.
8. He spoke of the future of the world to prepare His disciples for what is to come.
9. He promised the presence of the Holy Spirit after He departed so those who are His would not be left desolate, but know God’s presence with them.

Of course there are more to consider, but it takes wisdom and discernment to distinguish between what he says to intensify the law to reach the hardness of heart and what He says to those who have come to repentance and faith. For example, the oft quoted passage called “the sermon on the mount” is applied to believers as a standard of righteousness to attempt to achieve when most of it is so impossible only the self-righteous and pride filled would think they could fulfill it. What is humorous in my mind is the final nail in the coffin of self-righteousness most people assume they can fulfill, “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:48

“Oh, no problem!” Or, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR

MIND.'

Most believers go on glibly assuming they can do so when it is impossible.

The context is Jesus speaking to the self-righteous and hypocritical lawyers, Sadducees and Pharisees who were looking for a work they could do with the power of the flesh. He befuddled them with the truth. Here is the text:

“But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. One of them, a lawyer, asked Him *a question*, testing Him, ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And He 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 great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' ‘On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.’” Matthew 22:34-40

They had nothing to say and changed the subject immediately.

Questions for discussion:

1. What should the proper response be to Jesus statement?
2. What does true righteousness consist of? Or...
3. Where does it come from and on what basis?

It takes wisdom to discern how to best understand and apply the teachings of Jesus as a believer.

End of Excursus

The Transformation - Walking in newness of life. If it's not "Glad Tidings of Great Joy", it's not The Gospel.

What happens? We are transformed from death to life.

The Word of Truth. God's Word expressed through the Gospel message sets His love and provision for us in Christ against the hopeless despair and death in us and offers us a choice. Note: Luke 1:67-79.

Jesus' message presented the Kingdom of God to man and the means whereby one may enter it. He did this in both word and deed. He noted that one cannot enter the Kingdom of God unless one is born of the Spirit. This new birth is a result of an individual's repentance (involving conviction and contrition) and then faith in Him whom God has sent. Note: John 3:3-8. Also, John 6:28. Now the descriptions of what happens on behalf of those who turn to Christ as Savior and Lord is immense. But they boil down to two categories.

I. Forensic. Our previous standing with God has changed. Several simultaneous events occur.

A. Forgiveness is applied. This is the best illustration of Grace.

Forgiveness is not simply an overlooking or covering of our sin. Some teach that our sin is really still on the books, but God chooses to ignore it-until such time, of course, He needs to remind us of our horrible corruption and what He did for us so He can manipulate us through guilt fear of losing our salvation into some sort of shame so we will get our act together. I left a church that taught that very thing. That church has grown and is filled with people waiting for God to take their head off at the first slip.

No, God is not like us in that regard, holding our past mistakes over our head. On the contrary, the pages of God's Book, which had recorded all of our sins, are made blank-and, no new entries are ever placed in there again. (Ears, eyes as projectors illustration) So, now are we free to just go and sin since it is all covered? Romans 5:20-6:2

Is it true that nothing else is placed there against us to accuse us before God? Romans 8:28-39; Romans 5:1-2, 8:1-2; Ephesians 1:7-8a; Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 9:24-28, 10:10-18.

Forgiveness. Aphasis, Aphiemi from apo (off, away, separate from, removed, to send) and eimi (me, I, I am)

John announced Jesus as “The lamb who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). The word translated as “take away” is “i-row” meaning to take up or take away. What all this means is that sin is no longer, and will be no longer attached to you. Your sin is gone. It is not stuck away somewhere on some divine ledger with God waiting until you really get to Him and push Him to drag it all out again against you. God no longer sees it and it does not bring you under the judgment of death anymore because you are not under the law, but under grace. (Romans 6:14-15)

- C. The second forensic occurrence is called justification. Romans 5:8-9; Romans 3:19-26. This is truly amazing and it is a natural result of forgiveness. What does it mean? The dictionary defines the word this way: The legal definition is, “To show sufficient reason for something done, rendering the doer clear of any accusation or charge”. The theological definition is, “The forensic, judicial, or gracious act of God by which the sinner is declared righteous, or justly free from obligation to penalty, and fully restored to divine favor”. The Greek is simple. Diki-oh-then-tes – to declare and make one righteous. (Abraham) So, when I turn to Jesus for salvation and place my faith (my life) in him, that act brings not only forgiveness but renders me, including my whole life and the totality of my sin as justified.

In other words, the justice of God and His law demands that all who sin are sentenced to death. But Jesus paid the price for our sin, and that of all mankind and thus justice was served, the Law satisfied and all stand justified – cleared – of any charge or offense. (See: Romans 5:16-21)

Why? Could it be that my sin is now accounted as a justifiable means to God’s goal because it brought me to Christ when His word of truth, The Righteousness of God revealed in the law, and the conviction of The Holy Spirit clashed with my lost-ness in sin. Is this another way God brings good from evil? Romans 5:20-6:2; 7:5, 7-13, Gal. 3:22-24. Well, I’m not sure, but we stand justified before God in Christ, we are declared righteous. The charges against us are more than dismissed, our past history (our record) no longer exists. There is no sheet on us anymore, and there never will be again. With forgiveness, this is the essence of Grace. Why such lavish gifts from God? Because, through our faith, we have honored His Son as our Lord and Savior. We honor what He did on the cross when He gave his life for us, and God responds to our recognition of that sacrifice with love, mercy, grace and eternal gifts. (Ephesians 2:4-7)

C. The third forensic occurrence is called sanctification. This means to be set apart, which is the true definition of holiness. There are several parts to this, and they are all simultaneous .

1. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

2. We are redeemed. Closely related to forgiveness in that a price was paid providing for the redemption and forgiveness we enjoy. The Greek is “ex-agor-ah-zohw”. It comes from two words, “ex” meaning out of, and “agora” meaning market place. An illustration might go like this. One day Jesus goes into the market place to a shop owned by Satan. It is a pawn-shop. He looks around at the goods and finds nothing for sale. He asks Satan if there might be any other goods for sale. Satan brightens up immediately and says, “Yes, in my basement I have a product called ‘all mankind’ bound in chains. They came to me when they fell to my temptation in the garden. God was so foolish to tell them they would die and fall to me, but I knew. Then God gave them this law, and penalized them to death for breaking it, which He knew they would. How stupid can God be? So, the price to buy them back is extremely high”. “How high”? Asks Jesus. Satan rubs his hands with glee. “It would cost you all your blood, oh Son of God- and only those in the basement that believe you are the Son of God after you are dead will be redeemed. Are you willing to pay the ultimate price for this rubbish, under those terms”? “I am” says Jesus. Satan is overjoyed, but conceals it craftily. He thinks, Jesus would not fall for the temptations in the wilderness but I have this ace in the hole, and He cannot resist because of His foolish Love. Well, it will cost the fool dearly. Satan agrees immediately to the sale thinking He would be rid of the Son of God forever and finally bring God to His knees.

But, Satan had learned nothing from his encounter with God and Job or from anything else he and his demons had suffered under the authority and power of God and his Son. But, this foolish Son had taken on human, mortal form. It would be over soon. And so Jesus Redeemed mankind back with his own blood. Satan was true to his word. He released everyone who believed in Jesus. Of course, he was totally shocked when he realized that Jesus rose from the dead. It was a killer blow. He never expected it. My, he learned nothing from watching God raise the dead through Elijah the prophet, did he.

So we are redeemed. And the Bible tells us we are redeemed from “the curse of the law” (Galatians 3:13-14, Romans 3:21-26, Hebrews 9:11-15, Romans 5:8-11).

3. The third aspect of sanctification is that we are transferred-moved. This most clearly defines the actual meaning of the word “sanctification” or “being set apart”.

- a. Acts 26:15-18 – (Paul’s testimony) From darkness to light
- b. Colossians 1:13-14 – From darkness to the Kingdom of God’s Son
- c. Ephesians 2:4-7 – From death to resurrection in heaven
- d. Ephesians 2:19-22, Philippians 3:18-21 – From worldly citizenship to heavenly citizenship. (From the headship and family of the first Adam to the headship and family of the second Adam.

This forensic reality is expressed by many contrasts.

Death to life

Darkness to Light (Truth)

Estrangement to fellowship

The Kingdom of this world to fellowship with God

From being fearful to being loved

Being under condemnation to grace-being under no condemnation

Guilt to peace

Despair to hope.

4. Circumcision contrast: Romans 2:25-29; Ezekiel 44:6-7; Leviticus 26:41-42; Jeremiah 4:4, 9:25-26; Philippians 3:2-3; Galatians 6:12-16; Colossians 2:10-14.

We are heirs of Abraham, not because of a physical act of human hands, but because of a spiritual act not of human hands. Since circumcision was the sign of the covenant with Abraham based on his faith in the promise of God, so in Christ, a spiritual circumcision is the sign of the

fulfillment of the promise for all those who have faith in Him. A spiritual relationship depends on a spiritual act and reality, not on a fleshly one. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit”. (John 3:8)

II. Spiritual – Of the Spirit and the heart.

A. The New Birth

1. John 3:1-8
2. II Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15-16
3. I Peter 1:23-24
4. I John 5:1-5
5. Romans 10:8-13 (sedge-way to “heart”).

B. The Transformation Of The “Heart” (or “mind”, “spirit”, “conscience”) First, what our heart is like. Genesis 6:5, 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9; Ecclesiastes 9:3; Mark 7:20-23; Romans 3:9-19.)

1. Infusions into the heart: Acts 15:7-11; Romans 5:1-5; II Corinthians 1:20-22, 4:5-7; Galatians 4:6-7; Ephesians 3:14-19; II Thessalonians 3:5

C. Other: Hebrews 9:13-15, (10:1-4, 19-25) We enter His “rest”. The Sabbath (Law) issue resolved. We rest from works in Christ. Hebrews 4:1-10

What are we to believe? What are we going to decide to believe? Do we want to know the truth? What is the truth? Will we believe it if we hear it?

Jesus personifies the living truth. It is not what you believe, but whom you believe in. Here is the truth: Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father but through me.”

The Father loves us with an everlasting, unconditional love. His nature is Love and thus he does not express Himself to us in a manner contrary to His nature and character.

The pinnacle of His expression is seen in His Son, Jesus Christ who lived, died and was raised again from the dead for our sakes. This placed the New Covenant into effect, making the Old Covenant under Moses null and void. "God's love is for the entire world without exception or condition. For "God so loved the world..." we are told. Paul assures in Romans 5:5-11 of God's love.

God's unconditional love for us includes all the forensic declarations we have examined including forgiveness, justification and sanctification. We are clean, put in a right relationship with God, freed from bondage to sin and death declared by God's holy law, and set apart into his household and kingdom forever. We are moved from death to life, from darkness to light, from deception to truth, from guilt to peace and from despair to hope. This alone should be motive to live a thankful and gracious life. Please note a wonderful example of this in Luke 7:36-50. But wait, there's more! We are born a new, changed by his power from one tarnished glory to increasing brighter glory, made into a new creature designed to walk in newness of life. Paul describes this as God pouring out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5, 8:9-11).



We are changed and our identity is changed. Hence, our conduct changes. Here is who we are now:

Romans 8:16-17; Ephesians 1:4c-8; 2:10; Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1-5; I Peter 2:9-10; II Peter 1:1-4; II Cor. 5:21

If we believe what God has said in the scriptures, what are we to do? How do we understand what the "Christian life" is all about and in what way do we walk in obedience to God if we are not under the law? There are several things that must join together to understand our walk in Christ. (1) The forensic reality God has declared on our behalf for all who trust in Jesus. (2) The inner reality God has performed in us by his Spirit. (3) The truth about who we are in Christ and of our new relationship with God our Father. (4) Our decision about the direction of our lives and behavior based on these truths.

What we are to decide: Romans 6:1-5, 20-21. We are to decide to walk in the newness of life God has provided us with, without fear, in the truth of who we are in Christ, in His victory over life and death. Further, because of the confidence we have in God's Love for us, we can minister to and love others without fear. I John 4:10-21; II Corinthians 5:14-15; I Peter 2:9-12 (note: chapter three); Ephesians 3:20-4:3; Philippians 2:5-16; I Thessalonians 3:11-12 etc.

In deciding to believe what God has said and done in Christ, we set our feet on the path of Newness of Life. How are we to be guided now that we are not under the law? By a living reality not by tablets of stone. Remember, the sign of the New Covenant is the resurrection-alive from the dead-and we are now, “dead to sin and alive to God”. So guidance will be a living reality, that which is within, not an external standard. This is the whole issue of the matter of the “Heart”. So many churches teach that the Christian is saved by grace through faith but that their lives are to be mandated and judged by the Law. Note: Romans 1:5 and especially Romans 7:6

1. Holy Spirit – (John 14:16-17, 23-27; Galatians 5:22-26). Plants seeds for fruit.

2. Law written in our hearts, becoming not an external standard or mandate, but an internal reality. Our desires regarding righteousness change from resisting it to wanting it. It is no longer the need to be righteous by keeping the law that drives us, but faith in the One who loves us.

Jeremiah 31:31-34; (Hebrews 8:7-13, 10:15-18); Romans 2:14-16, 13:8-10; II Corinthians 3:1-3; I John 5:2-5 (3:23-24, 4:7-12, 21); Matthew 22:34-40.

(The action of conscience- Hebrews 9:8-15; 10:1-22; II Cor. 1:12; I Timothy 1:3-5, 1:18-19, 3:8-9; 4:1-2; Titus 1:15- 6; I Peter 3:13-16. “suneidoh” from “sun” – “with”, “together”, “next to” and “eidoh”, “see”, “perceive”, “understand”. Ultimately –“to see inside yourself”-conscience.)

“The Law written in our hearts” places the full intention and purpose of the Law regarding righteousness and conduct in our hearts (minds) so that godly righteousness and conduct becomes instinctive and desired rather than a mandated act of the flesh often in contrast to our will. (Rom. 2:14-16)

3. Faith, Hope and Love (Romans 1:5, 5:1-5; II Corinthians 5:14-15; I Corinthians 13:13)

4. New Covenant Teachings of the Apostles: I Corinthians 4:14-17; Ephesians 5:1-4; Philippians 4:8-9; I Peter 1:3-5, 10-2:3; 2:9-25ff.; 4:1-11; II Peter 3:7-18; etc.

5. Prayer and thanksgiving. I Thessalonians 5:16-18; Philippians 4:6-9; Ephesians 6:10-20; etc.

6. Thinking and meditation to train the mind. Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 5:15-20; Philippians 4:8-9; Colossians 3:1-17, 18ff.

THE NEW COVENANT

The Lord God Almighty, The Creator of Heaven and Earth, The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, The God and Father of Jesus Christ and all who have received Him as Lord and Savior, has bequeathed to all His children in Christ all things delineated below. This Covenant supersedes and negates all other covenants, wills, and conditions previously in force until this time²⁵ and is an eternal Covenant, which can never be revoked.²⁶ This Covenant is ratified in the blood of God's Son, verified by His resurrection from the dead, and guaranteed by The Holy Spirit through the new birth and adoption into God's household and family for all those who believe.²⁷ All provisions listed are grounded in God's revealed Word as noted.

The New Covenant Promise – The full inheritance of the blessings promised to Abraham including redemption, forgiveness, justification, sanctification, glorification and eternal life.

The New Covenant Condition - Faith. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved”.

The New Covenant Sign – The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead.

Declarations:

Declaration #1. Forgiveness and Redemption. Not a pardon written for you, but no record at all. God looks upon you as if you have never sinned. “I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Note: John 3:18; 5:24. Your sins are completely gone. They are not in an obscure place waiting to pop up to condemn you at a later judgment day. The apostle, Paul, devotes an entire chapter to this subject. II Cor. 3:1-5. You are declared forgiven – forever. This is for all mankind.²⁸

Declaration #2. Justification. “The forensic, judicial, or gracious act of God by which the sinner is declared righteous, or justly free from obligation to penalty, and fully restored to divine favor.” (Romans 5:8-9; Romans 3:19-26). You are declared justified.

Declaration #3. Sanctification. You are set apart unto God. You are sealed with The Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14), redeemed with the blood of The Lamb (Galatians 3:13-14, Romans 3:21-26,

²⁵ Romans 4:13-16; Galatians 3:16-17

² Genesis 17:7; I Peter 1:3-5; Hebrews 6:13-20, 12:18-29

³ Luke 22:14-20; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 2:1-10

⁴ John 1:29; I Timothy 2:5-6; I Peter 3:18; I John 2:2; Hebrews 10:11-12

Hebrews 9:11-15, Romans 5:8-11), Transferred to His realm (Acts 26:15-18, Colossians 1:13-14, Ephesians 2:4-7, Ephesians 2:19-22, Philippians 3:18-21). You are declared sanctified, no longer your own, you belong to Christ, purchased with a price.

Provisions:

Provision #1. A new birth: (John 3:1-8; II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15-16; I Peter 1:23-24; I John 5:1-5; Romans 10:8-13). You are new person, designed to walk in newness of life.

Provision #2. A new heart (mind, attitude, spirit) Infusions into the heart: (Acts 15:7-11; Romans 5:1-5; II Corinthians 1:20-22, 4:5-7; Galatians 4:6-7; Ephesians 3:14-19; II Thessalonians 3:5)

Provision #3. A new identity. We are changed and our identity is changed. We stand no longer under the condemnation of the Law, but free under grace (Romans 4:13-14, 8:1-2). Hence, our conduct changes. As do our desires. Here is who we are now: (Romans 8:16-17; Ephesians 1:4c-8; 2:10; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1-5; I Peter 2:9-10; II Peter 1:1-4; II Corinthians 5:21). No longer are we to be under and bound by The Law (Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:1-3)

Provision #4 A new hope. (Romans 5:1-5, 8:28-39, 12:9-13; I Peter 1:3-5, 21)

Provision #5 A new purpose and life style. (Romans 6:4, 7:6; Galatians 5:22-25, 6:15; Colossians 3:1-17; Ephesians 4:17-32)