



# Shepherd's Voice<sup>©</sup>

MAGAZINE

*Winter 2012*  
*Free!*

***In this issue...***

**Greater Sin, Greater Love**

**Wrestling With Evil**

**Children Of God, Part II**

**First Commandment: Perfecting Love for God**

**Submission: Key to Unity and Harmony**

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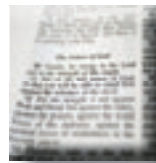
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## Greetings!

The editorial staff at Shepherd's Voice Magazine has not made it a point to have themes for each issue, but it seems we may have done so for this 2012 winter edition.

In this edition of the Scribe's Square, Edward Malone's discusses the various groupings certain belief systems number the Ten Commandments. My personal belief is that Genesis 20:2, where the Lord states I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage is not part of the first commandment, but the preamble for all the commandments that follow—the Liberator's laws of liberty.

*But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in all he does. (James 1:25)*

I believe James makes it clear the Laws of God are given to us by a Liberator, and we are to look into (Greek: parakupto—lean over to peer within) them and see the nature of the Giver, and the law's purpose. The Liberator freed Israel to serve Him, and serving the Lord is enabling and fruitful. It connects us with the One who brings meaning to life, and connects us with our neighbor in the proper way. This becomes evident as we grow in grace and knowledge. We are free to love our neighbor as ourselves, not because we have to (not liberating), but because we want to, a freeing experience.

It seems we can have a tendency to allow ourselves to become captive again, as Paul puts it, to serve worldly elements, which includes worldly and selfish ideas of serving God. The nation of Israel and the Church in Galatia are examples for us. For the Church in Galatia this was a false interpretation and application of the law. Any study we do or present on the laws of God

therefore should embrace and encapsulate them as how they liberate, and this requires that we know them as emanating from the Law Giver, our Liberator. The Galatians turned to identifying with the law for justification and not the Law Giver who is Jesus Christ. In my experience, James makes a good point in the scripture quoted above, he is not asking us to look into a law of justification (exhausting ideas of just how to keep them), because in doing so we cannot be fruitful doers of the work, only a burden to ourselves and others, adding to confusion. I have seen this many times over.

We include in this issue an excerpt from a forthcoming book Ten Words, The First Commandment—Perfecting Love for God. Author Jeff Patton reminds us that the keeping of the commandments is a loving response to our Maker. This is the highest response we can make, and it will come naturally to us being loyal to the Lawgiver. If we desire to be doers of the work, we first need to cultivate loyalty to the Lord, or we will make compromises in judgment, serving ourselves and blind to the needs of others.

Let us all peer within the laws of God and be blessed in all that we do in His service.

In Christ's Service  
*Jim Patterson*

# Greater Sin, Greater Love



This article is not about condoning sin. All sins hurt the sinner—and often hurt others as well.

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? (Romans 6:1-2)*

This article is about the role of mature Christians in helping those who are sinning—even when they are sinning a lot. If your reaction to this is “I stay as far away from sinners as I can”, then you may indeed not be ready for it. The steps of the maturing Christian follow this pattern:

1. Learn what sin is—from the Bible and/or the teaching of other Christians.
2. Repent of my sins—recognize that we have them and we are wrong.
3. Overcome my sins—through the power of the Holy Spirit. This often involves staying away from sinners to avoid temptations.
4. Preach the gospel to others so they can begin this cycle for themselves. This may involve going where sinners are, so you can reach them.

In order to accomplish this last point, one must be spiritually mature. Paul stated it like this.

*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:1-2).*

A believer cannot help restore others from a particular sin if he or she is still being tempted by that sin themselves. One must “consider oneself” before trying to help another. If a person is not ready, and likely to become involved in the sin again, he or she is better off not to try to help another. The goal is to go from 1 person in trouble to 0 persons in trouble; not from 1 person in trouble to 2!

In his last sentence, above, Paul notes that restoring others is not an optional thing for those who are bored or who want to try to look spiritual. He rather commands mature believers to “bear one another’s burdens” and tells us that is fulfilling the law of Christ! The same concept is taught by all the other Epistle writers (James 5:19-20; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 5:16; Jude 1:22-23).

But it is not easy. It takes greater love to deal with people who have greater sin. That is the first meaning of this article’s title. The second meaning is coming up.

### Christ’s Teaching

Christ taught extensively about how to deal with people who are sinning—sometimes sinning a lot. Let us

examine His teaching in the Gospel of Luke, stopping to make important observations. Then we can think about how His teaching might apply to us, today:

*Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to eat (Luke 7:36).*

So far, things are going well. We are being asked over for dinner at the house of a prominent person. Today, that might be a lawyer, church leader or politician. As the Pharisees in the Bible were considered acceptable and righteous by the common people (Matt 5:20), so are most of our leaders today. Even though they may be greedy and oppress the poor, they work hard to maintain an image of respectability and it often works (Luke 11:39-41). Continuing the story:

*And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and*

wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil (Luke 7:37-38).

Oh, No! A disgusting sinner shows up! Why did she have to come? This is going to ruin the evening. While the Bible does not say what kind of sinner this woman was, it seems unlikely that she was a thief, murderer, idolater or something of that nature. The owner certainly would be ushering her out—or maybe having her prosecuted. She was most likely an adulteress—the most common reason a woman would be considered a “sinner”. We might also ask, how did she know Jesus was there and who let her in to walk right to the dinner room? Had she been there before or had previous “business” with this Pharisee or his guests? Who is the greater sinner? A prostitute? Or the government, business or church leader who sometimes uses prostitutes? What should our reaction be to this woman?

*Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, “This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner” (Luke 7:39).*

It is interesting that the leader is busy faulting Jesus for letting this woman touch him. He is too timid to talk openly, but talks to himself. He is wondering why Jesus lets her touch him—something that he obviously would not do—or at least not while anyone important was watching. He still does not order her to leave. Is he afraid of what she could say about him?

*And Jesus answered and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” So he said, “Teacher, say it.” “There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. “And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more? Simon*

*answered and said, “I suppose the one whom he forgave more.” And He said to him, “You have rightly judged” (Luke 7:40-43).*

Our Messiah’s teaching explains the second meaning of this article’s title: those who sin much can be forgiven much and will love much. As we stated at the beginning, sin does bring much suffering, and everyone would be better off if they would not “sin much”. But the result of people who recover from this sin is often much love—which can then go on to help redeem the sins of others.

*Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little” (Luke 7:44-47).*

Christ applies his teaching directly to this woman, freely acknowledging that her sins were many, but that she was forgiven. He praises her for the good works that she did. Would we, as Christians today be also able to praise the good works of someone who was a known sinner? Or is it all right to always speak negatively about a “bad person”? If we say something good about a sinner, or let her touch us, are we afraid people will think we are her friend? Might they think we are a sinner, too? Christ was more interested in helping the person than in trying to make sure everyone thought the best of Him. We have to think that way, too, to help sinners. Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

*And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves,*

*“Who is this who even forgives sins?” Then He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace” (Luke 7:48-50).*

Christ forgave this woman. She certainly repented of her sins—that is necessary for forgiveness (Luke 17:3-4; Acts 5:31; 8:22). None of this recovery would have happened if Christ did not have the love to help this “bad woman”

### **Do “Big Sinners” Ever Accomplish Much for God?**

While the majority of New Testament leaders were never “big sinners”, some were. The apostle Matthew (also known as Levi, the writer of the book of Matthew), was called from the position of a tax collector. Tax collectors were considered traitors because they worked for the Romans, and were known for cheating the common people. Jesus was not afraid to go to Matthew’s house which was full of tax collectors:

*After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, “Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick (Luke 5:27-30).*

Another one of Christ’s apostles was Simon the Zealot (Matt 10:4; Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15). Zealots were an illegal party dedicated to overthrowing the Roman government—violently at times. Yet Simon served as an apostle.

Mary Magdalene was one of the few people courageous enough to stay with Christ during his crucifixion (John

19:25). She was the first to see him after his resurrection (John 20:1-18). She, along with other women provided the funding for Christ's ministry (Luke 8:3). But these women had demons and diseases. Mary had seven demons (Luke 8:2). How many Christians today would help demon possessed women? Who would think that they might become key figures and the major fiduciaries of the most important ministry of all time?

*And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance (Luke 8:2-3).*

The apostle Paul identified himself being "chief of sinners" (1Tim 1:15-16). This was not a joke or false humility, there was a time when he was "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1-2). But God required Ananias, a disciple at that time, to go to Paul and to baptize and heal him (Acts 9:3-18). This was not an easy thing for Ananias to do then (v 13-14), and it is not easy for us to deal with repentant "big sinners" now. But it is sometimes our Father's will.

Some religious leaders once tried to trap our Savior in his talk, so He gave them a parable of two sons, one rejected his father's command when he gave it, but then later obeyed it; the second promised to obey, but did not (Matt 21:28-30).

*"Which of the two did the will of his father?" They [the religious leaders] said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you (Matthew 21:31).*

Here, the King of the Kingdom of God declares that these known sinners, the tax collectors and harlots, will be in the Kingdom before the "respectable"

religious leaders. Christ was not afraid to talk to any of them, and he loved them enough to try to help them.

Finally, we can be sure that many more "big sinners" became members of the early church:

*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1Cor 6:9-11).*

The list above shows the kind of people who became believers, and the kind of people we can work with today. Yes, we can help homosexuals recover, drunkards and drug-pushers as well. We cannot do it for them—they must want to repent, but we should not classify one sin as worse than another when the Old Testament taught the death penalty for both. While murderers are not listed here, both Christ and Stephen forgave the people who were killing them at the time (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60). We can work with all of these people—observing the cautions in the last section.

### Who Should I Help?

Lots of people in this present age have lots of big difficulties. We all know that we cannot help them all. Who should we help? Where should we start? Christ gives more valuable teaching on the subject in Luke 15, where he is again "taking heat" for eating with "sinners":

*Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with*

*them."*

*So He spoke this parable to them, saying: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance (Luke 15:1-7).*

The sheep in this parable obviously represent people, and the shepherd a person who is responsible for them—a



leader of some kind. The obvious lesson is we should help anyone over whom we have authority—anyone who is listening to us. The sheep could be our children, members of our congregation, people who work for us, people who are economically dependant on us, etc. "To sin" means "to miss the mark"—lost sheep have missed it big time. If our sheep have major difficulties, we should leave the stable ones to go after the lost. The rest of Luke 15 contains the parable of the "prodigal son", the young man that squandered his inheritance on riotous living. The good father made no effort to help the son while he was away, sinning and not listening. When the son lost everything, repented and

returned, the father rejoiced greatly and made a feast for him. Even though the other faithful son was offended by this show of compassion, he is not harmed by it—all that the father had still belongs to the faithful son. The lesson for us is that parents need to do all they can to help their sinning children when they are listening! Neither Jesus nor the apostles forced themselves on people who did not want to hear. Some repented immediately upon hearing their preaching, others took a while. But when children are listening, we need to talk.

Matthew chapter 18 also contains the story of the lost sheep, but then relates another related lesson about helping sinners. It says that we should try to help fellow believers who are sinning against us. After all, we are a first-hand witness to their sin:

*“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother”* (Matthew 18:15).

Finally, Luke 19:2-10 relates the story of Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector who was a short man and climbed a tree to see Jesus just out of curiosity. Jesus told him to get down from the tree because He was going to stay at his house. Zacchaeus repented of his sin, gave half of his wealth to the poor and restored what he had overcharged to others. Except for the apostles that he chose, Jesus rarely singled out people to call them to repentance—but he did that here. We must acknowledge that at times, there are people whom God specifically shows us need our help.

To summarize, the Scriptures teach that the substantial sinners we should help are ones who are listening, specifically:

1. our children
2. people for whom we are responsible
3. other believers who sin against us
4. people to whom God directs us

### Who Should I Avoid?

There are generally these types of people with great sins who should be avoided:

1. Fellow believers who will not listen to their congregation
2. people who are harmful to others
3. people we find we are enabling to continue in sin

The verses after the above Matthew 18 quote say:

*“But if he [the one sinning against you] will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector”* (Matthew 18:16-17).

When someone will not hear the church, they need to be excluded so they will see the seriousness of their sin. An immoral man who had his own father’s wife was excluded from the Corinthian congregation until he repented, and then he was welcomed back (2 Corinthians 2:7). Similarly, Paul had to remove Hymenaeus and Alexander for their blasphemy. John gives the general instruction:

*If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that* (John 5:16).

The apostles Peter, Paul and John all explained that there were some who had departed from the truth so far that there was little that could be done for them (Philippians 3:17-20; 2 Peter 2:20-22; 2 John 1:10-11). When a person once understood the scripture and once had the Holy Spirit, they are accountable to a much higher standard.

Whenever there is a sinner, there is some chance that he will repeat the sin. We must not pointlessly subject others to great danger in an effort to help a sinner. Christ taught us to “turn the other cheek” or give up our clothing in cases where giving up our rights might bring a person closer to God. (Matthew 5:39-45). If someone steals a small item from us, or calls us a bad name, we are big enough to handle that. But we do not



want practicing murderers, adulterers, homosexuals, etc. to practice on us!

When Paul was preaching the Gospel to Sergius Paulus, a roman

proconsul, Elymas the sorcerer tried to stop Paul (Acts 13:6-12). He made no effort to help Elymas in his sin, but struck him with blindness. Elymas was not interested in repentance and his presence would have thwarted the work of Paul. There were numerous other places where people tried to stop Paul from teaching, stone him or cause trouble in other ways. These were unbelievers, who knew little of God and who were not interested in learning. Paul tried to stay away from them and said that God would judge them:

*Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works* (2 Timothy 4:14).

We must make a realistic assessment of the danger to ourselves and others that a person might cause if we try to help them. We should seek God in prayer on these matters. The strengths and weaknesses of others involved also matter a great deal. For example, a person

*continued on page 21*

# Wrestling With Evil

*In* his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul puts our struggle against evil in a proper perspective:

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Ephesians 6:12).

From this straight forward statement, we realize that the problem of evil is much worse than dealing with human beings. Humans are only the vehicle of choice that is used at attempts to derail the Christian in his walk, and the activities of the Church of God. The spiritual powers at work to destroy a Christian are fueled by beings with mental capacities that exceed the physical, including the degree of wickedness. You cannot reason with evil nor negotiate a peace.

This passage of scripture is introduced with the admonition to stay strong in His power:

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might* (Ephesians 6:1).

The use of power in this case is the passive form, that is, it is beyond our capability to muster. It is power from without. Strong is in the present tense. The Lord's power is constant as the battle rages on. This is about spiritual warfare, and the battle is for the control of the heart and mind. Christians, in a sense, are those who are disloyal to the Adversary who is Satan, and this has not escaped his attention. Satanic control of the heart and mind does not come instantly, but through Satan's "wiles", that is by definition, through his patiently applied stratagem, that has an end goal that

we would hand control, and therefore loyalty, back over to him.

Christians are in this battle and cannot hide from it or refuse participation. One side or another is going to win. The Father of Lights will win by our submission to Him having our minds transformed to holiness and purity, or the powers of darkness will win if the Christian hands his mind over to the control of the Evil One. One must win, and great is the battle—the stakes are high. A God's life died for you and was given at much cost (a cost only truly understood by those who have a capacity for love). For the adversarial powers, their last tiny realm of existence, a hatred for anything that threatens their kingdom, must be destroyed; a motivation only understood by those who adhere to the same rules. More on this as we progress.

This article is about awareness. Knowing the motivation and subsequent behavior of evil designed against the Church of God and the awareness of it, will help protect us from immeasurable damage. When counseled to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:11), Paul is not speaking in mild terms. The evil day in verse 13 of the same chapter is any evil day in which we encounter it. The motivation behind evil is likely only fully understood by God, but we are not left ignorant of what we are wrestling with. Paul and Timothy claimed not to be ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Corinthians 2:11), and we are given the task of maturing, and being able to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14):

*But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their*

*senses exercised to discern both good and evil* (Hebrews 5:14).

This statement in Hebrews implies that the distinction between good and evil is not always easy to detect. In the context given, the writer is concerned with dull minds (slow and forgetful), contrasted to those that are sharp, by being exercised and ready and with discernment. The line between good and evil may take a spiritual mind to understand.

## Satan's Motivation

Satan is passionate about his kingdom. From scripture he is described as the ruler of this world, and he makes this claim himself that this world and its nations are under his control, and his to give. (Luke 4:5-7) With your eyes opened to the Truth of God, receiving God's Holy Spirit, and walking in the light, you represent the Kingdom that will replace Satan's. The Christian is also beloved of God and precious. These reasons alone make the Christian a target.

The Church of God is the Pillar of Truth on the Earth, and as such is a target to be destroyed if at all possible. Nothing is sacred, and Satan and his house will use all means at his disposal in an attempt to frustrate the Kingdom of God's progress.

Christians represent, and can evoke the same power that is taking it all away from Satan permanently. We should not be so naïve to think he is going to quietly wait this out. Tyrannical kings and despots who have ruled on this earth now and in the past, who know they will not be around forever, rage wars against opposing forces within and without with all who threaten their domain, and take their war to the extreme. Their behavior did not come about independent of Satan,



their motivation was inherited. In recent history we have witnessed the scorched earth policy of Saddam Hussein who set over 600 oil wells on fire without regard to the environment or if they could put them out (protected by land mines). Do not underestimate the extremes the evil in men will go.

**Evil is Complicated**

Dealing with Evil is a complicated matter. We cannot wish it away nor pretend it is not there. It exists and is very real. As sheep we tend to default to conflict avoidance where at all possible, but as sheep we are paradoxically called to be brave.

**First Complication:  
Evil Can Transform Itself  
to Appear Good**

*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).*

Why do Satan and his ministers transform themselves into messengers of light? Because this strategy does work. It takes spiritual insight to sense that there is something not quite right. In the context this was given, the false teachers coming to the Corinthians desired to be highly regarded among them, and found it necessary to boast to achieve that end, even playing on their sympathies, claiming to be victims. They boasted in their righteousness, their service, and who was supporting them. They were winning over the affections of the Corinthians away from Jesus Christ to become loyal to their ministries. When you receive letters or material from an organization that promotes their ministries (financial

wherewithal, personalities and successes) more than they glorify the Lord, they should be treated with suspicion. When we value toleration so highly and practice it so widely in the Church we need to learn from Paul's example to call a spade a spade. Elders of discerning spirit are responsible to faithfully do the same if they are going to protect the naïve.

**Second Complication:  
Entangled False Brethren**

In the parable of the Tares, Jesus identified tares as "*sons of the wicked One.*" (Mathew 13:38) As sons they have the mind that Christ says they inherited from the Devil. This may not have been such a problem if the roots of the tares were not intertwined with the wheat. Removal of the tares will likely uproot and destroy the wheat. True and false brethren have relationships, and there are loyalties. This is a problem, and a severe complication.

**Third Complication:  
Sleeper Cells in the Church**

We are familiar with terrorist sleeper cells, they stay relatively dormant until called upon by their leaders. The goal is not to pull them out of the presence of the church body, but to remain in the brethren's midst. Speaking of brethren whose minds have been won over by Satan, Paul hopes that

*"...they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his(Satan's) will" ( 2 Timothy 2:26).*

These individuals unwittingly serve the enemy, believing they are doing the Lord a service, and they are called upon at their master's convenience.



**Fourth Complication:  
Pathetic in Vision**

Another problem with Evil is that it is pathetic in vision. Perhaps this needs more explanation. Satan's Kingdom is tiny. In fact, a tiny spec of nothing compared to the vision of the Kingdom that has been in place from the beginning, but oh how Satan defends it. When we realistically look at Creation, and God's promise of the kingdom that will have no end (Isaiah 9:7), Satan's realm comes into perspective. Even now we are told the visible universe is 15 billion light years in expanse, an incomprehensible size to perceive by human limitations, and the earth is relatively infinitesimal by comparison; it can be circumnavigated by land and sea transportation in 80 days according to the popular story.

We see this played out in our realm of existence all the time. Men and their kingdoms, their institutions, and their churches, being claimed and defended. Despots of history have known to go to excessive means in actions and in word, designed to intimidate, punish and marginalize all who they even perceive to oppose them. This is all played out again and again; it is just a matter of scale. From a proper vantage point, evil is most pathetic indeed.

Our focus for awareness is not the world at large, because this behavior plays itself out in the Church of God, which is our area of concern. False leaders are driven to ascend, and control what they believe to be theirs and unwittingly are, or become, servants of the devil their master.

**Driven or Led by the Spirit**

With this background we can look at the Church of God today and ask the question: who are and who are not serving the Head of the Church in their leadership capacity?

*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but*

*inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits (Matthew 7:15,16).*

Coming in sheep's clothing implies innocent in appearance and approach. They may be very helpful and generous, participating in activities and zealous for the Truth. There is no need to be suspicious of that because their fruit will ultimately show, and it is the fruits which are ultimately of value. (John 15:8) We can be sure false brethren will produce bad fruit, and the genuine will produce good fruit (Matthew 7:16-20). Embedded in this passage of scripture is a commandment, you will know them by their fruits. This is not a guessing game. Jesus expects us to obey His words, and that is to identify false teachers when it becomes evident.

However, the Church of God has had a history of disobeying Jesus Christ when the fruits of leaders in groups and organizations become manifest, even when the damage is being done. They even attach themselves to them with blind loyalty. To ask ourselves why, is to try to find out the temptation. What is the temptation? We will attempt to answer it here.

Have you ever met a driven person? In the world of business and government they are the leaders, movers and establishers of organizations. They build companies or institutions, provide jobs and opportunities. They are motivated to meet goals, to reach a vision, and perhaps make something of themselves. Drive can bring fortunate results to the driver and those who support him. Many people including myself have benefited by such individuals. Drive is in many respects what God has given us in the way of motivation (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Driven-ness to serve the Lord can be found in various ministries, now and in the past, and the Lord has directed such driven-ness to do to His will. The apostles Paul and Peter come to mind, and some ministries of today.

Driven-ness however, when left unchecked, can bring unfortunate results as well. Uncontrolled drive may become a constant concern about image and symbols of accomplishment. And and there is always a price to pay.

It appears evident from experience and scripture that the drivers amongst men can be the type of individuals who have "ravenous" needs to be met. These individuals can be either called or not called by God. If called by God, it is when their drive continually supersedes their calling, when they get to far ahead of the Head, is when the trouble starts. They see opportunity to command respect of the less capable sheep and of their peers. They bypass the process that Jesus Christ has ordained for growth of the individual and of the church. They begin to control and filter the activities under their oversight. They absolutely believe in their own lie, and there will be no disputing their motives, which to them are pure.

"Within a few years of the founding of almost all religious groups, they begin to take on the characteristics of the average business corporation. Nepotism reigns; they become ingrown and far removed from the thinking of their constituencies...It was the nature of Jesus to be given to persons. It is the nature of organizations to be given to self-preservation... Anyone with fresh insight or a prophetic word is stoned verbally or excluded from their Jerusalem (headquarters of the group). Only those who fit the prescribed pattern survive."(The Jesus Style, Gayle E. Erwin p.159)

Now the business world enters the Church world. Subordinates must obey and submit to organizational rules in which the uncontrolled driver has ascended. Over time, success and the vision and all that an uncontrolled driver does is about satisfying the driver himself—he is not concerned with satisfying the Head of the Church.

We should understand that growth is good, in numbers and in programs, and will be a blessing if it is ordained by God, that is, done by His process. When growth and progress come about by drivenness, it can become a curse. Goals must be met to maintain the reputation of the goal maker, and people are used to meet those goals. Obstacles must be dealt with, and with ever decreasing sensitivity. Over time it will become evident to some that there is a non negotiable agenda that becomes supreme above all else. Where there is opposition in the ranks, they will soon discover and be confronted by the fact that the driver needs to win. Not just to win, but to win big, and win at all costs if necessary. When others do not share the vision, are deemed insubordinate, or leave the organization they can be viewed as competition.

So we return to the question. What is the temptation to support and enable uncontrollably driven leaders? It is because they get things done. They accomplish objectives. In summary, they have made themselves indispensable. With them a loyal inner circle develops. Loyalty trumps righteous conduct and judgment. Fear of man trumps the fear of the Lord. The uncontrollably driven, though they carry with them the all the traits for a disastrous relationship, there is no action without them.. A trail of dead bodies is often found in their wake. There are also some un-negotiable terms that are dictated by God, that the driver in all of us should take heed to know.

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God (Romans 8:14).*

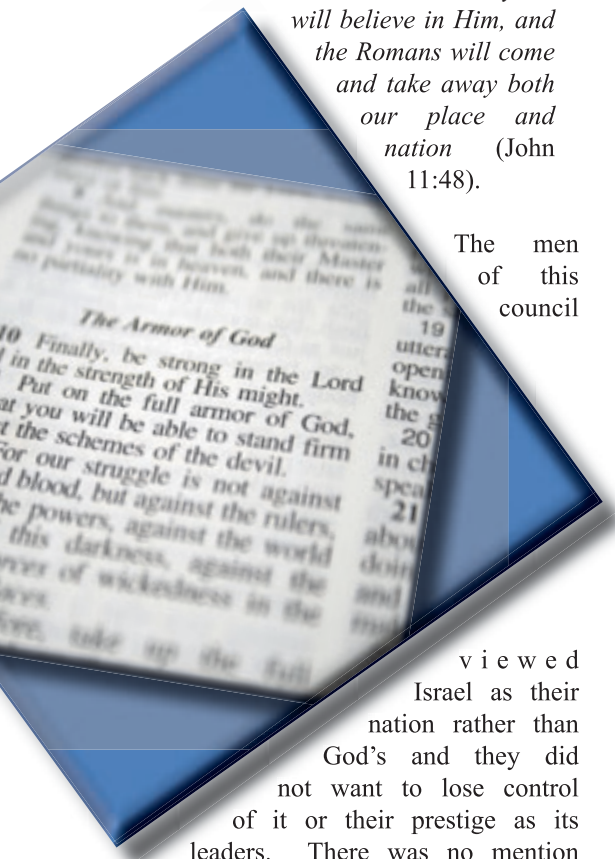
In Romans 8 worldly motivation is sharply contrasted to being led by the Spirit. If we are not led by the Spirit of God, we are serving the flesh, and it doesn't matter if we believe it is in Christ's service.

**Biblical Examples of the Uncontrollably Driven The Religious Elite:**

In John Chapter 11 we read the testimony of Lazarus being raised from the dead. After this event many believed in Jesus, and His growing popularity did not go unnoticed by the religious establishment. The Pharisees perceived Jesus as a threat to their institution. They were not interested in the goodness Jesus' ministry brought to the people, for it was not on their terms:

*Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation" (John 11:48).*

The men of this council



viewed Israel as their nation rather than God's and they did not want to lose control of it or their prestige as its leaders. There was no mention here for the welfare of the people. Caiaphas appears to be impatient with his colleagues' hesitancy in the solution to the problem to dispose of Jesus permanently. He felt Jesus' sacrifice was necessary for the welfare of the nation, by which he meant its leaders. Although

Jesus' sacrificial death was precisely God's intention, it was for different reasons. This institutional groupthink continues today, and again it's a matter of scale. The result of the meeting was to plot the death of Jesus (John 11:53).

Christ recognized the fruits of these individuals before. Speaking to the Pharisees:

*You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. (John 8:44).*

**Diotrephes**

*I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words (3 John 9).*

In the third epistle of John we are given a small account of Diotrephes. From John's brief letter, we understand Diotrephes is one who promoted himself more than the person of Jesus Christ. He rejected John the apostle because John challenged his preeminence. John was a threat. He lied about John, with lies very believable. Diotrephes use of malicious words was to project the seriousness of his cause against John.

But as stated earlier, driven types like Diotrephes need to win and win big. They are not content with small margins of victory:

*And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church (3 John 10).*

To protect his sphere of influence, he rejected believers associated with John. Moreover, if anyone disagreed with Diotrephes, particularly

in his view of John, he dismissed them from the church.

We are going to take specific note that Diotrephes had the authority to put others out of the church, and that authority was given to him by brethren being willfully ignorant of the fruits he exhibited. The temptation for them was likely the same for us today to allow dictators and bullies to continue. Diotrephes baptized, he anointed, he prayed and he taught. He organized, and mentored others. Yes, in sheep's clothing and we can be sure he was convinced he was serving the Lord and His people, but he was only serving his own belly. Diotrephes is as we described, a pathetic figure in history doing all he could to dominate his tiny world. John is not amused, and in verse 11 he gives his reader some straight talk we are trying to convey in this article:

*He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God (3 John 11).*

**A Matter to be Taken Seriously**

We often don't take the matter of false teachers and their teaching seriously enough. An account of Paul's concern is given in Acts 20 before his departure for Ephesus:

*For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears (Acts 20: 29-3).*

*continued on page 16*

## Ask Norm!

Dear Norman Edwards,

### Does God Believe What Most Christians Believe?

I happened upon your website and read a little and found the information to be interesting. Having attended various churches over a long lifetime, I have come to realize that human beings, although often very sincere will differ in what they consider to be “truth”, and often radically. The division of beliefs among people is as diverse as human personalities. What no human being can be responsible for is the origin of their physical birth, and because of that, all people are indoctrinated and programmed from birth primarily based upon the culture they are born into. If one were born in India, they most likely would be brought up to believe in Hinduism or Buddhism, and if one were born in many different Arab countries, then one would be brought up to believe in Islam primarily. Others are born into Judaism, Christianity (with its many diverse beliefs, teachings, customs and traditions) and so forth. If one is born in some parts of the world, their life may be running naked in the jungles and live a life captive to their particular group.

It would seem to my reason that God Almighty is more likely to think quite differently than we as Christians believe, because much of the world was not born into Christian beliefs. In reality, what we all primarily believe is simply what others have spoken into our hearing or what we have read



Questions?  
[asknorm@shepherdsvoicemagazine.org](mailto:asknorm@shepherdsvoicemagazine.org)

through ink on paper and we think it is true.

A: Thank you for your studied observations. I agree with them thus far. The Bible indicates that God judge’s people based upon what they know. The people of Nineveh were not condemned because they disobeyed the Old Testament, which they did not have. They knew they were doing wrong and their king proclaimed: “let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands” (Jonah 3:8). In the parable of the talents (Luke 19:12-27), Christ judged a man based on the “words out of your own mouth” (Luke 19:22), not on principles he did not know.

He also said “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains” (John 9:41). Even the “seven churches” in Revelation 2 & 3 are judged differently based upon their circumstances. Christians make a big mistake when they judge those without the Bible in the same way that they would judge themselves. Nevertheless, Christ will judge all men based upon what they have done.

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly

seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). Nearly every religion recognizes the Golden Rule (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:43; 19:19; 22:39). Christ’s parable of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46) shows people with no knowledge of Him can be judged by how they treat their neighbors—and that the good or evil they do, they are unknowingly doing to Christ.

### Can We Trust the Bible When It Claims to Speak For God?

Even what is called “the Bible” is INK on PAPER, and because writers of past ages made such claims as “thus saith the Lord” or “all scripture is given by inspiration of God” and similar statements, millions have believed that God in heaven is the author. None of us living today are personal witnesses to anything from Genesis to Revelation, but we have been indoctrinated to believe that these writings are the “infallible and inerrant word of God.” For those of us who do believe in Jesus Christ, we do so by FAITH and there is no other option or possibility, since Jesus Christ has not appeared to any of us in a physical form and spoken with us verbally and told us what absolute truth is.

Human beings have always from thousands of years ago, put words in the mouth of God that God never spoke and virtually any writer in history could easily pen the words “thus saith the Lord”, “God commanded”, “God spoke”, “God said”, “God told me”, “the Holy Spirit told me” or any number of similar phrases, and cause the readers of such writings to think that God is the source, when it is entirely possible that He was not.

A: This is where true Biblical Christianity differs from any other

“religion”. The God of the Bible is not one contained in books. He is active, living; able to speak to today through His Holy Spirit, dreams, visions, prophets, angels and His own voice. The Bible does not say His revelations are over and we are left to understand Him only through uncertain writings. Rather we are to use those writings as examples to ask God to speak to us and work with us now. Some might say, “If God still speaks to people, let him speak to me right now.” He is not our court magician, available to perform miraculous feats at our command. Rather, He is the Creator and King of the universe.

He says “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13). Jesus likens His Kingdom to a field with buried treasure or a pearl of great price for which a person labors diligently to obtain (Matthew 13:44-46). If you wanted to purchase a fantastic piece of real estate today and simply sold the wealthy owner “I wanna buy that”, you might not get an answer from him either. But if you did your homework—diligently researched legal and financial requirements wrote a proposal—then the owner would listen and respond.

This writer has personally experienced, as well as spoken with many other believers who have been instructed by God in our day, through His Spirit, His voice, dreams, visions, prophecies, casting lots and miraculous occurrences. Can we prove to the world that these were all intervention from God? No. In some cases, there is little remaining evidence, or the evidence can be easily but falsely discredited, such as the resurrection of Jesus Christ was (Matt 28:11-15). But I witnessed enough evidence to convince me it was God, and so my other believing friends each received enough evidence

to convince them. And that is all that is necessary, as each believer must seek a relationship with God himself or herself, and we receive the miraculous evidence that convinces them.

What stops one from interpreting normal events as messages from God or pretending God has spoken to them when He has not? Nothing! If people are foolish enough to try to place God’s stamp of approval on their own will for their own lives, they deserve whatever misguided beliefs and sufferings that will come as a result. If one does not believe that the whole Bible is true, then he should ask God to show him whether it is true or not—and be prepared to live by it if He does.

#### **Are the Bible and Other Holy Books the Source of the World’s Trouble?**

LYING SCRIBES and religious teachers have for thousands of years seduced millions of people by putting words in the mouth of God that God never spoke. Men will most likely forever argue over what is called “the Bible” and interpret it in as many different ways as there are pieces of sand upon the seashores of the beaches of the world. It is my personal belief after a lifetime of reading the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and over and over and over for years that in fact the Bible is NOT infallible and inerrant. It is the “Holy” books of the major religions of the world that are the source and foundation for massive human problems.

A: Non-biblical holy books certainly are a foundation for massive human problems—that is why the Bible condemns false religion. I have also read the Bible numerous times, with the purpose of establishing my beliefs from it, as opposed to “Christian” teaching—even though

my friends and family believed other things. I agree that most “Christian” teachers have taught their own doctrines to maintain their wealth and power, falsely claiming they were found in the Bible. This has been a great source of suffering. But the New Testament does not establish a separate minister/priest class of people who are the only ones who can perform certain functions or who are authorized to demand money from the other people. It teaches a man’s personal relationship with God.

If you are claiming that the Bible itself has been radically altered over the years, the historical facts do not support your conclusion. Rueben Swanson has published a series of books that contain all of the significant variations of the hundreds of New Testament Greek manuscripts.

While there are lots of differences in spellings of names, and in pronouns and connecting words, you will find it virtually impossible to come up with any significantly different doctrine no matter which manuscripts you choose. In numerous places, Christ and the New Testament writers quote from the Old Testament and accept it as inspired. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide us with copies of the Old Testament that are older than the New Testament.

Therefore, we do not need to worry about whether somebody changed the Old Testament, because we know that Christ accepted essentially the same Hebrew version that has been translated into English today.

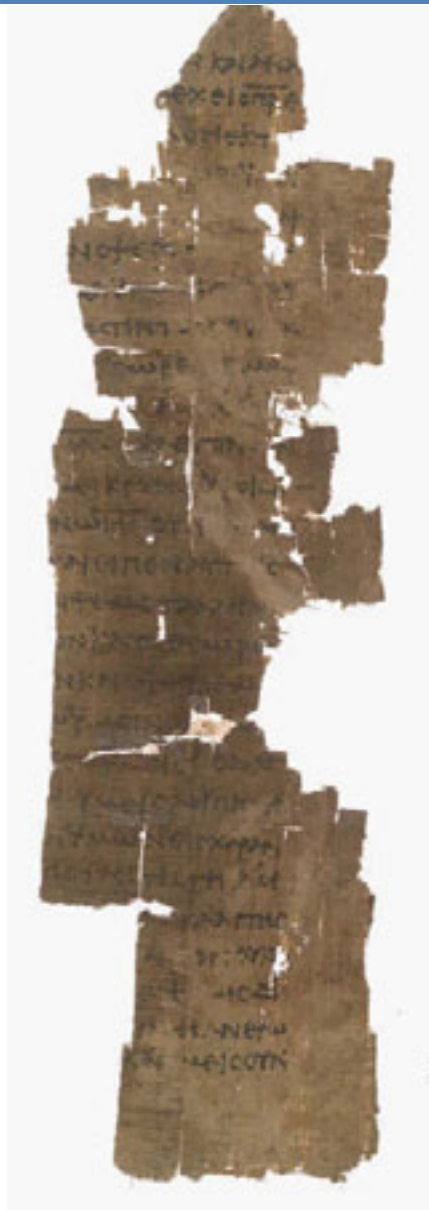
#### **Is God “Barbaric” in the Old Testament?**

I am a believer in Jesus Christ and based upon the four Gospels, His primary teaching is about LOVE, COMPASSION, MERCY, EMPATHY

and HUMILITY. That makes sense to my logic, where many of the other writings in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments do not. I consider the Old Testament as portraying God in such a barbaric manner, that it defies human conscience, as does the fictional book of “Revelation.”

A: Christ taught the best way is love, compassion, etc. as you describe. But how does He, or how do we, solve the problem of people who are evil toward others? Should the man or nation most skilled at war be able to continually take from those who are peaceful producers? Should those with continually destructive habits such as lying, cheating, substance abuse and immorality be permitted to forever make their own lives and the lives of others miserable? Or should God remove free will and force everyone to do good all the time? Old and New Testaments show us that God allows people to do evil to themselves and others hoping they will see the effects of their evil and repent. When they do not repent, He sends a judgment—sometimes a plague or “natural” event, sometimes an invasion from another nation. Death is not an end, because God promises to raise everyone from the dead (John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:12-13).

All four Gospels contain numerous references to Christ’s judgment on evil doers, including the great prophetic chapters (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) which contain statements like: “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). The trials that God allows are for our good. “‘For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom



a father does not chasten?” (Hebrews 12:6-7). The purpose of this life is to become like Christ so that we can live and reign with Him. “If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us” (2 Timothy 2:12).

#### **Ananias and Sapphira Struck Dead for Lying: Is the Story Fake?**

My senses tell me that the real inventors of the Bible, sought to instill FEAR of religious and secular rulers in the minds of human beings. For example in the story about Ananias

and Sapphira supposedly being struck dead at the feet of Peter over lying and \$money matters, it is such a contradiction to what Jesus taught, that I have to regard it with total suspicion and, in fact, as pure fiction. How interesting that the Roman Catholic Church traces (falsely) its origin to Peter and no doubt whoever really “inspired” the Ananias and Sapphira fairy tale, had ulterior motives to cause people to FEAR the future coming “Popes” and “pastors” of the church world.

A: While the Catholic Church may claim to have an unbroken line of popes all the way back to Peter, the extensive writing of the “Ante-Nicene and Nicene Church Fathers” shows this not to be the case. There was no strong central control of the Christian Church during the first four centuries—indeed the Bishop at Rome had title “first among equals”. The “Supreme Pontiff” title and “infallibility” came much later.

But we have portions of manuscripts of Acts from as early as 250 A.D. The manuscripts we have do not show a gradual addition of stories, but a whole document that emerged, and then was copied—with only very minor variation. You can check this yourself in New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Acts by Reuben Swanson (1996, Paperback, ISBN 0865850550): This book contains every significant Greek manuscript, and you will find none without the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. There are also ancient papyrus fragments, known as P8 (pictured here) and P57 which contain this exact story. The problem is not the Bible; the problem is people don’t believe it! Acts 5 does not say that Peter killed Ananias and Sapphira or that church leaders have authority to kill members. It says they died—an “act of God”. To

which many people will say, “How awful of God to do that!” But was it? Ananias and Sapphira were not whole-hearted believers. They claimed they were giving their all to the church, like others, but kept some of the money so that they could both have their needs taken care of by the church, and have extra money on the side. This was the first “church corruption” and God “nipped it in the bud.” It stopped people from joining the church unless they were completely committed (Acts 5:11-13).

But whether it is mankind’s complaints about God’s “awful” deeds or due to his own wisdom, God generally no longer strikes people dead who engage in “church corruption”. Church leaders, through the ages have oppressed the brethren and embezzled money—the very conditions which your letter acknowledges. “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil (Eccl 8:11). We can be strange at times: we do not want evil, but nor do we want those who do evil to be corrected.

### **Are Moses Earthquake and Revelation Fiction?**

We even read in the Old Testament a similar FEAR based fairy tale, where supposedly God opened up the ground and swallowed some folks for voicing opinions contrary to Moses. I regard this myth as pure fiction. And the book of “Revelation” while extremely interesting reading, presents such a contradiction to Jesus Christ’s teachings and His personal role-model that this book has to be authored not by Jesus Christ, but by some unknown author.

A: I disagree completely. History tells of hundreds of earthquakes swallowing

many thousands of people. Christ and his apostles frequently said he would return to judge the nations. Christ died because he claimed that he would “come in the clouds of heaven with power—that he will “sit on the right hand of the power” (Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; 22:69). He is both a loving servant and a reigning king and judge!

### **Are Human Religions and Governments All Corrupt?**

In the latter part of my life, I conclude that 100% of all religions and 100% of all human governments are man-made institutions. It was NEVER meant that human beings should rule over their fellow man and it is the love of power, control and the endless flow of free money (from tithes and taxes, interest on mortgages and so forth), that drives the power-hungry to dominate the lives and thinking of the masses. Religion is just as much a tool of control as are governments of men and they are alike in many ways.

A: As long as you are referring to institutionalized religions, I agree completely! I do not believe that the Bible teaches denominations—groups of people that agree to a doctrinal statement, leadership structure and a church organization that promises salvation or spiritual benefit to its members. True believers are those who have repented, surrendered themselves to God, received His Holy Spirit and are living their lives for him. They may or may not work within some human organization.

### **Is Our Own Concept of God Better than the Bible?**

The so called Bible actually presents such a distorted perspective of God, especially in the Old Testament, Revelation and even some in the New

Testament that it is next to impossible to really SEE God for who He really is. Amazingly, Jesus Christ stated “IF YOU HAVE SEEN ME, YOU HAVE SEEN THE FATHER” and that is so profound that it proves that it is NOT the Old Testament or the “apostle” Paul or “Revelation” or anything or anyone else who portrays the real Father God, other than Jesus Christ. And yet it is entirely possible that men put words in the mouth of Jesus that Jesus never spoke and so the four Gospels also are most likely a mixture of part truth and part human fabrication.

Best regards,  
Van Robison

A: Thank you for your honesty in this last paragraph. It seems you define God as how you see Him. Is each person free to create god in their own image? Is not that what kings and clerics have done through the ages? Have not they controlled and falsely interpreted the Scriptures to create a God that gave them the “divine right” to rule and to keep people in fear? That was clearly wrong. But others, apparently like you, advocate only “doing good” and never correcting evil. Neither system will work. That is why we need the God revealed in the Bible, not a god envisioned by one person.

The Bible teaches just judgment to “justify the righteous and condemn the wicked” (Deuteronomy 25:1). Even Christ taught, when comparing trees to men, “every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matthew 3:10). But He also gives power to live a righteous life: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12). We at the Port Austin Bible Campus have learned so much in the last 20 *continued on page 39*

*continued from page 11*

There appear to be two types of threatening individuals: Savage wolves: They will come from the outside with aggressive agenda. The flock will scatter and some will be destroyed. This is because some will fall prey and some will follow the True Shepherd and His voice.

Those from among us: They were likely called, but their drive and ideas (of self and doctrine) got them ahead of the Head. Paul warned them day and night with tears for a period of three years. It is not a stretch of the imagination that his consistent and emotional appeal was a result of their relative indifference to the problem. "No problem Paul, we'll identify these individuals quickly and nip it in the bud, we got it covered. Don't worry."

**You are Responsible**

For all in the Church of God, the message must now be abundantly clear from the pages of the Bible: Know Whom you serve. We all stumble over many things (James 3:2), but serving Jesus Christ leaves no room for enabling those with malicious intent by compromise.

The Devil plays for keeps, and it is not a game to play on his terms. James in his letter tells us to submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7), when we do this, the devil will not just step aside, but will flee (run away, vanish, shun) from you. To flee implies fear, but the devil is not afraid of you, but he is afraid of the power of the Lord's might that your obedience to the Lord evokes.

Therefore take on the whole armor of God. Partial armor will leave you vulnerable, and that vulnerability will be known. May God protect and preserve His people.



**God's Family Grows!**



Left to right: Elder Jim Patterson, Debbie Marquardt, Diane Steele from Missouri and Elder Duane Nicol.

The Chicagoland Church of God was blessed to serve the Lord in hosting several baptisms in the last 9 months. We are also fortunate to have a local YMCA right next door to our worship facilities in the historic downtown district of Naperville, and we are grateful for their ongoing co-operation.

We are excited to welcome them into God's family. Tristan Williams and Tina Blumenberg-Williams, and Amy VanHecke were baptized this past June. Just a few months prior to their baptism, Tristan and Tina were married with Elder Jim Patterson presiding.

This past February, Debbie Marquardt was baptized, and friend, Diane Steele came from Missouri to support her on this special occasion.

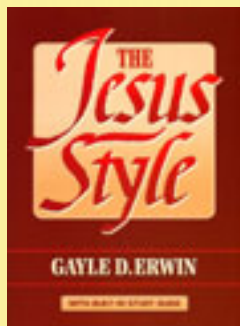


Front to back, left to right: Tristan and Tina Williams, Amy VanHecke, Elder Jim Patterson, Elder Duane Nicol, Edward Malone



## BOOK REVIEWS

### *The Jesus Style*

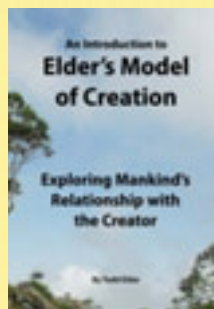


Gayle Erwin gives to us in his book *The Jesus Style* a refreshing, multifaceted and in-depth look at the life, humanity and servanthood of Jesus. He answers the question of ‘Who do you say I am?’ He also challenges his readers to reconsider the simple teachings of Jesus. It’s a book about choices, relationships, and love through the eyes and experience of Jesus. The author also uses *The Jesus Style* to compare what he discovers about Jesus’ lifestyle and mindset and exposes many modern day churches as power pyramids of self-serving and competitive leaders who desire to be master over others while feeding their insatiable pride. He shows how we claim to build our churches on the principal of not lording it over others but shows how religious organizations can be carbon copies of giant organizations. Erwin does show us the right way through Jesus’ example and if the church leaders would make an about face, putting on the mind of Jesus Christ, folks would flock to the churches and Christians would themselves become lovers of people, for this is what Jesus was about. Those wishing to serve in a leadership capacity in the Church of God will be well served in reading *The Jesus Style*.

*The Jesus Style* by Gayle. D. Erwin, 1988  
Reviewed by Jean Jantzen

### *An Introduction to Elder’s Model of Creation*

*Exploring Mankind’s Relationship with the Creator*



This writer found this an enjoyable and easy read. It is written in very simple language, but deals with some of the most important issues of life in a rather unique way. By the title one might think this is a scientific treatise (and there is some science in it), but the subtitle is really more descriptive of its contents.

The author shows that the real world we all live in is both physical and spiritual, and that the spiritual has a lot to do with the physical. He has proven to himself that there is a Creator and therefore a definite purpose for our lives. Being in harmony with that Creator and His purposes is what makes life truly worthwhile. He did not grow up with this view, but came to it through the struggles of life.

The author explores his creation model through 12 main aspects: The Almighty, the Scriptures, the original creation, physical life, spiritual life, mankind, covenant relationship, judgment, the Messiah, prophecy, the struggle against evil, and man-made traditions. All these things rightly approached will enhance our relationship with our Creator.

The book’s writer has a lot of practical Christian living ideas he shares throughout the book. On p. 17 he writes, “The sharing of personal testimonies and events that one has experienced or witnessed in life is one of the best ways possible to encourage other believers or to open the gospel message to non-believers. People can be defensive when taught or preached at, but they are often receptive to things that are personally shared.”

Another major theme of the book is learning to hear God’s voice in our personal daily lives. In the last chapter Todd shares some of his and his family’s experiences on the road to learning this in his own life. These are both interesting and informative.

In concluding the author states, “Life is precious! However, the value and beauty of life can be easily overlooked if a person does not have a relationship with the Creator. The hope and joy of living can be absent without understanding both the physical and spiritual aspects of Life.” This book shows us that many of the true values of life may not be what some of us thought they were.

This reviewer found this book very encouraging and enlightening.

*An Introduction to Elder’s Model of Creation*, by Todd Elder, 2011  
124 pp. with glossary  
Reviewed by Bill Buckman

## SUBMISSION: Key To UNITY and HARMONY

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord” - Ephesians 5:22

I am sure Paul’s words have caused more problems over the ages than he could possibly imagine. In order to truly understand Paul’s words we need to know who his particular audience is, why the need for the discussion, and the meaning of the word “submission”. I believe there is still confusion about this small, but noteworthy word in the Church of God today. Forty-two years ago when I was called into the church, this subject of submission was certainly significant in the eyes of the ministry and the men. I knew it would be problematic for me and pleaded with God to have much patience. Some men, misinterpreting Paul’s instruction, just about gloated in their power and control over their wives. I struggled for a while with this concept of submission and what it meant to be a godly wife, for they never preached the truth about the meaning of this word, but used it as a means of controlling their wives.

### What does submit mean?

*Origin: 1325–75; Middle English submitten < Latin submittere to lower, reduce, yield, equivalent to sub- sub- + mittere to send*

Submission in the Dictionary is defined as to give over or yield to the power or authority of another ; to defer to another’s judgment, opinion, decision, etc.: *I submit to your superior judgment.* It appears in various English Bible translations other than the King James Version (and even sometimes in the King James) as “subordinate,” “obey,” “subject to,” “submit,” “surrender,” “be weak,” “afflicted,” “humbled,” “put under,” and “stay in your place.”

When sin entered into the world in the Garden, Adam and Eve’s distinctive roles were blurred and their harmonious

relationship distorted. Sadly lacking God’s truth, men and women have been in a power struggle, and in confusion as to how to fulfill their god-given roles; each fighting for supremacy or control over the other.

Even in the nineteenth century we read about these sexist controversies. “Through various methods of analyzing the brain, many craniologists and neuro-anatomists sought to give merit to Darwin’s ideas of female inferiority.

Both groups studied skulls and the cranial regions of cadavers. Male and female brains look and operate in the same fashion, but male brains were relatively larger. According to these scientists, this difference proved women did not have the mental capacity of men. Reporting as much as a 12% to 19% difference in brain weight and size, they reassured men that they would never lose their evolutionary edge.” *19<sup>th</sup> Century Science & the Woman Question.* (tripod.com)

Women had to fight for the right to vote and to gain some workplace and social equality which led to what we have come to know as the feminist movement. But God knew the way things should be. He intended not competition between the sexes, but husband and wife to complete one another and become half of the whole and to complement one another. It is important to note the status of women in the Jewish Community during the first century. They were not treated as slaves or second-class citizens within their home, as we have been led to believe in order to substantiate the kind of submission some churches tried to teach women.

Quite the opposite. According to Rachel D. Levine, (currently working on a Ph.D.

*in Judaic Studies from Union University)* states in *Women in First Century Judaism*: “Within her home and family, the Jewish woman enjoyed the highest possible status. Her responsibilities were numerous, and she was accorded great honor by her husband and children.

Unlike the chattel wives in surrounding societies, she was considered an equal partner in the running of the household. Her virtues were expounded in Proverbs 31:10-31; in fact, to this day, religious Jewish men recite these verses of praise to their wives every week at the start of the Sabbath.” (www.bravehost.com) If this is the case, why would Paul need to give such detailed instruction to the church in Ephesus? What exactly did Paul mean when he gave his instructions to the body of believers in the Ephesus Community? Did he mean women were inferior to their husbands? Did he mean within the marriage they had a master/slave relationship? We need to know the religious background of these Ephesian couples.

Ephesus had a population of 250,000, one of the largest cities in the Mediterranean World. “The Ephesians were surprisingly modern in their social relations. They allowed strangers to integrate. Education was much valued. Through the cult of Artemis, the city also became a bastion of women’s rights.” *Wikipedia Encyclopedia.* (www.Wikipedia.org)

Speaking to the Ephesus Church, Paul gives us a clue to the problems he was facing as an apostle of Jesus Christ:

*Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in*

*the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:11-12).*

“It was commonly believed at Ephesus that the original founders of the city were Amazons, and that the present residents were descended from these Amazons. An “AMAZON, was one of a race of warlike women who made slaves of the men they captured. According to ancient Greek tradition, ....The largest city they built was Ephesus. There they built many magnificent temples for the worship of Ares and Artemis.” *The World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, article by Padraic Colum, pg. 344.

“The Amazons are believed by some historians to have been real women whose exploits were magnified into myth. These Amazons are reported to have believed they were not only equal to men, but far superior to men! Therefore, proponents of the Amazons’ goddess Diana taught female superiority, and this background was causing marital problems for the Christian couples of Ephesus!” (Church of God, Dallas - Fort Worth)

Can you imagine home life in Ephesus? A boy or girl would grow up in a household of strong, overbearing, strong-willed women who dominated and controlled the weak, pathetic father figure. These children witnessed the ineffectual character of the father who lacked leadership qualities. As adults these same children would fall into the same behavior patterns of their parents. We, too, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, can empathize with these men and women and understand the difficulties and challenges facing them as they turned to Christ and a whole new way of thinking and living. We also have faced these same challenges when discovering the truth. The thought of submitting to a man must have been very difficult, for proper

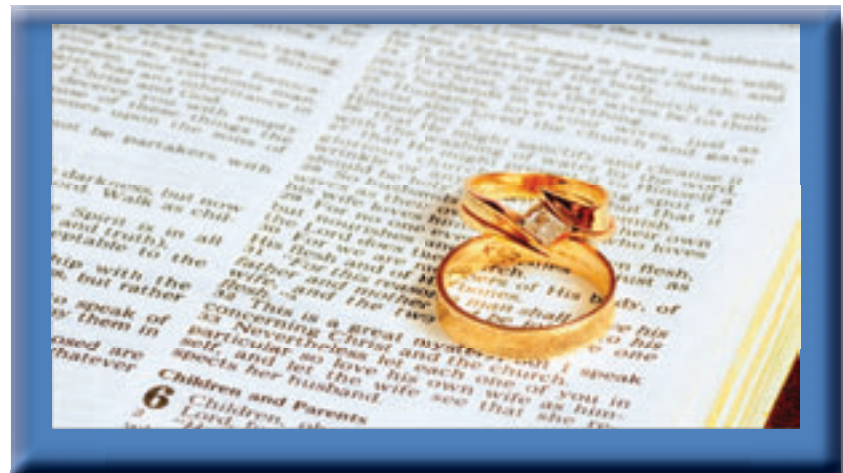
role models were sadly lacking in the first century.

Paul had his work cut out for him with teaching this foreign concept to both the men and the women on how to have a godly marital relationship. Once in the Church of God these couples needed to know what God expected of them within marriage. Paul tells men to love their wives. This is why Paul devotes much time and preaching to this subject. “*And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*” – verse 21. This is a whole new lifestyle and mental and spiritual mindset. The adjustment must have been agonizingly painful for them both. These teachings of

Paul must have shaken them up and gone against the fabric of their being. These women who previously held the upper

inspired by God to instruct them, and us today, on how to have a healthy, happy relationship with our husbands. She must have been comforted that her husband was instructed to love her. She must also have been grateful to know that submission to her husband and unto the Lord was her free choice. And loving her husband and having him love her would make submission easier. In this case both had a lifetime of learning ahead of them. Paul would never have taught the women to submit if it meant dishonoring or disobeying God.

God knew that men and women would lose this knowledge over the millennia, and these words are just as necessary to couples in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, where marriage fails much of the time. There were 71,783 divorces in Canada in 2001,



hand in relationships with men would have a struggle to get their minds around such a foreign concept as submission; for humility and submission go hand in hand. They probably were also anxious with how friends and family would accept this about-face in their lifestyle.

In reality, the former relationship with their husband must have been a stressful one – as the role of domination over one’s mate does not produce a loving, long-lasting, nor peaceful relationship. As God well knows women are not emotionally equipped for this dominating role, thus Paul was

(which is the last year for which statistics are available so how do we know the following figures?) This number has been more or less constant for several years now. The all-time high was in 1987, when there were 96,200 divorces. This followed the introduction of the Canadian Divorce Act in 1985, which liberalized the laws in Canada. After one year of marriage, there are 5.1 divorces for every 1,000 marriages in Canada. After two years of marriage, there are 17 divorces for every 1,000 marriages in Canada. After three years, there are 23.6 divorces for every 1,000 Canadian marriages. After four years, there are

25.5 divorces for every 1,000 Canadian marriages. (ottawadivorce.com)

Let's read more of Paul's instructions:

*For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of His body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. (Ephesians 5:22-26 NLT).*

Paul was prompted to pray:

*...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; (Ephesians 1:17,18)*

We must remember the overall theme of Ephesians is unity. Paul is giving a bigger picture here than just about husbands and wives when he says to the congregation: "submitting to one another in the fear of God." (v.21.) He is teaching them the correct role God wanted them to have within the Church of God congregation as well as within their community. We know that even now we are influenced erroneously by the society in which we live, a society that is still confused about men's and women's roles. Even today we need correction on the right way to interact with one another, just as those men and women at Ephesus. That is why Jesus instructed the brethren to love one another. That was the only way there could be unity and harmony in the body.

We need to listen to Peter, who further explains God's chain of authority to men and women alike.

*For the Lord's sake, respect all human authority—whether the king as head of state, or the officials he*

*has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right. It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Respect everyone, and love your Christian brothers and sisters. Fear God, and respect the king (1Peter 2:13-17 NLT)*

God is not selecting women as the only ones who must submit to authority. It's a way of life that is in loving service to others and creates peace and harmony. From Peter's instructions, we see that every Christian is to submit to others on a variety of levels. Peter explains this concept further when he says,

*In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives (1 Peter 3:1 NLT).*

*In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered (1 Peter 3:7 NLT).*

In Greek, the word "submit" is *hupotasso*, which means "to arrange in order under." It is actually a military term, and in the military there is a strong sense of submitting to someone of higher rank. A soldier must arrange himself in order under his sergeant. A sergeant arranges himself in order under the master-sergeants. A master-sergeant arranges himself in order under the lieutenants--and the lieutenants to the captain, the captain to the major, and

right on up to the general, who himself must submit to the Commander-in-Chief. Everything is "arranged in order under." Its "bare bones" meaning is that one has to arrange himself in order, that is, systematically, under another. (bibletools.org)

But we need to understand that Christian submission goes far beyond obedience to those in authority over us. Biblical submission is voluntary and from the heart, it is putting the interests of others ahead of our own. (Phil 2:3-8) By contrast, worldliness is submitting to the wrong people or a wrong system of values.

Now we understand that God is a God of order. Notice Paul also says the "woman is the glory of man." The most important ingredient God wants in His people is humility.

*But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." (1 Corinthians 11:3):*

*But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word (Isaiah 66:2).*

Submission is at the core of man's relationship with God. We, like the men and women of Ephesus, have also had poor role models to follow and it wasn't until we were called into the Church that we, too were taught the same words from Paul. Many have enjoyed the fruits of this concept of submission resulting in happier lives, more fulfilling marriages, and the confidence that we are pleasing in God's eyes.

*Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit,*

*but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:1-4).*

In conclusion, this study of the word “submission” in the book of Ephesians has led me to realize Paul’s goal was not to zero in on the woman’s submission to the man. His purpose in writing this letter to the Ephesians was to promote unity and harmony amongst the brethren. Paul knew that submission was the key to unity and harmony in human relationships as well as the key to our relationship with our Father in heaven. Paul knew he had to begin teaching the husbands and wives first, as they formed the building blocks of the church. If husbands and wives learned the humility of service to one another, and to Christ, that lesson would trickle on down through the family and the brethren in the church.

The lesson was to help them become a unified body of the bride—perfected and ready for the groom, Jesus Christ.



**continued from page 25(Quo Vadis, Homo?**

Christ] shall be added...” to us (Matthew 6:33 NASB)? Are we “ ... [growing] in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18 NASB)?

Are we certain? How far along our spiritual journey are we? Do we sense the motion that comes from the working of God’s Spirit in our lives, or do we perceive ourselves to be at rest and thus inert?

Rest? We are never at rest, at least not in a celestial sense. We dare not be at rest spiritually either. And so we return to the question posed by the title of our exercise in motion, i.e., where are we going? Put another way where are you and I going, and how close to our destination are we?



**continued on page 31 (Children of God)**

the parent.

**Conclusion of Part 2**

We have seen how God is the Master Parent and His Word is the Master plan for helping us raise children. We have seen how the basic principles of scripture can be used to apply God’s dealing with mankind, and God’s dealing with each believer to the raising of children. While the Bible does contain some instruction specific to children, the greatest and most important lessons must be learned from these noteworthy comparisons.

Next time, we will deal with the specifics of the love needed for young children, the good habits to instill in them, and the means to discipline them. It should be a blessing to parents, as well as to every believer who encounters young children from time to time.



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with young children in the home probably would not choose to help someone with a history of pedophilia or homosexuality. But years later, when those children are strong, stable young adults, help might be possible.

A home or congregation that has frequent social drinking—but without drunkenness—still may not be a good place to help an alcoholic. The alcoholic will be better helped in a place where there is no alcohol at all. Similarly, it may be dangerous to bring an alcoholic to a place where there are unstable teen-agers who may be easily tempted to follow the alcoholic’s ways.

When we help someone who has suffered from sin, it is usually both physical and spiritual. They may be destitute, diseased and distressed—in need of physical help. They also need to be taught the truth from

the Scriptures and to feel the love of God from us. But as Jesus told them woman taken in adultery, we need to convey the message “go and sin no more”. Some times that message is understood and heeded instantly, sometimes it takes a while. Mature believers should be ever vigilant, however, to discern when a sinner likes our physical help, and may pretend to accept our spiritual help, but is really not interested in believing that Christ can make the changes in them.

Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent”

(John 6:26-29).

Helping people who have greater sins requires greater love. It will often not lead to repentance—just as Christ’s miracles and perfect teaching often did not bring repentance to His audience. But mature believers can and should help greater sinners, as long as they are listening, not dangerous to families and congregations, and continue to make spiritual progress. When the greater sinners hear and repent, they will usually have greater love for others—a kind of the greatest love that God has for us.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8).

This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. <sup>12</sup> If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us (2 Timothy 2:11).





## Scribe's Square

# Count the Commandments, Name them One by One

What are the Ten Commandments? Can you name them one by one? Don't be so sure about that. Believe it or not, the Ten Commandments are grouped three different ways by Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. They all use the same scripture, but their numbering and division of the commandments differ.

The difficulty in grouping the above words into a list of Ten Commandments is that the commandments contain more than ten "thou shalt nots" and neither God nor Moses separates or numbers the commandments. According to some scholars, God literally gives 19 different injunctions and 25 different instructions. (See Alan M. Dershowitz, "Ten Commandments Aren't Gun Control Politics: Religion isn't a constitutionally acceptable alternative," in Los Angeles Times, June 20, 1999). In other words, the commandments seem to add up to more than ten. Yet the Bible makes it clear that God spoke "Ten Commandments" to the people of Israel (See Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 4:13 and Deuteronomy 10:4).

The Ten Commandments, often called the Decalogue or the Ten Words, appear in Exodus 20 and again in Deuteronomy 5. The text of the commandments is as follows:

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." You shall have no other gods before Me. "You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments. "You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain; for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which Yahweh your God gives you. "You shall not kill. "You shall not commit adultery. "You shall not steal. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's." (Exodus 20:1-19, RSV, the name "Yahweh" used instead of "the LORD").

## Variations in Commandment Groupings

Scholars and other scripture readers differ as to just when a certain commandment ends and when a new commandment begins. For example, most Jews regard the statement, "I am the Lord, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" as a whole commandment. It is considered the first commandment. The commandment, "You shall have no other gods" is a second commandment in their list. Protestants regard "I am the Lord your God" not as a separate commandment but as the prelude to all the Ten Commandments. And Catholics regard "I am the Lord your God" as the prelude to the first commandment to have no other gods before the true God.

An important difference in the grouping of the commandments involves the commandment against the creation and worship of graven images. Protestants regard this injunction as the second of the Ten Commandments after the commandment against having other gods and before the commandment against using Yahweh's name in vain. Jews and Catholics, however, do not consider the prohibition against graven images as a separate commandment but rather as an elaboration of the commandment against having other gods.

It is important to note, however, that Catholics often publish a short list of the Ten Commandments rather than the commandments in their entirety. Because the commandment against graven images is not considered a separate commandment in the Catholic Church, the Ten Commandments in the Catholic short list does not contain any specific language against creating and worshiping

JEWISH	CATHOLIC	PROTESTANT
1. I am the Lord, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.	1. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before <i>me</i> .	1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not have the gods of others in My presence. You shall not make for yourself a graven image or any likeness which is in the heavens above, which is on the earth below, or which is in the water beneath the earth. You shall neither prostrate yourself before them nor worship them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, Who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, and I perform loving kindness to thousands [of generations], to those who	2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.	2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of <i>any thing</i> that <i>is</i> in heaven above, or that <i>is</i> in the earth beneath, or that <i>is</i> in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God <i>am</i> a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth <i>generation</i> of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain, for the Lord will not hold blameless anyone who takes His name in vain.	3. Remember thou keep the Sabbath Day.	3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. Six days may you work and perform all your labor, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your God; you shall perform no labor, neither you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your beast, nor your stranger who is in your cities. For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and	4. Honor thy Father and thy Mother.	4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day <i>is</i> the sabbath of the Lord thy God: <i>in it</i> thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that <i>is</i> within thy gates: For <i>in</i> six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them <i>is</i> , and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath
5. Honor your father and your mother, in order that your days be lengthened on the land that the Lord, your God, is giving you.	5. Thou shalt not kill.	5. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
6. You shall not murder.	6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.	6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. You shall not commit adultery.	7. Thou shalt not steal.	7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.	8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.	8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.	9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbor	10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.	10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that <i>is</i> thy neighbor's.

Jewish list from "Online Tanakh" at [http://www.chabad.org/library/bible\\_cdo/aid/9881/jewish/Chapter-20.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/9881/jewish/Chapter-20.htm)  
Catholic list from "Catholic Catechism" by Peter Gasparri, (1932)  
Protestant List from King James Version of The Bible.

images. Some Protestants have suggested that the Catholic Church has intentionally concealed the commandment against graven images because such a commandment would be an embarrassment to Catholics who keep such images in their homes and church buildings, including drawings, statues, and other artistic representations of Jesus Christ, Mary, and other saints.

Another important variance in the commandment groupings concerns the prohibition against coveting. In the Protestant and Jewish versions, there is one complete commandment against coveting anything that belongs to one's neighbor. Catholics consider a neighbor's wife as separate from the neighbor's household property. Thus, they divide coveting one's neighbor's wife as a separate commandment from coveting other things.

Please note that Lutherans adopt the Catholic commandment grouping and Eastern Orthodox Christians agree with the Protestant grouping. There may be minority schools of thought within each denomination, and there may be hybrid commandment groupings different from the major three.

### Which grouping is correct?

Is Yahweh's declaration that "I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" a separate commandment? Should the prohibition against manufacturing and worshiping idols be considered an elaboration of the commandment not to have other gods before Yahweh rather than a separate commandment? Is coveting one's wife a separate offense from coveting any other thing belonging to one's neighbor?

The declaration, "I am Yahweh your God" is more of a prelude rather than

a command. In making this statement, Yahweh is neither prohibiting anything nor mandating any course of action. Because it is human nature to forget from whence one came, Yahweh was reminding the children of Israel that it was He who delivered them from Egyptian slavery. Generations earlier, God similarly told Abraham, "I am Yahweh who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess" (Genesis 15:7). And subsequently, Yahweh frequently introduced Himself to the children of Israel with this or similar language. (Leviticus 11:45; Leviticus 19:36; Leviticus 20:24; Leviticus 23:43; Leviticus 25:38; Leviticus 25:55; Leviticus 26:13; Numbers 15:41; Psalm 81:10; Ezekiel 39:28; Hosea 13:4).

Concerning idolatry, the rest of the Bible supports the proposition that having another god before Yahweh and building and worshiping a graven image are transgressions of separate commandments. The former involves abandoning Yahweh for another god altogether; but the latter might involve the worship of a physical object as a Yahweh himself. For example, when Aaron built a golden calf for worship in the wilderness, he proclaimed to the Israelites that "tomorrow shall be a feast to Yahweh" (see Exodus 32:5). When King Jeroboam made two golden calves, he told his subjects, "Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt (see I Kings 12:28).

Technically, Aaron and Jeroboam did not adopt another god before Yahweh. They both claimed to be worshiping Yahweh who had brought Israel out of Egypt. Their sin was in setting up a physical representation of God. Setting up a graven image, therefore, does not necessarily involve worshiping another God, but it may--as in the case of Aaron and Jeroboam--involve the improper worship of Yahweh Himself.

Regarding the last commandment, there is no reason to believe that God intended

for the inordinate desire for another person's spouse to constitute a separate offense from coveting other things belonging to another person. Coveting is a gateway sin. It is the only offense of the Ten Commandments which involves thought rather than action; and it is the only offense for which a punishment is not prescribed in the Old Testament. A covetous heart can lead to other offenses such as idolatry, theft, adultery, lying, and even murder. When Nathan the prophet visited King David to correct David for appropriating Uriah's wife, Nathan used an analogy of a man coveting his neighbor's ewe lamb. Apparently, coveting was coveting. Nathan did not consider coveting a neighbor's wife as a separate category of coveting and neither should Bible readers today.

Upon consideration of Biblical evidence, it appears as though the Protestant Ten Commandment grouping is the superior grouping. Protestants who recite the Ten Commandments, however, might do well to learn the opening statement, "I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Not as a separate commandment, but as a reminder that it is Yahweh who delivers us from sin.

### Conclusion: Keep the Commandments

No matter how we may group the Ten Commandments, it is important that we keep them. The commandments are designed to protect us individually as well as our families, our communities. By keeping them, we demonstrate our love for God and for our neighbors. Short forms of the commandments may be useful for pedagogical purposes, but reading or remembering the entire commandments is a safeguard against distortion or concealment. "Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).





## *Quo Vadis, Homo?*

The title of this article, which in its Latinate tenor rhetorically asks where humankind is heading, could provide a point of departure for excursions into many realms. For example, one might ponder his or her life status or spiritual state. On a larger scale one could analyze the overall direction of contemporary society or even the spiritual health of the Body of Christ.

For the moment, however, let us place the question posed above squarely in the contexts of astrophysics and celestial mechanics and use our findings to stimulate critical thinking by observing that things are not always as they seem. Let us further realize that things not being as they seem can and often do have far reaching implications relative to one's Christian walk.

Are we — collectively, as humankind — in motion at this moment? Unless one is suffering from vertigo, is driving or riding in a vehicle of some sort, or otherwise is moving about, he or she probably has no sensation of motion and therefore assumes his or her body essentially is static, i.e., at rest.

In truth, none of us ever is perfectly at rest—not even in the repose of death. Each of us is traveling on spaceship Earth and is one with a complicated, never ceasing trajectory through the cold blackness of interstellar space. Each of us is involved in a vast celestial dance with steps ranging from the familiar—for example, Earth's progression around the sun, marked by the equinoxes and solstices—to the obscure, which fundamentally are the multidimensional inertial and

gravitational dynamics of the cosmos itself.

The most basic step in our personal celestial dance is our daily circle on the rotating Earth, where our tempo is entirely a function of latitude. We have only slight angular momentum if we are freezing at the South Pole but our speed is 1,040 miles per hour, or 0.3 miles per second, if we are basking on an island beach at or very near the equator.

If any of our readership is interested in his or her exact rotational speed on planet Earth at a given moment, it is a fairly simple computation. The individual should find the cosine of his or her latitude and multiply by 1,040. If one is in New York City or Indianapolis (latitude 40 degrees N), to use two familiar cities as exempla, he or she is traveling at a rotational speed of approximately 800 miles per hour. But if one is in, say, Fairbanks (latitude 65 degrees N), the person is traveling at a relatively sedate 450 miles per hour.

But our celestial dance is just a little more complex than the Earth spinning on its axis and dragging us along with it! If we are largely unaware of that motion, how much less aware are we that the Earth also is making its annual trip around the sun (except for our awareness of changing seasons) at an average speed of 18.5 miles per second? And that the sun itself is on its own 250-million-year circuit around the nucleus of our home galaxy, the Milky Way, taking Earth and all of us along for the ride? Or that the Milky Way, one of 35 or so galaxies in a small cluster called the

Local Group, is falling toward the center of the Group at 25 miles per second? Or that the entire Local Group is moving at roughly 370 miles per second toward the constellation Hydra?

This means that we constantly are traveling at rather incredible velocities in several different celestial planes simultaneously. That we are blissfully unaware of our journey through space and time relative to motion is because gravity keeps us firmly rooted wherever we are and deludes us into thinking we are at rest unless, of course, we “really” are moving in a car, aircraft, or perhaps a roller coaster.

Is it not strange? We perceive motion only in limited and, in a cosmic sense at least, mundane ways: when we take a walk, drive to the market, fly to a destination somewhere in the world, or ride that roller coaster. The truly profound planes of motion that always are a part of our existence totally escape our notice because of gravitation dynamics. Yet these gravitational dynamics are precisely what drive the celestial dance of which we are an integral and perpetual part.

It can be much the same on our spiritual journey toward the Kingdom of God if we fail to be spiritually aware and strive to discern where we are along the continuum of conversion. Are we, for instance, “... [Seeking] first His kingdom and His righteousness . . . that *“all these things* [ultimately the whole of the universe as joint heirs with Jesus

*continued on page 21*

## Children of God Part 2 — The Moving Target

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments* (Psalm 111:10).

God and His Word are the foundation of knowing how to do just about anything—especially raising children. God identifies himself as the Father of the human race (Luke 3:38). He calls us, individually His children (John 11:52; Acts 17:28). God is the Master Parent, and His Word is the master plan for us to learn how to raise our children, and for our children to learn to grow to maturity. If we ask the question, “How does God take care of His children?” we cannot condense it down to a simple formula, and apply it to all children of all ages. That does not work. It is like asking “What is the best way to take care of an animal or plant?” In truth, there are millions of kinds of them, and while certain general principles apply, many need different things—and different things in different times of their lives. That is why the Bible is such a diverse book. Attempts to summarize the Bible and say “this is what you need to know” always fail. For the child or the beginner, the summary may be too difficult. The mature person needs to learn more than the summary. Similarly, simple formulas for how to raise children also fail. It is impossible to understand how God is raising His children (us), or how human parents should raise their children, if we are not forever mindful that children are always changing. As God raises those in His church, He clearly makes a difference in how He treats them based upon their progress. Food analogies frequently teach this lesson:

*As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby* (1 Peter 2:2).



"Noam, Jemima & Lila"

*I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able* (1 Corinthians 3:2).

*For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil* (Hebrews 5:13,14).

New believers need the “milk of the word” in order to grow. They frequently need to be told what to do from the Scripture—which practices are right and which are wrong. When they have issues about “gray areas” that are not directly covered by the scriptures, they often need the help of a mature believer. But as we grow, we can utilize solid food. We can take the Word of God and chew it up, swallow the part we need and spit out the bits we do not need (incorrectly applied Scripture, mistranslations, etc.). The goal of maturing is not simply to know every rule in the Scripture and follow it meticulously, but to know how to do what God would do in every situation in our lives. We must have our “senses

exercised to discern both good and evil”.

### New Testament Adds to the Old

Christ never transgressed the law (1 John 3:4-5). But the New Testament is not a rerun of the Old showing how He always kept every commandment—how he avoided idolatry, resisted temptations to steal, looked away from seductive women, tithed of every crop, stopped his work some number of minutes before each Sabbath, etc. While Christ did all those things, we only have a very few records of them because they were not the main point of God’s message (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42). Instead, the New Testament is a message of righteous teaching of a right heart, of love toward neighbor even when our neighbor does not love us. It is a message of knowing when to help a sinner and when to let them reap the rewards of their own actions. There are all different states of spiritual maturity of believers in the New Testament. The seven churches in Revelation 2 & 3 describe many of these states, the lowest being “lukewarm” and “dead.” They were not encouraged to go evangelize others, but to repent of their sins. Similarly, the epistles are written to believers with varying amounts of good and bad points. They were encouraged to

“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3) and to continue to spread the gospel.

The apostles, who were trained directly by Christ were able to perform great miracles, suffer persecutions and rejoiced in all of it (Acts 2 – 5). The ultimate example of spiritual maturity: “Even with no sin of His own, But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). That is the ultimate goal of the Christian, but “babes in Christ” are rarely ready for it. Different teaching is needed for people who are at different places along the way. In the following sections, we will look at how God deals with mankind as a whole, and how He deals with believers individually to understand principles for children raised by parents.

In the term “parents”, we include all members of a congregation as they are responsible to help teach the children there—especially as they grow to the teen years and begin to look for truth and guidance outside the home. The six foundational doctrines found in Hebrews 11 provide an excellent framework to use. They provide six stages of growth, which overlap to some degree.

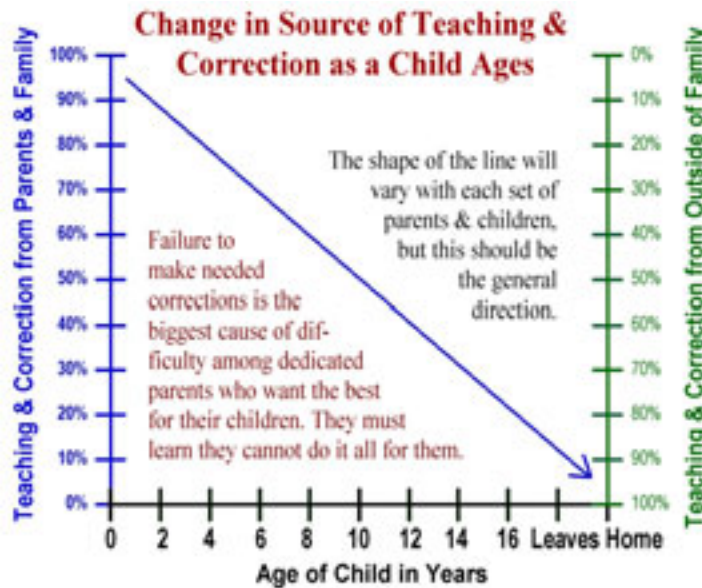
*... the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1-2).*

**Repentance from Dead Works**

Mankind as a Whole: Adam and Eve’s

decision to eat from the forbidden tree is the original “dead work” (Genesis 3). It was followed by a lot more “dead works” by nearly everyone:

*Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only*



*This is the most useful children-rearing graphs this writer has ever seen. It shows the relationship that a parent must expect between their own and family’s interaction versus outside interaction as their child grows. A babies parents control his life completely. But if a child does not continue to grow in responsibility for himself, he will stagnate and not be ready for the outside world.*

*evil continually. And the LORD was sorry [repented in KJV] that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air; for I am sorry that I have made them” (Genesis 6:5-7).*

There were very few laws given to mankind before the flood—the death penalty was not given for murder (Genesis 4:10-15), so the sin was very great. People had hundreds of years to live and learn, but nearly all did not. God repented “for them” and destroyed them all until the resurrection (Revelation

20:12). Even after the flood, the Amorites were given about 400 years to repent of their sin (Gen 15:16, Ex 12:40), and were largely destroyed by the nation of Israel when they did not.

“For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law” (Romans 5:13).

After God gave the 10 commandments and much additional righteous teaching through Moses, people had a much better idea of what righteous was, and what they should repent of. As some made human efforts to obey these rules, they lived in peace under Joshua and the elders (Judges 7:2) and a few of the good kings. When the punishments in the law were carried out, things went better:

Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

**Believers Individually:** Every story of someone coming to God begins with repentance from dead works, though the circumstances and extent of sin vary greatly. Job spent 36 chapters debating with his friends about what sin was, and then finally said: “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now



*my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes*” (Job 42:5-6). The thief crucified with Christ said: “*And we indeed justly [are condemned], for we receive the due reward of our deeds...*” (Luke 23:41). When a crowd in Jerusalem realized that they had been in part responsible for the death of Christ, Peter told them “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).

Some people repented immediately, some took a longer period of time. Raising Children: Parents are tasked with letting children know what sin is, and asking them to repent of it. This starts at birth and is the most important task in dealing with very young children. The above lessons show that the quicker a young child understands what is right and wrong, and the more quickly he is rewarded for doing good or punished for doing wrong, the better off he will be. For example, some babies will scream when they are hungry and want to be fed.

If the parent rushes and panics to feed them, the baby will keep up the process and begin to try to control the parent. If a parent refuses to feed a screaming baby, but feeds him right away based upon a normal cry or other more peaceful sounds, then the baby will learn that the scream is unacceptable. However if the parent is arbitrary—sometimes feeding the screaming baby and other times ignores the more peaceful hunger cry, the parent cannot expect a child to understand sin or repent of it.

As a child grows, parents should teach their children the principles of the Bible, and set up appropriate rewards and punishments where applicable. Not all children will be able to handle the same things at the same ages. Some will struggle greatly with some rules; some will have trouble with others. There is a time for punishment and a time for mercy.



### Faith toward God

Mankind as a Whole: Hebrews 11 gives us a marvelous summary of faith in the Old Testament. Faith is believing God and trusting in His ability to do the great things He has promised, even though we cannot physically see how it will happen. There is not much faith before the flood: only Abel, Enoch and Noah are mentioned. The near-destruction of mankind due to sin highlighted the need for a better way. Beginning with Abraham, we can see a faithful line of patriarchs, prophets and other people. Faith is generally associated with great adversity and great blessing. Noah struggled to build an ark for 120 years, had to see the destruction of the world, but was able to survive it with his family. Abraham had to move his whole household twice, had to wait till he was 100 to have his son Isaac, but was promised to be the father of many nations. David was persecuted by King Saul for many years, had to fight many wars, and had trouble with his own family, but he trusted that his throne would be established in his family forever. As we progress through the prophets and the New Testament, we find much more faith. The expression “the just shall live by faith” is in four places (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). In Hebrews, we find faith is a requirement for pleasing God: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). A life of faith brings trials, but the reward of faith is for mankind to inherit all things (Hebrews 2:6-8).

### Believers Individually:

After repentance, faith is the vital part of every believer’s life. These verses explain the relationship between God’s grace, the faith He gives us, and the works we do as a result.

*For by grace you have been saved*

*through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them* (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Christians can do things to increase their faith: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). It is also possible for one person to destroy someone’s faith (2 Timothy 2:18). Faith is not automatic—Christ wondered if there would be much faith when he returned (Luke 18:8). Raising Children: Children need to have faith in their parents. So when children are young, parents need to fulfill the role of God! Babies and small children do not have any concept of the real God, but they have a major concept of their parents. Parents must be reliable and righteous examples so that their children can trust them and someday trust their righteous Father in heaven. They must bless their children and show love and grace to them—promising and giving good things to them when they are in obedience. They must be fair judges and disciplinarians when they do something wrong:

*For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.” If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?* (Hebrews 12:6-7).

Parents must place the most emphasis on the principles of God: treating others as they want to be treated, not fighting, not stealing, respecting parents, etc. Lesser issues, such as how a child folds his napkin, puts away toys, etc. must be treated with lesser importance. In learning to fairly judge their children in all circumstances, the Bible shows God judged nations, how ancient Israel was instructed to judge their people, how Christ dealt with people who

came to Him, and how judgments were made by the Church. A parent should be generally consistent in judgment, with possible changes as the child's understanding and responsibility increase. When a child understands what they did wrong, and appears clearly repentant, there is also a time for mercy: For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13).

### Doctrine of Baptisms

The Bible mentions the baptism of water, fire and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). Water baptism pictures death to our sins and the start of a new life in Christ (Romans 6:4). It is an outward sign that one has received forgiveness for their sins (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38). Fire pictures trials (Luke 12:49; 1 Corinthians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:7; 4:12). The Baptism of the Holy Spirit gives us the power to overcome those trials and to do Christ's work. There are many cycles throughout the Old Testament of trials and baptismal cleansings, but not very much overcoming, due to the lack of the Holy Spirit. Mankind as a Whole: The sinful world was baptized in the flood, and only righteous Noah and his family emerged.

The Israelites had the trial of slavery for many years, then were baptized in the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:2). They were tried again for 40 years in the wilderness, and then they entered into the land of Canaan, as they were symbolically baptized in the Jordan River. A new cycle of fiery trials began, overcome at times when there was a leader with the Holy Spirit, such as Joshua, some of the judges, Samuel, David, etc. Water baptism pictures the end of previous trials and sins, and a new start in life. This can be seen in all of the above examples. Hence it is not surprising that John



the Baptist is not baptizing the whole nation in the Jordan river, but only as many individuals as are willing to repent. His major focus on working with nations is changing to working with individuals and congregations. When the corrupt Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized, John refused them, but told them that their national origin would do them no good, and unless they repent, they would receive a trial by fire (Matthew 3:7-10). Those who were baptized with water were prepared for the ministry of Christ. Believers Individually: The New Testament instructs the believer to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 16; 19:5). Even when the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his household before baptism, they were baptized afterward (Acts 10:47-48). The Holy Spirit comes in varying amounts. Elisha asked for twice as much as Elijah had (2 Kings 2:9); God took some of the Spirit from Moses and placed in on seventy elders (Numbers 11:16-17). Jesus gave a certain amount of the Holy Spirit to His disciples before Pentecost (John 20:22), but on Pentecost they were filled with it (Acts 2:4). Believers can ask for more of the Spirit (Luke 11:13). In spite of this power, they must expect fiery trials in their life:

*Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you (1 Peter 4:12).*

*Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him (James 1:12).*

**Raising Children:** Parents must realize that the lives of children go in cycles, much like the baptisms of the Bible. A child may struggle with a certain trials for a while until they overcome them. When the parent recognizes that the child has largely overcome them, they should recognize the effort, pronounce

them clean and hold it against them no more—like water baptism. For example, if a child is always grumpy, never keeps his room clean or wets his bed. When he overcomes it, the parents should no longer refer to him as “the grump”, “the messy one” or “the bed-wetter”. Sticking children with labels like this does not mirror the forgiveness of God, but causes children to be wounded and repressed for many years. Parents do not give their children the Holy Spirit as they grow, but they give them physical gifts that help them do the things children need to do. Parents who feel they should make their children earn everything in life are wrong (13:22). Giving a gift when a child asks for something good is an important custom, just as God gives us things when we ask in prayer:

*“If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:11-13).*

### Laying on of Hands

The New Testament gives five purposes for the laying on of hands:

1. to impart the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:16-17, etc.)
2. to heal (Mark 16:18; Acts 28:8)
3. to bless children (Matt 19:13, 15; Mark 10:13, 16; Luke 18:15)



4. to confer a spiritual gift or authority (Acts 6:6; 13:2-3; 1 Timothy 4:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:6)
5. to discipline people (Matthew 18:28; 21:46; 26:50; Acts 4:3; 21:27)

**Mankind as a Whole:** Over 40 times the Old Testament uses the expression “the Hand of the Lord” or His “outstretched arm” to indicate His direct intervention in the affairs of the world. These expressions are used for the same purposes as the laying on of hands above. They are used to describe the creation, but they are not used again until the book of Exodus, when God is working with His people, Israel after their repentance from the symbolic “sin” of Egypt, their faith in God and their baptism in the Red Sea and Jordan rivers.

*“Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You”* (Jeremiah 32:17).

*“The great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid”* (Deuteronomy 7:19).

*“But now bring me a musician.” Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him [and he went on to prophecy]* (2 Kings 3:15).

**Believers Individually:** While God initially grants repentance, gives faith, and provides the Holy Spirit after baptism and the initial laying on of hands, additional laying on of hands are part of the ongoing work of God in a believer's life. Christians can continue to receive healings and accept missions till they die. The believer has a choice to seek out, accept or reject these things.

*“[Seven men chosen by the brethren to serve the widows] whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them”* (Acts 6:6).

*“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away”* (Acts 13:2–3).

**Raising Children:** The “hand of the parents”: needs to be involved in the lives of their children, even when the children are able to do some things for themselves. In correspondence to the five points above, parents need to 1) give them good gifts, 2) take care of them when they are sick, 3) bless them, 4) give them authority when they are ready for it, 5) discipline them when they misuse that authority. Parents have trouble gradually, but definitely giving up authority to their children. Such things might include choosing which clothes to wear, choosing their bed time, choosing which music/video to play, deciding when to pray or go to church. These things should be definitely turned over to children—at a clear time, with a prayer that they will do it right, just like the laying on of hands. When authority is not turned over to children, the children have to take it—which is not as good. Without doubt, children will make some mistakes—even serious ones. But if the child is at home, the parent has opportunity for teaching and correction. “Run away” children nearly always result from parents’ attempts to enforce standards upon them that they do not accept. If the child is independent enough to run away, the parent has largely lost control. It would be much better to officially confer authority on the children and accept and help with their mistakes, than to let them leave and take everything at once—and cause more trouble for themselves and others.

### Resurrection of the Dead

**Mankind as a Whole:** There are several scattered resurrections of the dead throughout the Bible, signs of what God will do, but all of those people died again and are buried. The most significant all-time resurrection of the dead is that of Jesus Christ:

*Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead* (Romans 1:3).

The resurrection of millions of people was prophesied in the Old Testament (Job 14:14-15; 19:25-26; Ezk 37; Dan 12:2) and understood by Martha in the New Testament. But Christ told her that He was the source of resurrection. This is the purpose for which the entire world, the return of Christ and every one of our lives exist:

*Martha said to Him, “I know that he [Lazarus] will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”* (John 11:24-26).

*“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began”* (Acts 3:19-21).

**Believers Individually:** Revelation 20 clearly details two resurrections, one a thousand years before the other, almost certain the “better resurrection”

referred to in Hebrew 11:35. The first is for those who overcome during this life. The second is for “all the dead, both small and great” (Revelation 20:11-12). Jesus explained it this way:

“But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection” (Luke 20:35-36).

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice “and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28-29).

It is certainly worth striving to be in the first resurrection. We have to go through trials to do it. But the Apostle Paul said:

This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us (2Tim 2:11-12).

**Raising Children:** The resurrection is equivalent to a child leaving home. Just as Christians graduate from our physical bodies to spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44), so children graduate from their parents’ control to their own control. And just as there is a second resurrection to physical life (Ezekiel 37) for those who are not able to be in the first, so there is that resurrection for children who do die before leaving home or who are disabled and cannot live normal human lives. Thus, the parent’s love and effort are never wasted. Just as Jesus continually taught that we must place our efforts on eternal values, not the values of this life (Matt 6:19-21; Luke 8:14), so parents must continually prepare their children to leave home, not to get more and more comfortable at

home. For some parents, this can be very difficult. For lonely people who married and had a family so someone could love them, it can be nearly impossible. But a parent must realize that is their function in life—yet, to raise their own children, but to ultimately to raise children of God!

### Eternal Judgment

**Mankind as a Whole:** God is introduced early in the Scriptures as the “Judge of the Earth” (Genesis 18:25). Judgment includes both rewards and punishments, and is a wonderful thing because it is fair. He pronounces many judgments on mankind during this life, but eternal judgment, which is more properly translated “age-during judgment” (Young’s Literal Translation), is a thorough judgment for all our lives. In the sequence of our six foundational principles, it has not occurred yet. But we ought to live our lives based upon its certain eventuality:

*And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).*

*In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel (Romans 2:16).*

*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33).*

*Believers Individually: We will also be judged, too, though we have the opportunity to judge ourselves now if we will do it:*

*But why do you judge your brother?*

*Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10).*

*Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:9-10).*

*For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world (1 Corinthians 11:31-32).*



**Raising Children:** Just as parents represent God to their children in “faith towards God”, so they represent God in judgment of their children. As children begin to grow older and parents turn over

decision making to them, they will at times make bad decisions and reject the parents’ suggestions to change. Rather than argue with the children, parents can take over the role of prophet and tell them, generally and gently, what will happen if they continue in their error.

For example, supposed that a child keeps his room in a mess. Rather than fight him or badger him to change, a parent can say, “There will be a time when you will want to find something important, but you will not be able to because there is such a mess. When that happens, you will realize the value of keeping your things in order and hopefully you will change then.”

This is so much better than an argument! The purpose, again, is to help make human children into children of God. Even though they may not change until they have left the house, they changed for God, not for **continued on page 21**

"I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD."

"THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS  
BEFORE ME."

"THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE  
LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN"

"REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT  
HOLY"

"HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER"

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL"

"THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY"

"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL"

"THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS  
AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR"

"THOU SHALT NOT COVET..."



## THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: Perfecting Love For God

(Beginning excerpt from “Ten Words” project soon to be available in eBook)

### Our Loving Response to Our Maker

Once we've been convicted of the goodness of God and Jesus Christ, who gave His life for us, who saved us, just as the Lord saved the ancient Israelites from Egyptian slavery, God expects a loving response from us. Listen to the message God gave Moses for the Israelites:

*These are the commands, decrees, and regulations that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you. You must obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy, and you and your children and grandchildren must fear the LORD your God as long as you live. If you obey all His decrees and commands, you will enjoy a long life. Listen closely, Israel, and be careful to obey. Then all will go well with you, and you will have many children in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you. Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone (Deuteronomy 6:1-4.NLT).*

God is calling for a wholehearted commitment of those who will worship God. He doesn't want halfhearted, lukewarm people. He wants people who love Him, who recognize the incredible goodness of the God who calls them. God is expecting His people to obey these commands, decrees, and regulations! God makes it clear that a good physical life is promised, for within the covenants there are both spiritual and physical promises.

As a Christian, are you being directly addressed here? Are you part of Israel? Are you a new covenant Christian? There is a great problem of rising anti-Semitism in this world and in the church. Many people are turning their backs on anything Jewish or anything that has to do with Israel. Being a believer, can you afford to be anti-Semitic? There have always been certain people who hold strong anti-Semitic perspectives in the Church of God. Are you getting caught up in this? Some people have a hard time accepting that God is addressing them through Moses. Is this “Old Covenant” message addressed to you?

*It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation. May God's peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; they are the new people of God (Galatians 6:15, 16).*

As new creations we have repented, and become the “Israel of God”, in fact, a Hebrew. The Apostle Paul makes it clear we are Abraham's offspring.

*There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are His heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you (Galatians 3:28-29 NLT).*

Who was Israel's King? At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus called various individuals to be His disciples...to emulate Him, to walk with Him, to apprentice with Him during His ministry. All these people had a strong background in the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus called Nathanael. And Nathanael responded, “Rabbi, teacher, you are the Son of God—you are the King of Israel!” This was Nathaniel's response at his calling. He understood the facts, the spiritual reality, that Jesus was both the Son of God and the King of Israel.

### The Law is Essential to our Life

Being a believer, a part of the body of Christ, and a member of the Church of God (a Judeo-Christian), you cannot afford to be anti-Semitic. There have always been people who say they are Christians but who have had a strong anti-Semitic perspective. Traditional Christianity teaches that you don't need to keep the law – arguing that it was only given for the Jews. This perspective teaches that the law isn't important. Only love is important. And just what is love? Well, those that reject the law define love any way they subjectively see fit. They insist that love can never be objective and can never be clearly defined by an established written authority. But, is that what the Scriptures teach? Is that what a follower of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, should believe? Let's look at Deuteronomy:

*These are the commands, decrees,*

*and regulations that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you. You must obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy, and you and your children and grandchildren must fear the LORD your God as long as you live. If you obey all His decrees and commands, you will enjoy a long life. Listen closely, Israel, and be careful to obey. Then all will go well with you, and you will have many children in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you - Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today (Deuteronomy 6:1-6).*

The Bible's God alone is our master. This is a very, very critical, fundamental, basic, first principle teaching. As a Christian we need to have this clearly in our hearts and our minds. Why is Moses saying this? God wanted us to know that we need to think about this priority all the time. We need to remind ourselves daily of God's commandments, statutes, principles, and teachings - not just from time to time. We must keep them in the forefront of our minds in order for these teachings to guide us effectively in our daily walk. We're exhorted to talk about these commandments with our children when at home, when we're on the road and when we are going to bed and when we get up. We ought to think about them all the time. Deuteronomy 6:1-6 is saying we need one major authority in our lives wherever we might be, in all times, and in all places. This should be our spiritual reality, ideally.

We have a duty to teach ourselves by teaching the younger generation all that God is trying to communicate to us. In Matthew 19:16-20 we read the story of the young man who came to Jesus of Nazareth with this question:

Young man: *"Teacher what good thing must I do to have eternal life?"* Jesus: *"If you want to enter life, keep the commandments."*

Young man: *"Which ones?"*

Jesus: *"You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself."*

Young man: *"All these I have kept... What do I still lack?"*

Jesus: *"If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me."*

Just think how many preachers and priests in this diffused mass movement called Christianity both teach and practice the exact opposite of what Jesus said. This is a shocking state of affairs! What hypocrisy! Did Jesus say, "You're on your own so make up your own laws and rules about what is right and what is wrong?" Did Jesus espouse, "Do your own thing?" Did the Saviour say, "You can ignore the books of the Bible written by Moses because they are now irrelevant." No, he did not! Yet the fact remains that most who claim to be Christian do believe they can ignore this teaching of Jesus Christ and still inherit eternal life.

In Matthew 19:16-20, Jesus gave the young man a short form, executive summary of some of the best-known spiritual principles found in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. Specifically, Jesus quoted from the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. The entire Jewish community of that time would have immediately understood Jesus' point. Not even Jesus' greatest Pharisaical critics would have argued with Him about this. Yet, today, the sad truth is there are many religious people who would heatedly argue with Jesus Christ about the role of commandment-keeping in the lives of believers who

desire to enter into "eternal life" through the promised "New Covenant."

What the young man of Matthew 19 lacked most was his attention to the first commandment. God and His teachings must be the authoritative guide in the life of a believer, occupying the number one priority slot in all matters of morals, ethics, and lifestyle.

The apostle John, writing at the end of the first century A.D., consistently continued to teach what Jesus had taught him some 60 years earlier. Knowing the prophecies that Jesus had revealed to him concerning the state of the world during the End Times and its swelling apostasy from the truth, John put a heavy emphasis on the bedrock foundations of Christianity and what it really means to live in fellowship with the Father and the Son:

*We know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commandments. Whoever says, "I know Him," but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him (1 John 2: 3-5).*

How do we know, that we actually know Jesus? We keep the commandments. The answer is simple but profound. John tells us the commandments are the path we must walk if we wish to walk with the Word of God. It is God's own Spirit that gives us the power to walk in His Way of love. The love of God is perfected by those who keep His Word – His commandments.

*By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the Word which you heard from the beginning (1 John 2:5-7).*

We are to follow Jesus' example. We are to follow Christ's teachings. How much more clear can this be? Yet most people turn their back on Jesus' example. They don't want to practice the religion of Jesus, rather they want to make a religion about Jesus. But in doing this they don't follow the Son of God and so deceive themselves and live a lie. The majority of people who call themselves Christians, ignore or deny this basic truth by refusing to keep the commandments. Century, after century, after century, there has been willful blindness to the plain message of the Word of God. This willful blindness has kept many enslaved to the pain, unhappiness, and misery that are the inevitable consequences of living in sin!

And what exactly is sin? The apostle John answered that critical point as well:

*Everyone who commits (practices) sin is guilty of lawlessness; for [that is what] sin is, lawlessness (the breaking, violating of God's law by transgression or neglect—being unrestrained and unregulated by His commands and His will) (1 John 3:4 Amplified Bible).*

### The Law and Loyalty to the Lawgiver

Solomon understood the importance of the commandments and the need to "put God first" when he spoke to God's covenant people at the dedication ceremony of the temple:

*Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: "Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses. May the Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.*

*And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the Lord, be near the Lord our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require, that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other. Let your heart therefore be loyal to the Lord our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day" (1 Kings 8:55-61).*

At that moment, Solomon had faith that God would fulfill His promises. Not one word failed of all the wonderful promises He gave to his servant, Moses. Many people would deny this, but God's story has yet to be finished. Yet, Solomon knew that the people needed this knowledge of the commandments as well as loyalty to the word of God as their final authority.

In our nations and communities there is a great need for justice. We see injustices everyday in the media. Yet, the need for justice is not limited to the secular governments of our lands. The need for justice is even more critical for the spiritual peace and growth of the Churches of God. When one looks at the state of the Church today the question cries out, "Why do we have all these divisions?" The answer is simple. Our divisions are the result of a lack of justice in the conduct of the Church's administration because we as a community have ignored God's commandments, statutes, and judgments when it comes to resolving disputes and controversies.

*You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you (Deuteronomy 16:19-21 ESV).*

Solomon was making a point that the

Lord should be our final authority in how we live our lives and how we conduct our community's affairs. He alone is our God—there is not a good alternative to Him that will have long-lasting, good consequences. We must be completely faithful to our God. Ancient Israel was fickle. At times they were obedient and at times they wandered very far away from God, just like our society today. As believers and members of the body of Christ, we ought to desire to bring glory to God by how we do things. It is through our obedience that others outside our fellowship will see what we do and come to know that the Lord our God is God alone. The writer of the book of Hebrews in the Greek Bible highlights the importance of the law:

*This is the new covenant I will make with My people on that day, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their hearts, and I will write them in their minds (Hebrew 10:16).*

*Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep His promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near. (Hebrew 10:23-25).*

These verses are not in opposition to what was already written by the finger of God 1500 years before on tablets of stone. God has been consistently teaching the same message from the beginning. He has a purpose in the things He says. The problem is not with the law but with human nature. How many people understand this?

God is merciful and He is going to put all of our past behind us. This should encourage us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially knowing the uncertainties and dangers of our times, that we can have confidence in God, knowing that

He can be trusted to keep His promises! The apostle Paul, far from teaching the abolition of the law of God, rather affirms that if we have the right attitude towards others, then keeping the law would become something that would come naturally to us:

*We owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet. These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law. This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living (Romans 13:8-12).*

These instructions were directed to people who were members of the Church. Surprised? Paul knew that this point must be reiterated, even to believers. Paul understood that our human nature has a downward pull. Paul was definitely not anti-law, or "antinomian" in theological speak. He emphasized that *"If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law."*

God's inspired Scriptures are telling you the truth, not what is politically correct, or generally accepted. How many of us have not learned these things? How much hatred has been spilled out upon whole congregations of God's people, by those who ignore God's commands?

Loving neighbor is the broad principle given in Romans 13:8. Paul cited four of the Ten Commandments to specifically help define the meaning of the word "love." Love is not merely a subjective feeling or emotion that a person can define anyway he or she likes. Our authority on even the meaning of words like love should be the Word of God. This is a hard thing to grasp and many churches don't teach this. As a natural

consequence, there are divisions, rancor, and distrust in families and congregations.

Time is running out for our present society. What Paul wrote almost 2,000 years ago is as true now as in his day! He says that we need to *"wake up!"* If we are sensitive to God's instructions, then we will live decent lives for all to see. We will know right from wrong by the Word of God, and we will not to be subverted by our present "politically correct" society that enjoys substituting darkness for light, or religious leaders who preach the word but act hypocritically.

If we desire to live in the hope of God's promise of eternal life, then it is our duty as followers of Christ to set a righteous example for those who have lost their way – who are living without the Bible's sound moral guidance and are drifting belly up downstream as they slowly rot and disintegrate.

For the sermon on this topic by Jeff Patton go to [www.cogwebcast.com](http://www.cogwebcast.com) archives



*"We are a family of believers, our immediate aim is to provide Sabbath services to those who are unable to attend a local congregation through live sermon video webcasts and archives. We continue the discussion in person and online in chat after webcasts and throughout the week on Facebook. Friend us! We don't bite."*



## Cheerful Givers For A Cheerful Cause

Sabbath Keepers throughout the city of Chicago band together to help the cause of preventing homelessness. In support of S.A.G.A. Empowerment Services Coalition, NFP ([www.sagaesc.org](http://www.sagaesc.org)), a non-for-profit charity organization that provides housing options to families & persons in hardship or about to lose their homes. Talented artists, to include Chicagoland Church of God's very own Tina Blumenberg-Williams (ToMBoy), were asked to perform at their fundraising event called "Hip Hop 4 Housing Fundraiser" in order to raise money for SAGAesc's current goal.

Sharing the stage with ToMBoy were fellow hype-men, Branden "Blest" Conant and Michael "Phor" Mclemore, as well as her dancers, Corinthia Wilder and Fatima McMiller, the event was a success. With the help of her fellow church brethren and friends (special thanks to Mary Fernando), not only did she raise a generous amount, but also sold copies of her CDS with 100% of the profits going directly towards SAGAesc's goal.

SAGAesc, whose founders are also Sabbath Keepers from Israel, The Church of Jesus and the Israel of God Church, are eager to raise operational/seed funding that would allow them to purchase a facility in the southern Cook County Illinois area to operate their housing program designed to help those looking to help themselves! Short term housing, technology, marketing seminars and other various workshops are slated services to be offered as well as guest speakers to support spiritual, emotional, and financial stability. In light of their goal, SAGAesc were asking guests at the event to donate \$2, \$4, \$5, \$7 or more to help with this huge task.

SAGAesc currently runs a "Homesharing Program" that works with property owners and tenants who are at risk of becoming homeless due to economic or financial instability as well as with individuals who have experienced unanticipated economic crisis. SAGAesc helps by assisting these property owners and tenants, including those in pre-foreclosure, to utilize their homesharing program by renting out rooms which will provide additional income to support home ownership and or housing. In addition, they also coordinate with outside supportive services linking their clients to resources to sustain housing, strengthen families and regain self sufficiency. In support of their Homesharing Program, they also run a "Match-Up Program", "Shared Living Residence Program", & "Sharing on Wheels" program that provides the less fortunate with toiletries and clothing as needed.

SAGAesc, a member of the National Shared Housing Resource Center, is currently still raising funds for their goal. If you would like to donate towards their cause, feel free to go to [www.sagaesc.org](http://www.sagaesc.org), scroll down on the right-hand side and click donate, or contact them via email [contact@sagaesc.org](mailto:contact@sagaesc.org). SAGAesc asks those who are touched by this story to "please help us to continue helping others!" Thank you!

*"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:7-8 "He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, AND HE WILL PAY BACK WHAT HE HAS GIVEN." PROVERBS 19:17*



From L-R, Fatima McMiller, Branden "Blest" Conant, Tina "ToMBoy" Blumenberg-Williams, Michael "Phor" Mclemore, and Corinthia Wilder. Photo by Tristan R. Williams



### “Teach Them Many Things”

The ministry to homeless people continues at Port Austin Bible Campus. We have now accepted 100 adults and 33 children, and have provided 5500 bed-nights—1250 more than our previous report. We have had a lot of turnover since then. Some have gone on to good jobs and places to stay, two have gone to jail. We have had others come to take their places. It is PABC’s goal to help each of these people improve their lives. This includes both their physical needs—shelter, food, jobs, important appointments, applying for assistance, and their spiritual needs: seeking God through prayer and his word, rather than to substance abuse or other destructive habits.

Often, people tell us we are wasting our time—that people who end up in homeless shelters do not want to improve—that is how they got there. In some cases, that is true. But we also find that many of them simply do not know the moral and Biblical principles that would benefit their lives. Most had very difficult times growing up—living with only one or none of their birth parents. Some lived in abusive homes; others were taken out of good homes by inept agencies or courts. Most learned what they know from TV, movies and public schools. Their experience with churches was often minimal or miserable.

## PABC Update

Most readers of this publication have a clear understanding of the ten commandments. We know that junk food, tobacco, excess alcohol, drugs, stealing things when nobody’s around and a sequence of sexual partners are not good for us. If we slip into those sins, we know we need to repent—seeking God and our brethren for help. But many of our PABC Guests are not sure about these things. Some have grown up believing those things are normal or even good. They don’t see a clear cause and effect relationship between these mistakes and the suffering they bring.

One of the clearest examples of this is in the area of male/female relationships. The overwhelming Bible teaching is for a well-thought-out, loving relationship with a time of engagement, the blessing of both couples’ families, a big wedding feast, a lifetime together, sex without fear of disease or pregnancy and children who are loved. But for some here, that is not even a dream. Sex, relationships and even love are something found quickly and conveniently—“get what you can where and when you can”.

Marriage is something to be considered if for those who get along surprisingly well—or when one is afraid that they cannot get anyone else. Some try very hard to make these methods work, but we feel sorry that they are trying to make work what God said would not work.

A lot of the guests here are not sure whether they are made in the image of God, or the product of millions of years of random evolution. Some are not sure if there is a God. Most do not have a clear idea of what He expects of them, or what He is willing to do for them. During the last three weeks, we have

begun a Monday through Friday morning class, showing the best of Bible, creation, nature and proof-that-God-exists videos. We have discussions afterward, and answer other Bible questions that arise. While a few are bored or tired, most pay attention and participate. These are things that they have never heard before. This scripture comes to mind:

*And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things (Mark 6:34).*



We are still looking for a person or two to help in this teaching ministry. If this is what you would rather do than what you are doing now, please pray about it. There is no salary, but by God’s provision, everyone has had food and shelter here for the past 7½ years of this Christian community’s existence.

Read more at [portAustin.net](http://portAustin.net) or call 989-738-7700.

Continued from page 15

months helping homeless people. Some are poor in spirit or depressed, and need much help, encouragement, prayer and love. But others are in need of correction. We give them a free place to stay, free transportation and free food; but some lie to us, break our rules, steal from us, demand that we cater to their wants and even file false police reports in an effort to make us comply with their demands. They would gladly absorb all of the good and the love that anyone could give them—and still ask for more. If they can not learn from kindness, they will have to learn from correction. Our correction is limited to sending them out or having them prosecuted in the courts. But the Bible shows God sent nations into war and captivity for their evil—in the hope that they would seek God in their difficulty, repent, and learn His righteousness.

May the Eternal bless you, and reveal His truth, love, power and correction to you!



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## Western Canadian 2012 Feast Site



**Join us again this year for the Feast of Tabernacles 2012, October 1-8, in Canada's "Napa Valley," at the city of Penticton in British Columbia's spectacular Okanagan Valley.**

For Feast and accommodation information, go to <http://cogwebcast.com/>. Or you may contact Jeff Patton @ 250-716-1141 or email Jeff at [cinnabarvista@gmail.com](mailto:cinnabarvista@gmail.com) for additional information. The Western Canada Feast is sponsored by the Winnipeg Church of God and other participating ministries. All are welcome.