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The General Epistle of James

Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

<p>1. Preparation 1: Be quick to hear the Word of God</p> <p>a. By being slow to speak</p> <p>b. By being slow to anger: An angry man does not do what God says, does not live a righteous life</p> <p>c. By putting aside all moral filth</p> <p>d. By putting aside all evil</p> <p>e. By receiving the Word with humility</p> <p>2. Preparation 2: Be a doer of the Word & not a hearer only</p> <p>a. A person who only listens to the Word deceives himself: He soon forgets what he heard</p>	<p>D. The Preparations Necessary to Withstand Trials & Temptation, 1:19-27</p> <p>19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:</p> <p>20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.</p> <p>21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.</p> <p>22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.</p> <p>23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his</p>	<p>natural face in a glass:</p> <p>24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.</p> <p>25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.</p> <p>26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.</p> <p>27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.</p>	<p>a. A doer of the Word is blessed</p> <p>3. Preparation 3: Control the tongue</p> <p>4. Preparation 4: Practice pure religion—visit the needy & keep yourself from being corrupted by the world</p>
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Section I

TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS: THE BASIC FACTS

James 1:2-27

STUDY 4: THE PREPARATIONS NECESSARY TO WITHSTAND TRIALS AND TEMPTATION

TEXT: James 1:19-27

AIM: To plant the Word of God so firmly in your heart that you will be prepared for temptation.

MEMORY VERSE:

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

INTRODUCTION:

“Prepare for battle!” How often these words have caused the hearts and minds of soldiers to race. Yet preparation for battle occurs long before the battle actually takes place. Soldiers have to learn how to attack, how to defend, and how to care for their weapons, each other, and themselves. They have to prepare by doing exactly what they are commanded so that when orders are

given on the battlefield, they are quick and exact in their movements.

So it is in our spiritual warfare. There are several preparations that must be made in order to overcome temptation. Without these preparations, temptation can never be conquered.

OUTLINE:

1. Preparation 1: be quick to hear the Word of God (vv.19-21).
2. Preparation 2: be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only (vv.22-25).
3. Preparation 3: control the tongue (v.26).
4. Preparation 4: practice pure religion—visit the needy and keep yourself from being corrupted by the world (v.27).

1. PREPARATION ONE—BE QUICK TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD (vv.19-21).

The thrust of these three verses is seen in v.21: receiving the Word so that a person's soul will be saved. The greatest temptation in the world is for a person to walk through life doing what he wants and pleases, thereby ignoring, neglecting, and rejecting God. The result of this path is death (Ja.1:15). Therefore, if a person is to be saved—if he is to be delivered from the great temptation that will doom his soul—he must prepare himself. He must be quick to hear the Word of God. How can a person make sure that he hears the Word of God? Make sure that he can receive the Word and save his soul? This passage states that he must do five things.

1. He must be slow to speak. This means that a person must be willing to listen instead of speaking his own ideas about right and wrong and about how a person is saved. He must be willing to listen to God's Word instead of insisting upon what he thinks.

2. He must be slow to wrath or anger. This means at least two things.

⇒ A person must not react against what God says about temptation and sin nor about what God says about salvation. If a person reacts against God's plan of salvation and follows his own plan, he is dooming himself. No person can ever be saved or conquer temptation if he reacts in anger against God's Word of salvation and righteousness.

⇒ A person must not become angry and act against others in wrath. Anger and wrath disturb and distract. An angry person cannot focus his thoughts and spirit upon God's Word, not enough to hear what the Word is saying. An angry person cannot do what God says; he cannot live righteously nor receive the righteousness of God's salvation (v.20).

3. He must put aside all filthiness. The picture is that of taking off a dirty garment and putting it aside. A person must put off every dirty thing and lay it off to the side away from himself. If he enjoys the dirt and filth, then his mind will not be clear, not enough to hear the Word of God. William Barclay makes the point that the word for "filthiness" is sometimes used to refer to wax in the ear.¹⁶ The picture is descriptive: a person with wax in the ear cannot hear the Word of God, not clearly. Therefore, he must take the wax out of his ear and put it away or else he will be deaf to the Word of God.

4. He must put aside all that remains of naughtiness, wickedness, and evil. The idea is this: even after putting aside all filthiness, there will still be some naughtiness or wickedness that will show up within us. Therefore, we must be alert to these uprisings and put them off or lay them aside as well.

5. He must receive the Word of God with meekness. He must be as a child before God our Father, that is, sit before Him meekly just as a child does his father. The idea is that we must be humble, gentle, quiet, and attentive in listening to the Word of God.

Note the word "engrafted" in verse 21. It means to implant; to be born within. When a person listens to and hears the Word of God, the Word is planted within his heart and life. What God says is actually born within his heart, and the person hears exactly what God says. The person's soul is thereby saved, and he conquers and triumphs over all temptation, including the terrible temptation to reject God and live as he wants. He is saved to live eternally with God. The first preparation a person must make to withstand temptation is to be quick to hear the Word of God.

"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Lu.8:15).

ILLUSTRATION:

We must allow God to test our hearts. We must not only let His Word stir us inside but also let it come alive within us, search us, change us. Jesus described this vital fact with the picture of the Sower and the seed. Consider the important teaching concerning the seed of the Word of God in the following quote:

"The heart, that is so prone to be deceitful, must first be dealt with. The good seed is only fruitful in a "good and honest heart.""¹⁷

¹⁶ William Barclay. *The Letters of James and Peter*, p.66.

¹⁷ James Smith. *Handfuls on Purpose*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1947), 7:108.

QUESTIONS:

1. What hinders you from hearing God's Word?
2. What specific things can you do to keep an open heart toward the Word of God?

2. PREPARATION TWO: DO THE WORD OF GOD; DON'T BE A HEARER ONLY (vv.22-25).

We must live and do the Word of God, not just hear it. Note three points.

1. The person who only hears and knows the Word deceives himself. If a person thinks that he can hear and learn the Word of God and then go out and live as he wants, he deceives himself.

APPLICATION:

There are many who sit under the Word of God week after week, and they learn and know as much of the Word as anyone. They think that their listening and learning makes them acceptable to God, that it makes them safe and secure. When they slip into sin, they feel that they can ask God for forgiveness and that He will forgive them. They feel that God would never reject them. But note something, the most critical fact: God does not accept us because we hear and know the Word nor because we confess our sins. Each of these are necessary and very important, but they are not enough.

⇒ God accepts us because we confess and repent. Repentance means that we turn away from our sins and turn to God. God accepts us because we turn to Him and live for Him. When we believe God—really believe Him—then we trust and follow Him, doing exactly what He says.

2. The person who only hears and knows the Word soon forgets what he has heard. If a person does not practice what he learns, it soon fades from memory. It is simply forgotten, and it never becomes a part of the person's life. He is like the person who looks in a mirror to see if he needs to do anything to his appearance, but walks away and thinks of something else.

APPLICATION:

How much like what happens so often. We hear the Word and are convicted of some defect, some shortcoming, some failure that we need to clean up. But as soon as we walk out from under the Word, we are distracted by the world and its affairs and we soon forget to do what the Word of God told us to do—what God Himself has told us to do.

3. The person who obeys and does the Word of God is blessed. Note that the Word of God is called the perfect law of liberty. This means that the Word of God will set a person free from the bondages of sin and death. The Word of God will free a person from all the temptations of this life and give him the full and victorious life for which his soul longs—a life that will continue on and on eternally with God.

A person who obeys and lives the Word of God will find that he is freed from all that enslaves his soul upon earth. He will discover love, joy, and peace—a soul that soars with a sense of...

- Freedom and liberty
- Purpose and meaning
- Security and safety
- Victory over temptation
- Joy and rejoicing
- Assurance and confidence
- Life over death
- Deliverance from sin

“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Ro.2:13).

ILLUSTRATION:

Our obedience to God's Word must follow our hearing it. Without obedience, any attempt to be religious is worthless.

The story is told of two believers discussing how wonderful it would be to tour the Holy Land. This was their conversation:

Believer 1: “Wouldn't it be fantastic to go to the Holy Land, stand on top of Mt. Sinai, and shout out the Ten Commandments right from the very mountain where Moses received them?”

Believer 2: “Yes, it sure would. But do you know what would be even better?”

Believer 1: “What's that?”

Believer 2: “If we kept them.”¹⁸

God does not expect us to be perfect, but He does expect us to be faithful.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some practical ways you can be a doer of the Word?
2. Why is repentance such a necessary step in doing God's Word?
3. How has obeying God's Word been a source of real freedom for you?

¹⁸ Based on Michael P. Green's 1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1989), #984.

3. PREPARATION THREE: CONTROL THE TONGUE (v.26).

If a person thinks that he is religious, that is, acceptable to God, and he does not bridle his tongue, he deceives himself. No matter what he thinks or professes, his religion is empty. The person may be active and very faithful in his religious worship and service, but he is loose with his tongue...

- interrupting and dominating the conversation
- being easily provoked and lashing out at others
- gossiping and telling tales
- criticizing and murmuring
- judging and condemning others
- using slang and cursing
- engaging in suggestive and off-colored talk

As stated, no matter what a person thinks—no matter how religious he is—if he does not bridle his tongue, he deceives himself. His religion is empty. He does not please God and is thereby unacceptable to God. For a person to withstand and to conquer temptation, he must bridle his tongue. This is the third preparation necessary to conquer temptations.

“Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles” (Pr.21:23).

QUESTIONS:

1. Why must the Christian believer in particular control his tongue?
2. In what kinds of situation do you have trouble controlling your tongue? How can you overcome the temptation to speak unwisely?

4. PREPARATION FOUR: PRACTICE PURE RELIGION—VISIT THE NEEDY AND KEEP YOURSELF FROM BEING CORRUPTED BY THE WORLD (v.27).

Two things are said to be necessary in this preparation.

1. A person must visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. This certainly would apply to visiting all who have need within a community, those who are...

- Orphaned
- Newcomers
- Bedridden
- Widowed
- Lost or unsaved
- Lonely
- Shut-in
- Fatherless or motherless
- Grieved

Whatever their need, God expects us to visit them. He expects us to reach our community. Letting the community know that

one really cares will cause many to call upon the believers of the church when the hour of crisis strikes, and it will strike, for it strikes us all. In addition to this, every church should, of course, have genuine believers who can share Christ with the lost.

2. A person must keep himself unspotted from the world. Pure religion does not become corrupted with false beliefs or with false religion. It holds to the purity of the gospel and to the Word of God.

Pure religion focuses upon the power of God to change lives eternally and it reaches out to change people’s lives by visiting them. Pure religion does not become morally corrupt; it does not become entangled with the affairs and pleasures of this world. True religion stirs people to separate themselves from the things of this world that arouse their fleshly desires and cravings. This is a necessary preparation if a person is to conquer the temptations and sins of this world.

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Mt.5:8).

ILLUSTRATION:

There is an old quote that says, “Quite often when a man thinks his mind is getting broader, it’s only his conscience stretching.” Listen to the pointed words of one mother’s son as he describes it further:

A mother was helping her son one day with his spelling assignment and they came to the words conscious and conscience. She asked her son, “Do you know the difference between these two words?”

He immediately replied, “Sure, Mom. Conscious is when you are aware of something. And conscience is when you wish you weren’t.”¹⁹

If we are to keep ourselves pure, we must listen to the warnings of the Holy Spirit and not allow the world to corrupt us.

QUESTIONS:

1. In everyday society, what does it mean to have pure religion? To truly minister to others?
2. Whose life can you touch today with a caring visit? A helping hand?

¹⁹ God’s Little Devotional Book. (Tulsa, OK: Honor Books, Inc., 1995), pp.280-81.

SUMMARY:

We must be prepared for trials and temptations. It is not a question of whether trials will come; it is only a matter of when they will come. That is one reason the Word of God is so important in helping us to stand true during times of testing.

As believers, we should be glad to hear the Word of God. We should accept it with great joy and treasure it in our hearts. After all, the same Word that saved us from sin has the power to keep us from sin. But we must apply it to our hearts so that we will be prepared to fight temptation. We must do four things: We must:

1. Be quick to hear the Word of God.
2. Be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only.
3. Control the tongue.
4. Practice pure religion—visit the needy and keep ourselves from being corrupted by the world.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES:

(Reflection and Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2. The thing that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Prayer of commitment:

END

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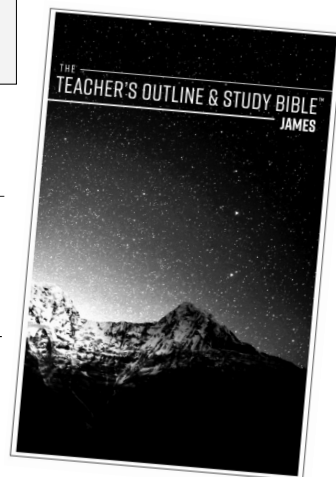
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Embracing Divinely Created Womanhood

—by Norma Miller

God's Word has so much to teach us about womanhood and its beautiful place to play in God's plan on earth. So many of these truths are missed, forgotten, and ever perverted by false religion. Let's go to the Word to find some of these.

First of all, I would like to visit the book of beginnings, Genesis chapter 2:18–25. Here we see that God declared it was not good for the man to be alone, and that He creates the woman to be a helper for him. We see that the two were created as equal counterparts, intended to work together. Both needed. Both valued - to create together an earthly picture of a perfect God. Alone, man can not completely depict God. Alone, a woman cannot depict God. However, each of them separately shares part of God's divine nature, and

together, in God's will, walking out His standard for marriage, they share a beautiful picture of our amazing God.

The enemy has done so much to pervert and twist this amazing picture - in fact, he has gone to great lengths to do so. Already, we see him at work in Genesis 3, where the serpent approaches Eve to get her to act independently of Adam so he could tempt her to eat of the forbidden fruit. As a result, she was deceived. We also see Adam, who was with his wife, go silent and not take leadership to protect his wife, and instead to join in this with her.

As a result, a curse came upon them both. This curse was never part of God's plan- it was something that happened as a

result of both the man and the woman disobeying God's divine design for them. With this curse came several aspects, but the one I want to cover today is the one found in the last part of verse 16, where God says to Eve, *"Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."*

There are many and varying explanations and translations for this, but most of them express that the relationship between husband and wife changed that day and that Adam had a more dominating relationship with his wife from that day forward.

Don't we as women all understand well the phrase that "her desire shall be for, or

Continued on Next Page

toward, her husband?" We long for our husband to love us, to understand us, to spend time with us. As women, we often feel that we are at the mercy of his long hours at work or whatever may be taking his attentions.

The good news is that Jesus came to be the curse for us!

Jon Bloom, from *Desiring God*, says this:

Do you see what happened? As long as Adam and Eve believed God, they would have life — abundant life, full of the joy of sweet fellowship with their Father. Trusting God with all their heart would have protected them.

But, when they listened to a deceiver and trusted in their own understanding (Proverbs 3:5), it opened to them a world of horror. Their eyes, and the eyes of all of us descendants, were opened to evil and blinding complexities that none of us have the capacity to grasp. Fear and self-worship turned us pathologically selfish. We became susceptible to all sorts of deception.

God pronounced a curse on them that we, who sin like them, have inherited (Genesis 3:17–19). Death entered the human experience and with it all sorts of affliction and trouble.

When Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life*," what He meant was that He had come to reverse this curse.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Jesus came to bear "*our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness*" (1 Peter 2:24).

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

But Jesus only reverses the curse for all who will believe in him. That's why He says, "*He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live*" (John 11:25).

Why is believing so crucial to Jesus? Because the fall of Adam and Eve was the failure to believe in God. "*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever*" (Romans 1:25). This is a dishonoring, a treason of such magnitude that a holy God cannot tolerate and be righteous. Such guilt must receive its just penalty.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Jesus pays the penalty for this treason by bearing the curse (Galatians 3:13) for everyone who will trust His word over Satan's or their own understanding. And everyone who believes in Him will be raised from the dead, just as Jesus was resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:52–53). And more than that...¹

Galatians 3:13 tells us that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. This is great news! This means we no longer need to live under the curses that sin brought - if we submit our lives to Christ and are redeemed! We get to walk in true intimacy with Him!

Religion and different cultures have done much to oppress women. The truth is that God created women as a beautiful repre-

¹ Bloom, Jon. "Jesus Came to Reverse the Curse." *Desiring God*, 3 May 2013, www.desiringgod.org/articles/jesus-came-to-reverse-the-curse.

sentation of the softer, creative, nurturing aspects of Himself, and woman was created as a helper for the man. Lest we become offended that we are "helpers," I would like to point out that the Hebrew word used for helper was actually the same word used for the Holy Spirit being our helper. I don't believe this means we are to be the Holy Spirit to our husbands, but I do believe that it gives us an idea of the importance of our role and the influence that we have. It is not a lesser or lower place. It is a different role from the man. We need to embrace our role as wives and as women, and realize that we were carefully designed and created in God's image, and we are valuable and unique, and not created as lesser than men.



1 Corinthians 11:11–12 tells us that the woman and the man are not independent of each other or more important than each other but the woman came from the man and the man came through the woman, but all things are from God.

We do not need to feel threatened by or jealous of men, for they represent the Lord as well, and are uniquely designed to carry a different side of His nature. TOGETHER we carry out His plans and His purposes!

Today I would simply like to encourage all women of all ages, backgrounds, and races: embrace yourself for who you are as a woman! Embrace your femininity as a glorious gift from God, and embrace the opportunity that we have to carry this part of God's nature to the world, and that we get to partner with God's dear sons who carry a different part of His nature.

END

Step Out of the Boat Conference

—by Joe Keim

March 25, 26, 27

For several years, the Lord has burdened me to host a conference—a conference where people from all walks of life gather together in one place to get challenged and be encouraged to walk in the fullness of God. In 2020, Joseph Graber, myself and a few other godly men met in Holmes County to discuss the details, come up with a date and find a place to meet, but it never happened. I'm not sure why, other than it was not God's timing. But now that we have entered 2021, I am thoroughly convinced that we must move forward with this conference.

The conference dates are set for March 25, 26, and 27 of this year. You are invited to come. In fact, I ask you with a sincere heart, to seriously pray and seek the heart of God before you just shrug this invitation off and continue on with your life as it is.

Consider that this is our generation. It is our turn to make an eternal impact. Others before us had their chance. Now it is ours.

So, come on, move away from your comfort zone and join us this March for the *Step Out of the Boat Conference*. I promise, you will be challenged to get busy about our heavenly Father's business, as well as encouraged in your faith. You desperately need it, and so do we!

As the world gets darker, dives deeper into the pit of sin, and godlessness and persecution begin to show up at our own doorsteps, one thing is more and more clear: you need me and I need you.

Let's put our petty differences aside, and together, fall at the feet of Jesus and ask for His mercy and anointing.

What to expect:

1. Common people like yourself who

want more of God, but don't really know how to get out of the rut and stay out.

2. Fifteen to twenty men of God, filled with the Spirit, are scheduled to preach and share their testimonies.
3. Jimmi DeLay, a preacher and friend of mine, will lead us in worship.
4. Times of prayer will be offered up on behalf of those who are desperate for more of God in their life.

The conference will begin right at 7pm on Thursday, March 25, go all day Friday and end about noon on Saturday. A light breakfast (Friday and Saturday) and full meals (Friday) will be included. If you need a place to stay for the night, you can either stay at a local motel in Ashland, OH, or we will find a home for you.

We are requesting that attendees register for the conference. It is the only way for us to know how much food to prepare. We are also suggesting a registration payment of \$25/person, \$40/couple, or \$60/family when you register.

Date: March 25, 26, and 27

Place: Bethel Baptist Church

Location: Savannah, OH (15 minutes from downtown Ashland, OH)

Address: 575 US-250, Greenwich, OH

Phone: (419) 962-1515

You can register in the following ways:

1. Send a letter with all the names coming to the conference. Please include the age of anyone 12 and under. (Children's program and nursery provided throughout conference.)
2. Call our office at (419) 962-1515.

If you come just as you are ... expecting God to move in your life ... I assure you

that you will leave a totally changed person, on fire for God!!!

Bring your family and your friends. Do not miss this life changing event.

Matthew 14:28-29

And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

This "come" was spoken by the One who made all things (John 1:3), and this one word had just as much power in it as the words that were spoken at creation. This was where the power came from for Peter to walk on the water. Likewise, any word spoken to us by God carries in itself the anointing and power it takes to fulfill that word if we will release it by believing it and acting on it.

Despite all the criticism that might be said about Peter in this instance, he did walk on the water. There were eleven other disciples in the boat. Although they clearly saw Jesus and Peter walking on the water, they still did not participate. One of the important steps in receiving a miracle from God is to leave the security of your natural resources (step out of your boat), and put yourself in the position where a miracle from God has to hold you up. God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11). Any of the disciples could have walked on the water if they would have asked - and stepped out of the boat.



Since I have time on my hands, I thought I would take a peek, a reality-centered, Kingdom-focused, Biblical look at things involved in raising children.

Happy conversations around the table, family sharing with one another, caring for each other, and bringing the home to a place of rest, should be a goal. Children are born with a desire to please their father, so he should feed that desire in them. They grow to love their mother, for she is the source of nurture and care to them early in their life. These heart-strings are extremely important for anything else to go right, moving forward.

The following are some simple realities:

1. The child needs to know what the word ‘NO’ means well before he is two years old. Someone, somewhere, is going to teach the child this. If the child enters life and has not been taught this inside of the framework of love and authority by his parents, something deep within will begin to simmer in violation. That violated feeling will fester, then explode in rebellion and anger in later teen years.

It is not difficult to teach, but it demands consistency. This requires sacrifice, time, and intent on the parents’ part. When the child is crawling around, he should already be aware. Take him into the living room, take him around the room, show him objects that he may NOT touch. Tell him, “That is a NO.” Then let him play. He will wait until you are in a conversation, then crawl over to an object, and contemplate.... look at you, and deliberate. He will soon reach out and touch it.

Dad will need to get up, pick up the child, tell him firmly, “NO,” snip his hand, and then hold him and speak affirmation until he feels secure again.

The loss of the parent’s approval is felt, along with temporary pain. An association is formed in the brain, between

wrong decisions and pain, much like touching a hot stove. The child’s mind is wired to receive this as instruction; that ‘NO’ means pain. Usually, a couple of evenings of this dedicated attention will establish the word, ‘NO.’ This gives the child a free gift that will benefit him for the rest of his life. Failure to give it, is abusive and cruel.

2. A strong association between wrong decisions and pain needs to be established. Life will force this reality on anyone who refuses to learn it otherwise. Some people go all the way to their grave insistant on making wrong decisions and trying to get around the pain of it all, but it never works. Kingdom economy and usefulness demands that one understands this principle.

Hear. Do. Obey. = Blessing
Disobey = Pain.

The wise man built his house on a rock.

Spanking was never intended to be a “beating into compliance” or something done in a rage, personal hurt, or offense of the parents. It was intended to help establish in the child’s psyche that wrong choices bring pain. Spanking also brings relief to a violated conscience. The child, in his spirit, knows that justice has been violated by his wrong action. He feels a need for justice. If that need for justice is not answered, the conscience seethes, the face grows cloudy, the child becomes fussy and irritable, the relationship gets strained, the parents become stressed, and good behavior flushes down the toilet. It becomes a game of “Who-Explodes-First,” with mom crying because she lost.

In this scenario, everyone loses. The parents explode in anger and beat the child out of anger. This further damages the child, and leaves scars on their heart. Twenty-five years later, this child is a parent. Convinced that the beatings were

all wrong, he attempts to raise the next generation with no association with pain. This is ALSO a response out of woundedness and produces serious wounds in helpless children. Poor babies grow up without intentional training and helplessly face the feelingless systems of this world. The systems chew them up and spit them out as debris. Somewhere in the process, they completely reject their parent, whom they rightfully see as selfish adults responding out of their own pain, instead of responding out of love and Truth.

Raising children is intended to help you locate unhealed areas in your own heart. God is right. His ways are right. He invented the notion of chastening children. He is the One who has a right to be listened to. Let’s find Christ, find healing in the stripes He bore, and bring a balanced set of realities to our children. Let’s help them establish a strong sense of cause and effect, misbehavior and pain, good behavior and approval — before they are crushed by those realities in this cruel world.

(I do not comprehend the strong aversion to this concept in today’s world. It is a creational reality, a Biblical reality, a spiritual reality, a legal reality, and a Kingdom reality. Resisting it and hating on it looks like a hatred for wisdom in my world. I am open to explanations.)

3. Separate between behavior and identity. The child’s name has a meaning. Speak it over him. Remind him constantly, that his identity is in WHO he is, not in what he does or accomplishes. Praise his accomplishment, to be sure, but that is separate from his identity. “You are a good boy, Ben, and you are growing up to be a mighty warrior for the Lord. You did a good job of cleaning up your food.” These refrains will follow him all the days of his life, subconsciously. That is

why phrases like “never amount to anything” burn so deeply inside, and damage so much for so long.

“Ten pounds of praise, for every pound of correction,” is a decent rule of thumb. Even in correction, separate identity from behavior. God does this for us, as His children.

4. Bible stories, and instruction, cannot be over-played. Stories of Biblical history, stories of Jesus, etc., are part of moral fabric instilled into the interior of a child, often before cognizance. My earliest memories are stories of Daniel; I so admired

him, I cried that I wasn’t named Daniel. So, my dad told me the story of Stephen, who stood alone.

Determinations are made very early, by children. Dads and grandpas need to be speaking stories of God’s perspective in history to little minds that cannot comprehend them yet. This establishes a moral compass in spirit, a foundation unshakeable, that guides later life. A parent who withholds that great benefit, because of personal wounds from religion, is cheating a child out of something that will never be replaced. He will subconsciously hold it

against you..... you had something of value, that he needed, and you refused to give it to him. That equals violation of spirit, deep within. It is not easily erased.

Story records.... recordings of Scripture playing quietly while the children are drifting off to sleep, daily routine of family worship, integration of Scripture into educational material— all are important tools not to be overlooked. It is especially true of educational material; this again is a God-idea.

Hopefully, this helps. It is not intended to be entire or complete, but just a few tips.

Living in a Snow Globe

— by Emanuel Schrock

Have you ever shaken a snow globe? One moment the world inside the globe is picture-perfect. The next, everything is a swirling mess of glitter and confusion until it all settles down again.

Have you ever imagined living INSIDE a snow globe? Well, you are.

Our world is in the hands of forces much greater than ourselves. Everything that can be shaken will be shaken, and already many people don’t know what is up or down, right or left. It seems like some sinister personality is playing shadow tricks with us. Almost everything we thought was reality is proving to be a shadow, only to be replaced by the next false reality.

It is in times like these, and much worse to come, that Jesus said men’s hearts would fail. A boat that is not anchored will flounder in a storm. If you are not anchored on the Truth, you will also flounder.

The enemy of your soul does not care much which of his puppets rule the political stage. What he is after is your deception. Like the serpent that he is, he has a deadly intrigue in keeping you

enamored and captivated with his own seductive and deadly moves. Politics and religion are the oldest tricks in his book.

Snap out of it! Awake, sleeper, and Christ will give you light! The Kingdom of God is here, and our salvation is much closer than when we first believed. Do not let the times draw your heart away from the soon-coming Bridegroom.



The Truth is a person: Jesus. Love Him. Worship Him in Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such. Follow Him. Listen to His voice. Obey Him. Our faith was built for such a time as this. The church of God is the pillar and ground of the Truth, and as all other truth is shaken, ours is greater than ever.

During this time, it has been hard for me (and many other believers that I see struggling with the same) to not be unreasonably consumed with going after all the “inside information” that is out there clamoring for attention. For all of the hype, I do not feel much informed or in any advantage.

We have an inside Informant, and we need to be listening to Him. Each of us have the witness of God within us, an ever-present Unction from the Holy One, leading us into all truth and planting our feet on solid ground. Let us heed Him, and nothing less. Listen for His quiet voice, for it remains persistent through the shaking.

Hebrews 12:25-29

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.”

I have no idea where your mind goes when you think of repentance. Maybe you think about a confession, or the words, “I’m sorry.” Maybe you think about King David and his repentance.

Most of us think of repentance as an apology or confession, with a promise to not offend again. The offender is given the benefit of the doubt and the time needed to “prove” his/her repentance. Even in cases where there has been serious sexual sin/crimes committed against women and children, repentance is painted as a vague confession with a promise to do better.

But is this really what repentance is and how it works?

Going straight to the Bible for the definition opened my eyes to the reality that my understanding of repentance was, at best, flawed.

The Biblical definition of repentance comes from a Greek word that means “to think differently.” It is a change of mind and heart. In other words, when repentance happens, it will be obvious. It is a heart change that is expressed by actions. Luke 3:8 makes this very clear:

“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of” [and consistent with your] *“repentance”* [that is, live changed lives, turn from sin and seek God and His righteousness].

Anyone can articulate a well-worded apology, never offend again, and still be unrepentant. On the contrary, when repentance has taken place, everyone will know – the attitudes, thought

process, and actions of the offender will be radically different than before.

Consider the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. After he found himself with nothing to eat, he remembered his father’s house. Listen to his thought process here (vv. 17-19):

“And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.”

Sounds pretty good, right? But is he repentant or is he simply going back because he got “stuck”? Is he remorseful because he sinned, or because he doesn’t have any food?

Listen to what he actually tells his father upon meeting him (v21):

“And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.”

Do you see the difference? He acknowledges his sin without demanding *anything* in return. He has hit “rock bottom” and does not even ask to be a hired servant so he can at least have food. He just says, “I’m sorry. I have sinned.”

We all love redemption stories. We want to hear how God turns lives around and

makes something beautiful out of the ugly. But in some cases, we overlook the fact that repentance is different than an apology. We prefer a fast “fix” and as little messiness as possible. Consequently, we don’t look for fruits of repentance.

Can we know if someone is repentant by how they act when confronted with sin? Can we know if an offender has godly sorrow?

I think there are some clues as to where the offender’s heart is if we are willing to look for the fruits of repentance. Here are a few of them:

Complete Acknowledgment of Sin

One of the most important aspects about repentance is truth. The truth must be told in its entirety. Unless there is full acknowledgment of sin and wrongdoing, there is no repentance.

No Excuses

Along with the acknowledgment of sin, there must be no excuses for why the offender sinned. If the offender’s confession has excuses in it, it is questionable whether the confession is genuine or if it was only done to “save face”.

No Minimization of the Action or Damage the Action Caused

Any kind of minimization should give us a bunch of red flags. When the offender says things like, “What I did made him/her *feel* hurt...” that is minimizing the damage. The survivor doesn’t just feel hurt; *they were hurt*. If a sexual offender describes his/her sin using terms such as “moral failure” instead of “I raped her”

or “I molested him,” there is a problem. Repentance never sugar-coats truth.

Acceptance of all Consequences (including civil)

If the offender isn’t willing to accept consequences for the sin, then there likely hasn’t been repentance. Repentance. An offender who “confesses” but is not willing to pay the consequences of his/her sin, is not repentant. Repentance is far more than a well-worded apology. A repentant offender will willingly turn himself/herself in to civil authorities for the crimes committed.

No Forced “Forgiveness” or a “Get over it” Attitude

If an offender tries to “make everything all better” by begging or forcing the survivor, the survivor’s family or their church family to “forgive” (which is often used by offenders to get people to “shut up” and forget), it’s safe to assume there hasn’t been repentance. A repentant offender understands the depravity of his/her own heart and the damage his/her actions caused – enough to realized he/she doesn’t deserve forgiveness or mercy.

By the way, the survivor’s forgiveness doesn’t wipe consequences away for the offender, but that subject is for another day.

Respectful Obedience of the Boundaries set up by the Offended

A repentant heart will welcome boundaries and respect them. Repentance says, “I hurt you deeply and I understand why you can’t trust me. If you never want to see me again, I understand. If you need space, I get that.” When an offender violates even small boundaries set up by the survivor, their “repentance” needs to be questioned.

Attitude of “Godly Sorrow”

Any time there’s repentance, there will always be Godly sorrow. There’s a big difference between being sorry because you got caught OR being sorry because of the pain you’ve caused the offended and your own family. An offender who has godly sorrow grieves for the hurt and pain that he/she caused, while a sorrow of being caught is focused on escaping consequences and polishing a facade of godliness.

In repentance, the truth about the action and the pain that action caused is held up and valued highly. Truth is key. In unrepentance, truth is discouraged and even actively hidden. When there is deception instead of truth, repentance hasn’t taken place. When there is an effort to “make” the offended forgive or trust the offender, the “repentance” of the offender needs to be questioned. When an effort is made to keep a good “Christian” reputation intact, there has not been repentance. Repentance kicks self-preservation in the face. When there is no acceptance of consequences and boundaries, the fruits of repentance are not there.

”By their fruits, ye shall know them,”
Jesus once said.

**In other words, when there is
repentance, you will know it.**

It’s that simple.

Note: If you wish to study repentance for yourself, compare Saul’s confession with David’s confession. Ask yourself why God accepted David’s and not Saul’s.



Just a Season

It’s winter now.

The trees are bare.

Sunshine rare.

The Earth is cold

The wind bold.

No flowers, no leaves

No birds, no bees

All color has fled

The landscape dead.

It’s winter here too –

In my heart.

My tears fall down

To the ground.

I shiver. It’s cold.

The wind is bold.

I am so weak

My body speaks.

I hurt everywhere.

My heart bare.

But winter is a season.

One day soon

The flowers shall bloom.

The sun will shine,

Buds on the vine.

Color will appear

On the cold sphere.

The birds will sing

For it will be Spring.

The winter in my heart –

It’s just a season.

One day soon,

I too, shall bloom.

I will shine,

New growth on my vine.

The crippling fear

Will disappear.

I shall sing

For it will be Spring.

He promised. And I believe.

In the scope of time,

Winter is fleeting

Yet in the grime,

It feels like a beating.

So I patiently wait

Like the sailors of late

Watching for Light

In the stormy night.

—Ann Peachey Detweiler



END

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March

Book of Romans (Romans 2:1-16)

Message by Michael Pearl.

You are Secure

Fear is a paralyzing emotion. Are you afraid of getting sick, of civil unrest, of losing your job, of your kids turning out alright, of having enough money? The bottom-line question is: How do we find security in fearful times? Join Chip Ingram for the answer.

Freedom of Forgiveness

Matthew 6:14 says, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." The two great enemies against the human soul are guilt and bitterness. The freedom of forgiveness is the only thing that can combat them. We are freed from guilt when we are forgiven by God. We are freed from bitterness when we forgive others. Message by Adrian Rogers.

Christian Theology – The Trinity (part 2 of 11)

Message by Pastor John Marino.

April

Book of Romans (Romans 2:17-3:4)

Message by Michael Pearl.

You are Competent

Shame is a powerful, debilitating emotion that causes us to withdraw from others. Sometimes we even engage in self-destructive behavior to try to make up for it somehow. Chip Ingram helps us learn how to overcome the shame in our lives.

When Prayer Seems Unanswered

The Bible instructs us to pray without ceasing, but so many times, we pray and seek God, ask according to His will; and yet our prayer seems unanswered. At the beginning of the book of Luke, we meet Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth; both righteous before God, blameless, yet barren. They were well in their old age, and without any children which they had prayed for their whole lives. We can learn three things from Zacharias and Elizabeth when prayer seems unanswered. Message by Adrian Rogers.

Christian Theology - God the Father (part 3 of 11)

Message by Pastor John Marino.

May

Book of Romans (Romans 3:5-23)

Message by Michael Pearl.

You are Beautiful

What do you do when you hear nice things about yourself but in your heart of hearts, you just don't believe it? You can brush compliments aside—but what if it is God? How do you overcome feelings that get in the way of believing good things that God says about you? Don't miss this program by Chip Ingram!

Marriage (part 1 of 3)

Modern culture has "redefined" marriage to be whatever feels "right" to you. But the biblical roots to marriage go against the current of our present culture. What is marriage according to Scripture? What did God design marriage to represent? Message by Pastor John Marino.

Christian Theology - God the Son (part 4 of 11)

Correct doctrine is the foundation of our faith as Christians. In this eleven part series on Christian theology, we explore what the Bible teaches on sound doctrine regarding sin, man, salvation, and other topics. Message by Pastor John Marino.

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The cost of *The Amish Voice* is \$.50 a copy and is totally funded by readers from across our great country who appreciate the ministry and care to support it. If the Lord would lay it on your heart to come alongside of us by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit, as well as highly appreciated. Thank you. —Joe Keim, Executive Director

Feedback and Response

1

Please do not send us a single issue of the false doctrine you print. It is clearly false doctrine. The Lord will judge. The reason we unsubscribed is because of false doctrine, and did not Jesus say we should be careful of wolves that come dressed in sheep clothing. No, it's not even dressed in sheep clothing - it's wolves through and through. Don't want to hear more from you. — AM

I wish you would have taken the time to explain why you feel we are giving out false doctrine. You obviously do not believe that the doctrine we write about aligns with what you believe. This leaves me with some questions:

- What measuring stick are you using to measure our doctrine?
- Is your measuring stick in alignment with God's Word, or are you measuring our doctrine with a list of personal preferences?
- Think! Is your measuring stick worth dying for?

Only you can answer these questions. There is a day coming when we will be measured by the very same measuring stick that we use on each other.

If your measuring stick and mine are different—it appears they are—it would be to our advantage to figure out who is holding the right one.

Instead of judging me without giving details, why don't we sit down, lay all pride aside, and do what the early church did?

Acts 17:11 says,

“These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

Why were the Bereans more noble (more honorable)? Because they didn't run, and

they didn't judge. Instead, they came together and *“sought the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*

I challenge you to do the same! We have little time to spare. Lay your pride aside and let's be noble like the Bereans and search the scriptures daily to see why you feel we are teaching false doctrine and are wolves in sheep's clothing.

Heavenly Father, I sincerely pray for AM. Soften his heart and give him a deep desire to know and follow You. Draw near to him and fill him with Your Spirit. Make the scriptures come alive in his heart and devour his body, his spirit and his soul. Thank you Father for answering our cry. —Joe Keim

2

We are not interested in your so called *Amish Voice*. Is it honest and upright to call it Amish? I know of no Old Order Amish that believes as you do. Paul said that you will be saved through hope. I think it is yours that need to read the whole Bible—won't you? If we had no hope, there wouldn't be a church. I could write lots more, but the Bible is for bettering one's self, not to find fault with others. I do not wish for our *Amish Voice* newsletter here or anywhere in this settlement!!! —SG

Thank you for your letter. You bring up some good points. Think back a couple of thousand years, when the new convert, Paul, was proclaiming the truth of the gospel to the Jews and gentiles. Can you just imagine some of the Orthodox Jews telling Paul that he should not call himself a Jew—that they did not know of any Orthodox Jews who believed as he did—that he should not claim to teach the Jewish Scriptures and to speak as a Jew to the Jews?

I am glad that Paul kept going. Despite rejection and opposition from the very religious ones, he continued to proclaim the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Having lived a life of rules and ritual, even of prayers and studying the

religious laws, Paul was not free until he was free in Christ alone—and He remained a Jew, seeking to save the lost.

You are right, too, in that many do not believe God's truth. It has always been that way. I am glad to report, though, that there are indeed an increasing number of Amish who are being born again, who are being set free from sin and self and rules, and who choose to gladly remain Amish— yet now living with true forgiveness, joy, hope, peace, and eternal life.

As for being saved by hope: Yes, Paul wrote that in Romans 8. I hope you will read the entire chapter. The beginning of that chapter says, *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh,*

but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Do you see? Those who have faith in Christ Jesus have been set free from the law! We could not do it on our own or by trying to follow the law, *“but if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you”* (Romans 8:11).

Does God's Spirit dwell in you? Have you been born again, born of the Spirit, as Jesus taught? If so, then you, too, can look forward with expectant hope, as Paul says, to eternal life in Christ. Paul is not talking

Continued on Next Page

This morning I am thinking about my dad. He was always on the quiet side, and worked hard all his life. He would spend a lot of time in our small shop at home—that is how he got the nickname “Tinker Dan”.

Dad was always looked down upon by other Amish men. As a boy growing up, I remember seeing ministers get a mocking smile on their faces when talking about my dad. I remember feeling so bad inside when I saw that. What they did not perceive is that he had a lot more understanding about the things of God than they could ever know.

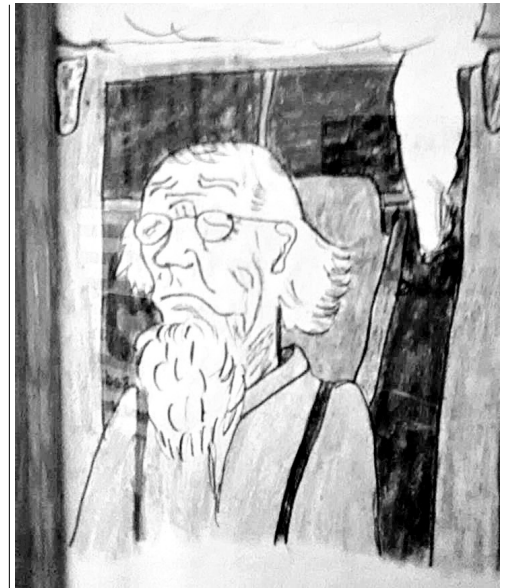
I remember how Dad would hunger after God. He would often read the Bible by himself for hours, of course in German. Even my mom would get tired of him reading the Bible and complained of him reading it too much.

One day, when I was 27 years old, the Holy Spirit was dealing with my life. I was so miserabCale that I went to see my dad. I poured my heart out to him about how and why the Amish believed what they believed, and did what they did. He listened to me until I was finished, and

then simply said; “In the Bible it says ‘Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.’” Dad did not tell me to stay Amish, or to obey the Amish rules and ordinances, but he just simply told me to seek God.

Our mind is very, very powerful. Some of the brightest minds of the world have accomplished some tremendous feats. I am not saying all of this is bad, but what I am saying is that the brightest of the brightest minds in the world cannot understand the things of the Holy Spirit, which are the things Of God! The brightest minds will never understand how to do church, or how to do things that increases membership. Ministers will never become more effective by planning how and where they want to minister with the power of our natural mind. Only if we allow our old Adam mind to be put out of commission by the Power of God, and just simply seek the mind of the Holy Spirit, which is the Mind of Christ, will we accomplish and do the will of God on earth as it is in Heaven!!

I believe that there are so many traditional doctrines of men today in the Church



that the human mind has thought up and completely miss-understood the text and the meaning of the Scripture. In the past, the brightest of minds have tried to figure out end times, but so far they have always been wrong. It is no wonder many have given up on Christianity.

Could it be that God wants us to simply do what my Amish dad advised me to do 48 years ago;

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7)?

Feedback - from Previous Page

of a mere, “I hope I will go to heaven,” but Paul is telling those who have been born of the Spirit that their hope and their trust is in Christ, and they can expectantly look forward to the day when God will make all things new. As Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4, those who trust in Jesus do not grieve as those who have no hope, for we have hope—we know what the future holds, and we know that He holds us!

May you not only seek the truth contained in the *Amish Voice*, but may you and all people hear God’s voice in the Scriptures and by His Spirit as He pleads with us to put our faith and hope in His Son, Jesus Christ.

—Paul Miller

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Praise God, that in the name of Jesus, this can be reversed. If you have been involved in anything that allowed Satan access to you, even in innocence, you need to cut it off. In the name of Jesus, and in the power of His blood, and in the power of the resurrection, pray for God to take away all ground that was lost and commit to follow Jesus only. Ask for His power in your life. Ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit that will guide you into all truth. God will gladly give to those who ask.

Expose the enemy at every opportunity. Always remember that the power of sin is in its secrecy. Expose sin. *“Submit yourselves therefor to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you”* (James 4:7). Satan and his demons hate to hear the name of Jesus, or hear about the blood. Let them hear it often. Remind them that you have been redeemed by the Son of God, and that you are committed to serve Him, and Him only, all the days of your life. Then do it.

Witchcraft is rampant in lots of conservative groups. Dabbling in witchcraft allows Satan access into the person's heart and soul. Satan then uses that access to do what he does best: kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10).

Many of these people, through ignorance, no doubt, defend these practices for a variety of reasons, such as:

1. My (brother, uncle, grandpa, father, good friend) has done this for years. They don't look evil, and they are a good person, etc.
2. It works, so it must be from a good source. This argument is very common.
3. Are you saying that our forefathers, who we respect highly, were wrong?

The list could go on. Seldom will a defender of witchcraft look at scripture.

Not surprising.

Let us look at one such practice: water witching, or water smelling. Divining is another name, as is dowsing.

Here is the definition for the above;

“Water witching generally refers to the practice of walking over an area with a forked stick, or bent rods or something similar, and by observing the apparatus moving, one can determine below-ground water or sometimes minerals. The subject has been debated for hundreds, if not thousands of years.”

“There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth DIVINATION, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12a).

The above verse clearly states what God thinks of the strange or unknown powers. Let's look at what the New Testament has to say about the same.

In Acts chapter 16, Paul met a young girl who was "POSSESSED WITH A SPIRIT OF DIVINATION." This girl brought her masters a lot of money by soothsaying (the art or gift of prophesy, or the pretense thereof, divination, etc.). Paul was grieved at what the spirit was doing and he turned and said to the spirit,

“I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour” (Acts 16:18b).

Her masters were greatly displeased that their source of income was gone. They had Paul and Silas beaten and imprisoned. Here it is clear that this girl's

ability came from a spirit that possessed her.

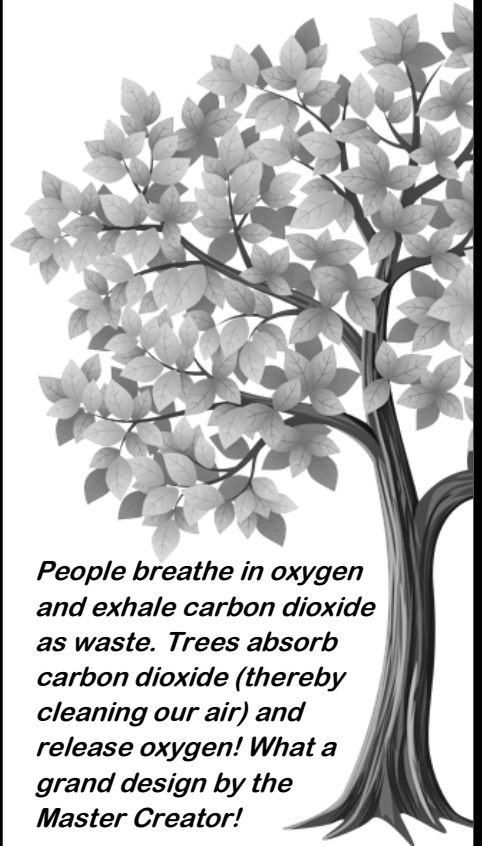
The subject of water witching has brought out strong feelings, both pro and con, in many people. I have been asked to write about it. I was a bit reluctant because of the potential of strong feelings, but God gave me a peace about it. You are welcome to express your thoughts. I do ask that you be like a LED bulb rather than a heat lamp. A LED bulb gives light, without heat.

I have given scripture out of both the Old and the New. I have also observed people practicing water witching. Years ago, I tried it in ignorance, but it did not work for me. I would not ever want to try it again.

Some say that water witching is electric power or currant working through some people. There is no scientific explanation for water witching, or for the source of its power.

END

Did You Know?



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Witchcraft

—By John Weaver

WITCHCRAFT: The use of spells, invocation of spirits, communication with the devil or a familiar spirit or medium.

There are only two sources of spiritual power: 1) From almighty God. 2) From our enemy, Satan. Satan has a lot of power. But God has all power. It is absolutely imperative that we understand the difference of these power sources. Many people do not. It is a dangerous ignorance to say that something must be of God because, "It works."

Witchcraft is tapping into or using Satan's power. Divination is similar. It is the practice of seeking knowledge of the future or of the unknown by supernatural means. Christians should have absolutely nothing to do with anything related to the spirit world, except what comes from the Holy Spirit of God. The spirit world is real, but it is not innocent. REPEAT. The spirit world is real, but it is not innocent. It is far from innocent.

Many from conservative, or ultra-conservative Anabaptist groups have been involved in using unknown powers. It is often used for healing (bracha), for telling the future, to cast spells, or about anything else. I would say that much of this has been practiced in ignorance, not

realizing the source of the unknown power or energy. The Bible says that Satan is out to kill, steal, and destroy. WE SHOULD NOT BE IGNORANT OF HIS DEVICES.

Let me expose one of those devices: being involved in anything that utilizes the wrong kind of power. When a person allows themselves to be subject to an unknown power, it opens a door for Satan into their lives, and he will exploit that person for his agenda. Dangerous indeed.

All kinds of witchcraft, superstitions, and divination are not from God. Involvement in these will give Satan access to the person, to control and use that person for all kinds of evil. It is shocking to hear of the abuse that is rampant in conservative groups where the above-mentioned powers are practiced. I see a connection.

Why, or how, can all manner of sexual sin be rampant in these groups? Fornication, adultery, incest, rape, homosexuality, etc. It is shocking. How can these things happen? What we know is likely just the tip of the iceberg. We must face and expose these things for what they are.

In the first two chapters of Romans, we

read of the foolishness of man, and what happens when God is not honored or given His rightful place. When a man allows Satan to use him instead of exposing him, all kinds of evil will come about, and God will take away His hedge of protection.

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God... their foolish heart was darkened, professing themselves to be wise they became fools... God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts... for this cause, God gave them up to vile affections," and "God gave them over to a reprobate mind." (Romans 1:21-28)

God has given us access to His power through Jesus Christ. We need not fear Satan. He is powerless in the presence of a believer and follower of Jesus. But if we open ourselves to the wrong kind of power, we lose that protection. Satan will exploit and manipulate such a person to do all kinds of evil. That person becomes powerless to resist. The power of God has been exchanged for the power of the enemy.

Continued on Page 15