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The General Epistle of James

Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

<p>1. Be patient, for the Lord is going to come again.</p> <p>2. Be as patient as the farmer, for the Lord's coming is near.</p> <p>a. You must strengthen</p>	<p>VI. TEMPTATIONS & TRIALS: COMBATED STEP BY STEP, 5:7-20</p> <p>A. Step 1: Be Patient—Endure—Keep Your Eyes Focused Upon the Return of the Lord, 5:7-11</p> <p>7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.</p> <p>8 Be ye also patient; stablish</p>	<p>your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.</p> <p>9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold the judge standeth before the door.</p> <p>10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.</p> <p>11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.</p>	<p>your hearts, focusing upon the Lord's return.</p> <p>b. You must not grumble—lest you be judged.</p> <p>3. Be as patient as the prophets in suffering, for they believed & spoke in the name of the Lord.</p> <p>4. Be as patient as Job in suffering trials & temptations, for he saw the end of the Lord—that the Lord was full of compassion & mercy</p>
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Section VI TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS: COMBATED STEP BY STEP James 5:7-20

STUDY 1: STEP 1: BE PATIENT—ENDURE—KEEP YOUR EYES FOCUSED UPON THE RETURN OF THE LORD

TEXT: James 5:7-11

AIM: To put trials in perspective by focusing on eternity.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8).

INTRODUCTION:

The temptations and trials of life can be terrible and overwhelming at times. If we give in to temptations, they can enslave and destroy us before we know it. Temptations can hook us on the world and its possessions and pleasures or else they can wear down our willpower, devastating families, friendships, finances, even health. The trials of life can unsettle and disrupt our lives, and if we are not on guard, they can crush us through some unforeseen event or accident, disease or death. How can we overcome temptations and trials, conquer and gain sure victory over them? There are two steps. The first step is covered in this passage: *be patient—endure—keep your eyes focused upon the Lord's return.*

OUTLINE:

1. Be patient, for the Lord is going to come again (v.7).
2. Be as patient as the farmer, for the Lord's coming is near (vv.7-9).
3. Be as patient as the prophets in suffering, for they believed and spoke in the name of the Lord (v.10).
4. Be as patient as Job in suffering trials and temptations, for he saw the end of the Lord—that the Lord was full of compassion and mercy (v.11).

I. BE PATIENT, FOR THE LORD IS GOING TO COME AGAIN (v.7).

Time and again Scripture declares in no uncertain terms that Jesus Christ is going to come again and return to earth.

⇒ Christ is coming again to reward every person for his work.

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Mt.16:27).

⇒ Christ is coming again to separate the sheep from the goats.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt.25:31-32).

⇒ Christ is coming again to judge both the living and the dead.

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Ti.4:1).

⇒ Christ is coming again to execute judgment upon the unbelievers or the ungodly of the earth.

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him [the Lord]” (Jude 14-15).

⇒ Christ is coming again to judge believers.

“For we [believers] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good

or bad” (2 Co.5:10).

Note also what Scripture declares about the return of Christ and believers. It clearly declares how believers are to live.

⇒ Believers are to occupy themselves, be busy in serving the Lord until He comes.

“And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come” (Lu.19:13).

⇒ Believers are to be without spot and unrebukeable when Christ returns.

“That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Ti.6:14).

⇒ Believers are to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously, and godly until Christ returns.

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit.2:12-13).

⇒ Believers are to live so as not to be ashamed before Christ when He returns.

“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (1 Jn.2:28).

Now, the whole point of the passage is this: we must be patient—endure all the temptations and trials of life, no matter how strong and terrible their onslaught may be. We must patiently combat their enslaving power and the spirit of discouragement and defeat that can sweep over our souls swiftly and unexpectedly. The Lord is coming, and He is going to reward or judge us. And one thing is sure: none of us want to be condemned when He returns (v.9). Therefore, how can we conquer the temptations and trials of life? How can we overcome them and be sure of being rewarded by the Lord when He returns? There is one way and only one way: be patient—endure—keep your eyes focused on the return of the Lord.

The word “patience” means longsuffering, persevering, enduring. Note: this is a very special kind of patience—a spiritual patience that never gives in; it perseveres and suffers on and on no matter what attacks it. Two significant facts need to be noted about that spiritual patience.

⇒ First, spiritual patience is not a passive acceptance. It does not just lay back and accept trials and temptations as though they are a part of life that nothing can be done about. Spiritual patience is an active, fighting endurance

that confronts trials and temptations and that sets out to conquer them.

⇒ Second, spiritual patience is a fruit of the Spirit (see Ga.5:22-23). When the believer faces some trial or temptation, the Holy Spirit arouses within us the urge to combat the situation and to conquer it. Then it is up to us to respond to the leading of the Spirit, to act on the urge and to persevere. It is up to us to refuse to give in to the enslavement or discouragement or defeat. This kind of patience is spiritual patience—a work of the Holy Spirit—and it can be had only by trusting the Spirit of God. Therefore, the believer must trust the Spirit of God to stir his heart to stand fast against the temptation or trial; then he must exert his own will and energy to conquer the situation. The believer is to stand fast and not give in. He is to struggle and fight, persevere and endure—patiently suffer on and on against the temptation or trial—all the while keeping his eyes fixed on the goal and the end: the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, his wonderful Lord.

ILLUSTRATION:

Perhaps no one illustrates patience better than the farmer. Warren Wiersbe comments: If a man is impatient, then he had better not become a farmer. No crop appears overnight (except perhaps a crop of weeds), and no farmer has control over the weather. Too much rain can cause the crop to rot, and too much sun can burn it up. An early frost can kill the crop. How long-suffering the farmer must be with the weather!

He must have patience with the seed and the crop, for it takes time for plants to grow. ... The farmer [has] to wait many weeks for his seed to produce fruit.

Why [does] he willingly wait so long? Because the fruit is “precious” (James 5:7). The harvest is worth waiting for.⁴⁰

“In due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Ga.6:9).

QUESTIONS:

1. How are we to live, knowing that Christ is coming back? Is your lifestyle a positive testimony to that fact?
2. How can you be more patient in the midst of your trials? Can you help others in their time of need?

⁴⁰ Warren W. Wiersbe. *Be Mature*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1978), p. 154.

2. BE AS PATIENT AS THE FARMER, FOR THE LORD’S COMING IS NEAR (vv.7-9).

The farmer is a good example of the kind of patient waiting believers must have as they wait for the Lord’s return. The farmer plants his seed and patiently waits for the early rain to germinate the seed and the later rain to ripen the crop. Note this: the farmer looks forward to the day of harvest with great expectation—so much so that he does all he can to protect the glorious day of harvest. He combats the trials of dry and wet weather, insects and disease, and the wild weeds and briers of the world. No matter what confronts him, the farmer does all he can to conquer the trial. Why does he endure so patiently? Because his eyes are fixed upon the great day of harvest.

The example for believers is strong: “Believers—you also be patient—patiently endure just as the farmer. Do two things.”

1. Believers must “establish” their hearts. The word establish means to set upon; to fix upon; to make fast.⁴¹ We must set our hearts upon the Lord’s coming, for His coming is near. The idea is that it is drawing ever so close and can happen at any moment. We must focus and set our hearts upon His return—be looking for it every day just as the farmer looks for his great day of harvest. Looking for the great day of redemption—for the Lord’s glorious return—will stir us to combat and overcome temptations and trials, no matter how bad the situation may be.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Co.15:58).

2. Believers must not complain about, murmur against, or judge other believers. We must not grumble about our circumstances, our trials and temptations, blaming others for what happens to us. This is one thing God will not tolerate. Note the Scripture: if we complain, murmur, and grumble, we will be condemned. And, “behold, the judge stands before the door.” This is a very strong warning.

QUESTIONS:

1. How do your daily actions show faith in God and in His return?
2. Complaining and criticizing keeps us from focusing on the Lord’s return. How can we keep from doing so when there are so many burdens and trials to bear?

⁴¹ W.E. Vine. *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p.41.

3. BE AS PATIENT AS THE PROPHETS IN SUFFERING AFFLICTION, FOR THEY BELIEVED AND SPOKE IN THE NAME OF THE LORD (v.10).

What James is saying is this: “Look at the prophets. Look at those who have gone before you—men and women who believed and hoped in God and bore witness to God. They faced all kinds of trials and temptations, but they patiently endured, combated, and conquered them all. Look at the prophets, and you will have a great example to follow in patient endurance.” They continued to proclaim the salvation and hope of God for the world, continued to believe and to speak up for God. As Hebrews says:

“[They suffered] cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (He.11:36-38).

ILLUSTRATION:

All the children stayed home from school—all except for six-year-old Ruby Bridges.

Every morning, she walked through a heckling crowd to an empty school. White people lined up on both sides of the way and shook their fists at her, simply because she is black. Two U.S. marshals walked ahead of her and two behind her, but she kept coming. Then she spent the day alone with her teachers inside that big silent school building.

In explanation of her courage, Ruby’s mother said, “There’s a lot of people who talk about doing good, and a lot of people who argue about what’s good,” but there are other folks who “just put their lives on the line for what’s right.”⁴²

As believers, we will often be persecuted for doing what the Lord commands. But when it comes to doing right, we must not be swayed by the world’s opinions. We must be steadfast, patiently living and proclaiming the salvation of the Lord.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think the prophets ever became discouraged?
2. How did the prophets respond despite all of their trials? How can you follow their tremendous example of faithfulness?

⁴² Edward K. Rowell, Editor. Fresh Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching, p.34.

4. BE AS PATIENT AS JOB IN SUFFERING TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS, FOR HE SAW THE END OF THE LORD—THAT THE LORD WAS FULL OF COMPASSION AND MERCY (v.11).

Few people have ever suffered or will ever suffer such trials and temptations of life as Job did. He suffered utter bankruptcy—the loss of all his property, livestock, and employees. And then, in the severest blow of all, he lost all of his sons. In addition to all this, his wife fussed at him because he refused to complain against God for destroying their lives. But note this: Job never gave in to the trials or temptations. He never forsook his faith in God. He did not understand all that was happening to him, but he refused to turn against God. He stood and patiently endured, struggling to conquer all and to do it in the name of the Lord. The point is this: Job kept his eyes fixed upon the Lord and the great hope of the Lord.

“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Jb.13:15).

“The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger” (Jb.17:9).

QUESTIONS:

1. Despite all his trouble, what precious things could never be taken from Job?
2. How did Job keep his faith during the terrible attack of Satan? What are some experiences you have come through that have tried your faith? How did you handle the situations? What might you have done differently?

SUMMARY:

When trials and temptations come, we must focus on Jesus Christ and patiently endure. Be encouraged, for He is all we need. He is our Deliverer. He not only gives us strength in the here and now, but the day is coming when He will return and deliver us from the evils of this world—deliver us eternally!

1. Be patient, for the Lord is going to come again.
2. Be as patient as the farmer, for the Lord’s coming draws near.
3. Be as patient as the prophets in suffering, for they believed and spoke in the name of the Lord.
4. Be as patient as Job in suffering trials and temptations, for he saw the end of the Lord—that the Lord was full of compassion and mercy.

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:

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Understanding Salvation

—by David and Ella

Let's look at the record of what Jesus did while He was in His human body.

- 1) Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus, became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18).
- 2) Jesus was born in Bethlehem as a human baby (Matthew 2:1), and God is His Father (Matthew 16:13-17).
- 3) Jesus came to fulfill the law, and He kept the law perfectly (Matthew 5:17-18). He was tempted in every way, but never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).
- 4) Jesus carried the cross Himself and was crucified for our sins (John 19:17-18). He knew that His mission to rescue us was finished. (John 19:28-30).
- 5) Jesus rose from the dead (Luke 24:6), received His new body (Luke 24:39-44), and went to heaven (Luke 24:51) because of His perfect, sinless record in the human body. Jesus is now sitting at God's right hand interceding for us (Romans 8:34). Jesus did all of this in His human body because we are human.

Let's look at our record in the human body.

- 1) We are born and Adam is our father, not God (1 Corinthians 15:22).
- 2) We are all sinners and fall short of God's perfect standard (Romans 3:23) which is required to have eternal life. Our record in the human body is nothing

but that of a filthy rag (Isaiah 64:6)! The question isn't if we are going to be condemned or not. We are condemned already. We are headed straight to hell, eternal death, and separation from God forever unless something happens that is impossible for us, as humans, to do.

3) As we can see, we have a terrible situation. We cannot make ourselves right with God. We need the record of Jesus in the human body. So what can we do? Let all the world look to Jesus and be saved forever (Isaiah 45:22). That means turn from anything else we are trusting in to be saved. No piece of fabric, no water baptism, no ordnung.

"Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:7-8).

We need the record of Christ in the human body, and we get that by faith. Because of our faith in Jesus, we are also counted as righteous in the eyes of God (Romans 4:24).

We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22). This is true for everyone who believes, no matter who they are.

So, we need Christ's perfect righteousness, which is His record in the human body. As we can see from that record, when Jesus was buried, He was raised

from the dead, received His new body, and is now sitting at the right hand of God. When we put our faith in what Jesus has done for us, He buries our record of sin as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12) and remembers it no more.

"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25).

He paid for it with His blood. "...and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time (Hebrews 10:10).

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

So when we get His record by truly believing in what Jesus has done for us, we are born again. We are set free from the power of sin (Romans 6:7), and we get the same record as Christ. God becomes our Father because He kept the law perfectly for us, and when this physical body dies, we will get our new body and go to heaven with Jesus. It worked for Jesus, it will work for us.

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Soon after my wife and I were married, we began occasionally visiting Joyce. Joyce was an older single sister, well known in our community for frugality and an interest in spiritual things. She always parked her ancient car in the exact same spot at church, and it was hard to miss. By the time I was a teenager, the vehicle was a relic almost forty years old. To the young boys standing around after church, who had no appreciation for antiques, her old clunker was nothing to be desired.

But as I grew older, I learned to appreciate something about Joyce, and that was her love for the Word of God. The first time we went to visit her, she described her reading schedule. It was something like three times through the entire Bible each year with several more times through the New Testament for good measure. She did confess, with an embarrassed shake of her head, that recently, due to health issues, she hadn't been keeping up. If I remember correctly, the reason for her shame was that she had dropped from three to two annual readings through the Bible!

In addition to her love for the Word, Joyce was known for her views on prophecy. She had her very own unique twist on end-time events—so unique that she didn't know of one other person on the globe who agreed with her. Not one!

On our second visit to her home, Joyce had a little table set up in front of her fireplace with three chairs and three Bibles. The evening's agenda was clear. After discussing several Scriptural topics, I asked a question regarding prophecy. That was all it took. She started back in Genesis and walked us through the Bible, explaining her viewpoint as we went. We didn't stop until we got to the maps in the back. She knew her Bible!

My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed the evening, and we came away with a great respect for this older sister. It wasn't because we agreed with her view of prophecy. In fact, I couldn't even explain it today. And it wasn't due to a charismatic personality or her persuasive defense of her opinion. Rather, it was because of her single-minded focus. Her mind was obviously on her Lord. She loved Him and was attempting to follow Him with everything she had. And in spite of her strange conclusions regarding prophecy, there was something refreshing about a single sister who hadn't been reading or following anyone else's prophetic views. Joyce had just continued to read her Bible until future events were clear in her mind. She had cheerfully ignored all the opposing views and stuck to what she believed.

When individuals finally begin to slow down, it is interesting to observe what they cling to. I have seen older people hang onto a few little trinkets that remind them of a trip or a special event in their lives. Some people surround themselves with family pictures, cards from grandchildren, or cherished items belonging to a deceased spouse. But with Joyce it was different. When her health began to fail, she made a conscious choice to dispose of almost everything she had. In fact, she confided in another older sister that she wanted to keep only three things. All she wanted was her bed, her phone, and her Bible. At the end of her life, she didn't want distractions. She wanted to focus on what was most important to her, and she became a shining example of the effects of a single vision. There is something extremely powerful about watching older saints with this single vision. Watching them focus on the approaching harbor gives courage to those who are still battling the storm.

Recently a young brother was traveling through our area and wanted to talk, so we met at a local restaurant for lunch. We chatted about a few things, and then, after a moment of silence, he looked me in the eye and asked, "Gary, is fasting a part of your life?" Now, the question was a little unusual. Many of us have grown up trying to take Jesus' warnings literally, and we don't normally go around talking about how much we fast. But this brother went on to explain the reason for his question. He had been asking older brothers in his church whether or not fasting was part of their lives, and their responses had been discouraging. Some had said fasting was practiced more in Bible times, and others had tried to avoid the question altogether. This young brother was reading Jesus' teachings. His words indicate that fasting will be part of the believer's life in the last days. In three of the Gospels Jesus explicitly said that in the days after He was taken away, His followers would fast.¹ As my friend compared this with the lack of fasting among the older members of his congregation, he was concerned.

As I listened to this young brother over lunch that day, one thing became clear to me. Fasting was not really the issue. His real concern was much deeper. This young brother was searching for genuine, authentic Christianity. He wanted the real thing. He had a young family, and he wanted to make sure the people he was following were actually following Christ. He knew it was possible for a church to become so preoccupied with its history and culture that it loses sight of the Lord Jesus. He was searching for older believers whose lives demonstrated a single vision—a focus on the Lord Jesus Himself. As he looked at those ahead of him, he wasn't sure whom they were following.

¹Matthew 9:15, Mark 2:20, Luke 5:35

I don't know how old a person needs to be to sound an alarm or to admonish those who are older. Most of us probably never reach a point where we feel comfortable doing this. But there are a growing number of young, serious-minded believers among us, and I believe a warning needs to go out to the older generation. In the words of Job, "Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment."² There are many illustrations of this truth, not only in the Bible, but also in life. Most of us have observed those who were zealous for the Lord in their youth but in old age lost their courage, zeal, and eventually even their faith. If you are one of the older ones in your church community, I ask that you humbly consider the following four issues.

1. A focus on Jesus' teachings. I see a great interest in our young families in returning to a focus on living out the basic teachings of Jesus. They want to use those teachings not just to support their practices but as a source of guidance for daily life. The young brother's question regarding fasting is a prime example. I think most of our churches would say fasting is a good idea. But is it actually practiced? Today emotional needs abound, and our first response seems to be a search for the right pill or a counseling center that has an opening. There is a place for both medicine and counseling, but could we start with fasting, prayer, and anointing with oil? Where in the Gospels or the early church do we find that medicine was the first remedy to be tried? Perhaps we should begin addressing specific needs by times of prayer, anointing, and public fasting.

2. Appreciation for tradition. There is a tendency in our culture for youth to disparage tradition, and sometimes this creeps into our churches as well. Some seem to be eagerly looking for new ways to do just about everything.

Sometimes this is driven by a hidden desire to embrace more of what the world has to offer, and this is rightly alarming to those who are older. But before you condemn the young person in your congregation who desires to make some changes, take time for prayerful discernment. Many of the young families I have listened to are not just on a quest for more freedom. They aren't looking for an opportunity to pitch everything from the past. They recognize the value in some of the traditions handed down to them. But neither are they interested in hanging onto a practice simply because it has always been done.

Tradition can be a great stabilizing force in the church, but it can also be a hindrance to spiritual growth. The Bible addresses both of these truths. Paul encouraged the church at Thessalonica to keep the traditions they had been taught,³ yet Jesus gave strong warning to the Pharisees regarding the traditions they were keeping.⁴ Obviously there are traditions that help and others that hinder. The value of some worthwhile traditions is not always immediately clear, and younger people should be cautious about recklessly dismantling them. On the other hand, spiritually minded young families sometimes have legitimate concerns, and the validity of certain traditions may need to be prayerfully reconsidered. Some may object to messing with a structure that seems to be working. But if its supporters are no longer seeking God's face by prayer and fasting, is it really working?

3. Respect and appreciation for other Bible-believing fellowships. At some time or other almost every conservative church verbally attacks the positions of other groups in order to substantiate their own. For some reason we decide that promoting truth is not enough, and we resort to identifying flaws in sur-

rounding fellowships. It is true that heresy must be exposed. The Bible is clear that church leadership is to be vigilant in warning against ungodly teaching and practices. Much of Paul's writing attempts to refute heresy that had already crept into the church. But there are many ways to live out Biblical principles. Younger members of our churches often grow concerned when the focus in preaching shifts from Biblical truth to attacks on other believers who are practicing Biblical principles slightly differently.

We need to teach the principles behind our practices. Our children and grandchildren need to be taught why we have chosen the particular methods we have for living out Biblical teachings. But can we do that without tearing others down? Can we humbly admit that we are not superior but simply doing the best we know? Even more than this, can we be humble enough to ask advice of other fellowships? Can we admit that our understanding may not be complete?

Make no mistake. This is not a call to blindly accept anyone walking around under the banner of Christianity. We are in a time of insidious deception, and we need to be extremely vigilant. But in the battle, let's make sure we are fighting heresy and not different parts of the body of Christ!

4. Separation from the world is all-inclusive. It is sometimes easy for a fellowship to select easily definable criteria to indicate separation from the world. These criteria might be things like certain cuts of clothing or particular types or colors of vehicles. While the rationale for making these choices may be valid, over time these items can become "separation-from-the-world indicators." If a person fits the criteria, they are deemed to be separate from the world and vice versa. When young people begin to question this method of

² Job 32:9

³ 2 Thessalonians 2:15

⁴ Mark 7:13

ascertaining separation, they may find that these questions alone label them as a troublemaker or lover of this world.

As I have listened to and observed many in this younger generation, however, I have concluded that they are interested in a higher level of separation from the world, not lower. They have seen too many individuals in conservative settings who have learned how to comply with a few baseline rules while living worldly lives. Such individuals tend to obey the required criteria to prove their sanctification, but then, as though their tithe has been paid, they feel free to live the rest of their lives for themselves. But I see a new generation emerging that wants more. They are searching for older people who believe in a separation of heart

that affects every part of life, not just a few arbitrary areas. It is not that they are afraid of standards, but they are looking for more than strict adherence to a code. They want to follow older believers who desire to unite every part of their lives with one single, sanctified vision.

Conclusion

Henry Varley, the well-known evangelist, inspired Dwight L. Moody to give himself more wholly to the service of the Lord. They were sitting on a park bench in Dublin when Varley said, “The world has yet to see what God will do with and for and through and in and by the man who is fully consecrated to Him.”⁵ Those words greatly influenced Moody. Varley hadn’t said that God needs great men or educated men;

He just needs men who are fully consecrated to Him. Moody resolved that day on the park bench to be that man.

Henry Varley was a mentor who challenged Moody to higher ground. I hear a cry for such mentors coming from our younger generation. While youth are often idealistic, I don’t think they are searching for perfection. Instead, they are looking for mentors who have purposed in their hearts to finish well and to demonstrate a single, sanctified vision until they’re gone.

⁵ James Gilchrist Lawson, *Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians*, Warner Press, Anderson, IN 1911, copied by Stephen Ross, <http://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/biomood4.html>

A Single Sanctified Vision, chapter 21, from the book *Going Till You’re Gone* by Gary Miller is used by permission from the publisher, TGS International, a wholly owned subsidiary of Christian Aid Ministries, Berlin, OH, 2012.

What I Already Was

—by Gerald Hochstetler

Do not try to become what you already are! A little baby never becomes more of a baby by trying to become a baby. It is conceived. It is born. It is a baby!



Photo by Kelvin Octa on Pexels

I was a believer at a very young age. Back when I was a young child, very young, I had already begun a prayer life. One day, I remember we got the news that one of our neighbors was deathly ill. I ran up into the barn hay loft and prayed my little heart out, pleading to God for mercy and healing. I knew of no one who would do such a thing, but I did. I believed in God.

The person was healed and lived many, many years. I never thought much of it. I just talked to God like I would talk to anyone else.

But, I was plagued with my sins, and that’s when the long battle began. I believed the doubt and the fears that plagued me. I believed that I had not done my part properly. Thus, no peace.

People gave me a lot of answers. “Obey the church.” “Get saved.” “Repent.” “Get baptized.” The list was a mile long. I did all of the above many times over, but I never got any real relief. I was never good enough. I simply could not live it.

I never heard the simple gospel message without a long list of “Thou musts.” How does a person ever know if they have fully surrendered, or repented, to God’s satisfaction? How can there be peace if you don’t know?

What I needed was the pure, good old gospel explained. But, you can’t explain what you don’t have.

I spent most of my life trying to become what I already was. God’s eternal life was birthed in me as a child, and I had no one to lead me on. If only one person could have told me, “Rest, my child. Believe. The work has been completed. There is nothing more you must do!”

I have one message for all. Look unto Jesus, the author and the finisher. There are not seven steps. It is one step: a new birth. Salvation is a total miracle from God. Receive it. Believe it. God lives within you.

I will proclaim to all who will listen:

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!”

This is a good day! This is YOUR day!

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:17)

October 31st, 1517, Wittenberg, Europe

On this day, Martin Luther’s 95 theses was nailed to the chapel door in Wittenberg in what today is called Germany. You might have heard of this day referred to as “Reformation Day.” It was the beginning of a very turbulent era in which the Catholic Church saw its power torn apart, persecution become severe, theological disputes arise, wars break out, and Europe’s map drastically change. This reformation was the engine for the 2nd church split since the days of Christ, with many more still to come. From this day on, split after split occurred, leaving us today with hundreds, if not thousands, of Christian denominations. But where do the Amish and Mennonites fit into this bigger picture of church history?

In this series I will be taking you on a journey through time to (re)discover the roots of the “plain people”.

The Reformation Era

For centuries, the Roman Catholic Church had been the only church in Western Europe. Around 1500, the power of this church began to crack. A monk named Martin Luther rediscovered the biblical truth that was hidden by the church because the lay people could not read Latin and the priests were the only ones to “explain” the Bible to lay church members.

One of the matters that Luther started to question and preach against, was the selling of indulgences: a piece of paper that people could buy in order to have their sins forgiven and get access to heaven. When Luther started reading the Bible, he soon discovered that this was not what the Bible taught.

As a result, Luther wrote his world famous 95 theses that was nailed to the chapel door in Wittenberg. This caused huge turmoil in the Catholic Church, and because the printing press was one of the newest inventions, Luther’s message spread rapidly, not just within the German regions, but also in the “low lands” (nowadays the Netherlands and Belgium), France, Austria, Switzerland and other European countries.

Martin Luther was the first “successful” reformer, but definitely not the only one. His teachings soon became very popular and other reformers in other countries followed his example and tried to reform the Catholic Church. The result of these reformation attempts within the Catholic Church was, without exception, that the reformers were banned and excommunicated from the Catholic Church, and prices were set on their heads to try to kill all of them. Among them were John Calvin in France, Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland and Menno Simons in the “low lands.” All of these men were willing to risk their lives in order to preach the true gospel: salvation by grace through faith alone, directly from God to men, without interference from a mighty institution like the Catholic Church. However, although the reformers were all united in the main teachings of the Reformation: only by grace, only through Christ, only through faith and only by the Bible, they differed in their explanation of the Bible in other areas of Christian doctrine, such as baptism and communion.



This became an important issue, especially in Switzerland, where Zwingli tried to reform the Catholic Church. The authorities in many of the Swiss cantons chose the side of Zwingli, thus starting a new church: the Swiss Reformed Church. Just like the Catholic Church had been, this was a State Church, leaving no room for other interpretations of the Bible than their own. Many of Zwingli’s friends were opposed to the Catholic and Reformed doctrine of infant baptism. Even though

Zwingli at first was not against the idea of a church membership (and thus baptism) that was only for adult believers upon the confession of their faith, he now sided with the Swiss State Church and thus became the theological

“enemy” of his former friends. Since church and state were very much intertwined, infant baptism in the Swiss Reformed Church also meant being registered as a Swiss citizen. Since the “radical reformers” refused to let their children be baptized, they were often left with no right to be part of the main Swiss society. The first “rebaptism” among them took place on January 21st, 1525, when Georg Blaurock, Felix Mantz and Konrad Grebel baptized each other upon their confession of faith. In the eyes of both the Catholic Church and other churches of the Reformation, these radicals were already baptized as babies. They therefore called these radicals “Anabaptists.” Anabaptists means: “re-baptizer”. Thus, the Anabaptist movement had started...

Continued in Next Issue

Nowhere in the Old and New Testament does a passage of scripture prove God's existence. It's not there. You cannot find it. If someone said, "Show me the verse that proves there is a God," you would not be able to point to one. The Bible does not offer a single bit of proof that God exists.

When I first heard those statements, I wanted to prove my friend wrong and began searching the Old and New Testament for proof of God's existence. I was sure my friend was wrong and that I would find a verse of scripture to prove it. But I found none - not a single verse of scripture that proved God's existence.

If there is not a single verse in the Bible that proves God's existence, why do most people believe that God exists?

I believe we could answer that question by turning to the first verse in the Old Testament. There it says, "*In the beginning ... God ... created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). Later in the New Testament, the writer states, "*And Thou, ... Lord ..., in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands*" (Hebrews 1:10). Furthermore, Old Testament writers state at least 2,800 times, "*For thus saith the Lord...*"

Are the statements we just read from Genesis, Hebrews, and throughout the Old Testament enough for you to believe that God exists? If not, you can close this up and go on about your life. The rest of this article is for people who, by faith, and faith alone, believe that the previous statements are true, and that God—everlasting, all powerful, all knowing, Creator of the universe, and all that is in it—does exist.

Consider the following passages of scripture.

"Through faith we understand that the

worlds were framed by the Word of God..." (Hebrews 11:3).

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is..." (Hebrews 11:6).

Many people struggle to believe by faith. Even people who have been born again for years and have read the Bible through many times still struggle to believe by faith. Oh, they may say they have faith, but when the rubber meets the road – life gets tough and they lose control – fear and doubt take over, and faith flees right out the window.

When the disciples informed Thomas (John 20) that they had been with the resurrected Lord, he responded, "***Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.***"

Thomas had to see with his own eyes before he would believe Jesus had risen from the grave. But as you and I know, faith is believing in something we have not seen. That is why we call it faith.

In John 20:27-29, Jesus shows up, and He turns to Thomas and says, "*Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*"

There are three reasons why people doubt God's existence:

1. People don't believe God exists, **because they can't see Him.**

The Bible tells us the hidden and invisible things of God are clearly seen when one looks at creation.

"For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world 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).

David expressed his faith in God when he looked out across the universe and then wrote these words: "***The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork***" (Psalm 19:1).

The question we must ask ourselves is: Who made the sun that lights up the whole earth? Who hung the moon in outer space? Who made all those stars scattered throughout the vast and open universe? How about that baby that was born a minute ago? Must one see the Creator to believe?

2. People don't believe God exists, **because of the consequences of believing.**

First, I can't think of a more selfish reason to block God out. Someday, that unbeliever will come face to face with reality. Why wait until it's too late. Why not just give up the selfish attitude and surrender to God?

Think with me. When someone creates a book, he or she becomes the author of that book and has authority over it. The same holds true for God. If God exists and He made everything, then He has the right to rule His creation, including all the people in it.

3. People don't believe God exists, **because they want to do as they please.**

The problem with people doing as they please is that their choices result in complete and total chaos. Romans 1:28-30 says that people who refuse

to retain God in their knowledge are handed over to a reprobate (good for nothing) mind. At that point, their world turns into a complete and chaotic mess. Verse 28-30 says they become filled with unrighteousness and turn to utter wickedness.

Because God created all things, He alone possesses power and privileges that are only His and no one else's.

Daniel 4:35 says, *“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed [presumed] as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay (restrain) His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?”*

Before we move on, let's ask ourselves the following questions:

1. Do I believe that God has the **power to control** everything in creation?
2. Are there things that (I think) escape His attention?

Because God created ALL things, He ALONE has the RIGHT to determine a set of rules for all people and judge all people by His standards.

The Apostle Paul must have been thinking about God's set of rules for mankind when he asked himself the following questions:

- *“Nay but, O man, who art thou that replies against God?”*
- *“Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?”*
- *“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?”*
(Romans 9:20-21)

Here are two more questions for us to ponder:

1. Do I believe God alone has the right to **decide a set of rules** for mankind?

2. Do I believe God alone has the right to **judge every person** in the world?

Because God created all things, He alone deserves the praise of all creation.

John writes in Revelation 4:11, *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”*

King David goes on to say:

- *“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker”* (Psalm 95:6).
- *“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before Him, all the earth”* (Psalm 96:9).

Up to this point, we have covered the following truths and facts about God:

1. Only God has the power to control all things. He is completely independent and needs help from no one.
2. Only God has the right to judge all things, determine standards, and reject those who are not obedient to those standards.
3. Only God deserves all praise, worship, and approval from all things He created.

Though God is the only one who has the power to control, the right to judge, and deserves all praise, there are others who have tried to steal those rights. It started with none other than Satan himself. Consider the words of Isaiah 14:12-14. He writes:

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

Here is what Satan said from the above verses...

- *I will ascend into heaven...* It sounds like he wants to take control and do what he pleases.
- *I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...* It sounds like he wants people to bow at his throne and praise him.
- *I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation...* It sounds like he wants to rule and judge from a seat of authority.
- *I will be like the most High...* It sounds like he wants to push God out of the way and take His place.

Satan's sin wasn't hatred for God, but envy and jealousy toward God. He wanted to be like God (Isaiah 14:14). Satan was not content with who God created him to be. He wanted all the praise and glory for himself (Isaiah 42:8 and 48:11).

Trying to be like God did not end with Satan. Satan (in the form of a serpent) successfully tempted Adam and Eve to follow his rebellion of trying to be like God. Let's read it.

Genesis 3:4-5 says: *“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods (God), knowing good and evil.”*

QUESTION: Who else do you know that has been deceived into thinking he or she could assume the rights of God? Why don't we take a moment and answer the following questions?

1. Does it bother you when you are not in control?
2. Does it bother you when things don't go your way?
3. Do you have trouble asking for help?
4. Do you get impatient when people don't do things right?
5. Does it upset you when you don't get

good service?

6. Do you try to change people?
7. Do you look for approval or thanks from others?
8. Do you try to keep people happy?
9. Do you reject people who mistreat you?

1. Man tries to CONTROL PEOPLE, but only God possesses that kind of power!!!

Once again, the prophet Isaiah writes in chapter 40:22-25:

“It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. To

whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.”

2. Man tries to CONTROL the OUT-COME of things, but only God possesses that kind of power!!!

The attempt to control things that are beyond your control only produces anxiety and worry. Trying to control people will only stress you out and bring about sleepless nights. You’ve been there. You know what I’m talking about. In the end, it does nothing for you. Jesus said in Matthew 6:27: *“Which of you by taking thought [anxious] can add one cubit [second] unto his stature [life]?”*

If you are bothered when things don’t go your way, it reveals that you think God isn’t doing things right.

In Job 40, the Lord appeared to Job

out of a whirlwind and demanded Job to brace himself like a man. Then God asked Job, “Are you calling Me a sinner so you can look more like a saint? If so, I will gladly step aside and hand things over to you—that is, if you think you can save yourself with no help from Me!”

Fact #1:

Being controlling can result in unpleasant emotions like frustration, anger, exhaustion, depression, fear, and worry.

Fact #2:

You and I do not have the power or resources to control everything in our life because we are not God.

Continued in Next Issue

New Covenant vs Old Covenant

—by John Weaver

The laws that God made and gave to Moses are called the Old Covenant. It includes, but is not limited to, the Ten Commandments. This was basically an agreement from God that, if obeyed, a blessing would follow. If not obeyed, you would be punished.

God saw the need to give a new covenant, one where He said He would put His laws into our minds and write them on our hearts. The law simply reminded us when we did wrong, but never gave any encouragement or help. In contrast, the New Covenant, which came by Jesus Christ, empowers us because we have His presence within. *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”* (Jn 1:17).

Sadly, many people are still living by the Old Covenant. They try to please God by their efforts. Some try really hard, but no one is justified by keeping the law, because no one ever kept the law in its entirety, except Jesus. He came and lived a completely sinless life and then willingly died so that His sac-

rifice could deal with the sin problem, once and for all.

But for us to be able to partake of the New Covenant and reap the benefits thereof, we must get free from the Old. And the same as in a marriage covenant, to be free from the old, we must die. Only death can break the covenant. Only by dying and rising in new life can we be free to, as Romans 6 and 7 point out, be married to Christ.

What many people do is to try to partake of the New Covenant while staying loyal to the Old...having some of each. To God, this is committing adultery. The first few verses of Romans 7 make this very clear. In the Old Covenant, there was mercy for transgressors, but no power, besides their will power, to walk in freedom from sin.

When Jesus came, that changed. It was prophesied before His birth that He would save His people from their sins.

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (Jn 8:36).

God gave a New Covenant that will free men from the bondage that the Old could not. However, there is no freedom for those who choose to stay under the law.

Now many people get very concerned about this New Covenant, which is a covenant of grace. They believe it to be a license to sin. But God’s Word is very clear. *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid”* (Romans 6:1-2a). The real grace from God not only comforts, it empowers! Instead of ‘grace to sin,’ it gives ‘grace to live above sin!’

The very thing that many fear, is actually the answer to the problem. Which has the most power: you by yourself, or you with God’s power within you? We all know the answer. Die to your own righteousness, and embrace the righteousness which Jesus offers to all who believe.

We believe, God help our unbelief. Amen!

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November

Resolving Conflict Peacefully

How do you handle conflict? Are you a person who bursts out in anger or are you someone who completely shuts down? In this message, Chip Ingram offers an option to resolve conflict in marriage. Don't miss how you can radically transform your relationship!

Son of God, Son of Man, King of Israel

Jesus' many titles show His divinity and universal rule, yet His identity is what drove man's wickedness to reject and kill Him.

When Jesus Met a Dad and His Lad

One of the most significant relationships a son can have is with his father, for it is by the father's influence that a boy grows up to be a man. But what is a father to do when a crisis comes to his son's life? Message by J. Vernon McGee.

December

Science and the Bible (part 1)

Is science trustworthy? Where can we find truth? Join Pastor John Marino in this two-part series on science and the reliability of Scriptures.

Science and the Bible (part 2)

Is science trustworthy? Where can we find truth? Join Pastor John Marino in this two-part series on science and the reliability of Scriptures.

Managing Your Finances Together

One of the biggest sources of conflict in marriage revolves around money. In this message, Chip Ingram walks through how couples can biblically manage their finances and tackle debt issues in their marriage.

The Reason the Son of God Appeared was to Destroy the Works of the Devil

If any human is to be saved from their sin and from the righteous wrath of God, the Son of God had to become human for our regeneration. Message by Pastor John Piper.

January

8 Ways to Jump Off the Crazy Cycle

Join Emerson and Jonathan as they discuss 8 ways to prevent and get off the "Crazy Cycle." Examples include what to do when you see the spirit of your spouse deflate.

The Way to Heaven (part 1)

Do you know the one and only way to get to heaven? Sermon by Dr. Charles Stanley.

The Way to Heaven (part 2)

Do you know the one and only way to get to heaven? Sermon by Dr. Charles Stanley.

Things I Wish I'd Known Before Parenting Teens (part 1)

No one feels prepared for raising teens. But you can do this! Author Gary Chapman reveals what I wish I'd known and ways to redefine your relationship.

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The cost of *The Amish Voice* is \$.75 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

God hates sin because it is the very antithesis of His nature. The psalmist describes God's hatred of sin this way: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee" (Psalm 5:4). God hates sin because He is holy; holiness is the most exalted of all His attributes (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8). His holiness totally saturates His being. His holiness epitomizes His moral perfection and His absolute freedom from blemish of any kind (Psalm 89:35; 92:15; Romans 9:14).

The Bible presents God's attitude toward sin with strong feelings of hostility, disgust, and utter dislike. For example, sin is described as putrifying sores (Isaiah 1:6), a heavy burden (Psalm 38:4), defiling filth (Titus 1:15; 2 Corinthians 7:1), a binding debt (Matthew 6:12-15), darkness (1 John 1:6) and a scarlet stain (Isaiah 1:18).

God hates sin for the simple reason that sin separates us from Him: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2; see also Isaiah 13:11; Jeremiah 5:25). It was sin that caused Adam and Eve to run away from God and hide "amongst the trees of the garden" (Genesis 3:8). Sin always brings separation, and the fact that God hates sin means that He hates being separated from us. His love demands restoration, which in turn demands holiness.

God also hates sin because of its subtle deceitfulness which entices us to focus on worldly pleasure to the exclusion of God's blessings. Those who have their

sins forgiven can say, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). To pursue sin is to turn one's back on the gifts of God, who has "thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11). God's hatred of sin implies that He loves His people and wants to bless them.

Another reason God hates sin is that it blinds us to the truth. Jesus likened false teachers to "blind leaders of the blind" (Matthew 15:14). John said that the one who hates his brother "knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:11). Sin has consequences which the sinner often disregards. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians

6:7; see also Numbers 32:23). God hates sin for the same reason that light hates darkness and truth hates a lie. God wants His children to have "all riches of the full assurance of understanding" (Colossians 2:2), and sin only gets in the way.

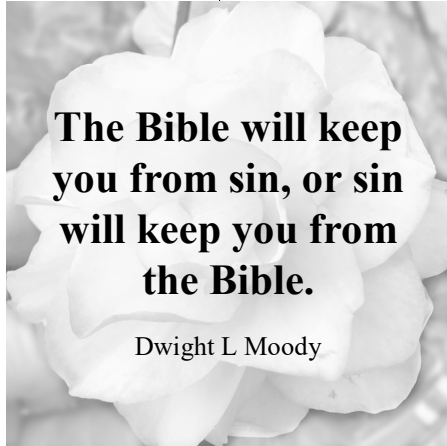
God hates sin because it enslaves us and will eventually destroy us. Just as Samson's sin led to his physical blindness and captivity (Judges 16:21), our sin will lead to spiritual blindness and bondage. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Romans 6:16). God is the source of life, and He

will extend that life eternally to all who believe. Sin is a barrier to our reception of life, and that is one reason why God hates it.

God hates sin because it lessens our love for Him. The Bible says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16). James warns us of the danger of embracing the world: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). No one can serve two masters (Luke 16:13), and we must choose between sin and righteousness.

As believers, we should hate sin as does God. We are "children of the light and children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thessalonians 5:5). We must recognize that God has set us apart; we are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9). We cannot become holy on our own, but God gives us His Holy Spirit to sanctify us (2 Thessalonians 2:13). We have His promise that He will help us in our struggle against sin (1 Corinthians 1:8).

We hate sin because it separates us from God. We hate it because it lessens our love and dulls our conscience, because it binds us and blinds us. We hate it because it grieves the Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30). Our prayer to the Holy One is "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).



**The Bible will keep
you from sin, or sin
will keep you from
the Bible.**

Dwight L Moody

My Yoke is Easy

—by John Weaver

Is the Christian life easy? Or is it hard?

It is tragic how many people believe that it is hard to live the Christian life.

Jesus said these famous words, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”* (Matthew 11:28-30).

If we meet the conditions here, there is no way that we can say that the Christian life is hard.

Paul was persecuted, beaten, and left for dead one time, but he called it *“a light affliction”* (2 Corinthians 4:17). How could he?

The conditions here are simple: we must come to Him. We must take His yoke upon us, and we must learn from Him. Then, and only then, does the Christian life become easy.

Jesus came to give us peace and rest. Rest in Him. Being a disciple of Jesus and learning from Him will give us

rest and peace beyond understanding.

Yet many are trying and trying to keep enough rules and ordinances to please a hard-to-please God, all to no avail.

My friend, stop trying to be a Christian and become a disciple of Jesus. Rather than trying to please God by your efforts, rest in the finished work of the cross.



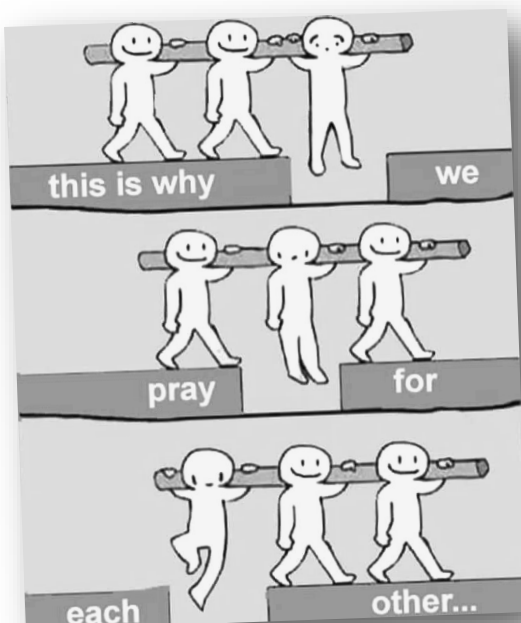
Take His yoke upon you. When we tame a wild and unruly young horse, we team it with a older seasoned one: one who had learned to take one step at a time. The young horse will lunge and wear himself out, prancing about until he learns that by walking in step with the other horse, life will become easy. Trying to pull everything by himself is

tiring, but working as a team is way easier. Learn this from him.

There are afflictions in our life. Some are much harder than others, but I can not imagine going through them without being yoked with Jesus. Don't be satisfied with giving Jesus your heart. Give Him your all. And don't go through life with a false hope that because you repeated a prayer, or joined a church, or were baptized, etc., that you now have a ticket to heaven.

We believe, then we repent (turn around and go a different direction), and then we become one with the One who saved us. Then, as we have received Him, so we walk with Him (Colossians 2:6).

Paul could call persecution *“light affliction”* because he had found rest - rest for his soul and for his spirit. Yes, our bodies get weary and they wear out, but if we have found rest in our soul and spirit, then the life of a believer becomes easy - as long as we keep our focus on the One who gives us that peace and rest. Amen!



Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

Pray without ceasing

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

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Revival: What Does it Look Like?

—By Joe Keim

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What do you think a real God-sent world-wide revival would look like in 2022? It is a serious question I have had for a long time. We talk about it often. We desire it with all our heart. We pray, “Dear God, please send one more great revival across this land.”

But, if a real God-sent revival came to our land...how would we recognize it?

Are large gatherings a requirement before we can label it a revival?

Are a rising number of Amish churches the result of a God-sent revival?

Is it considered real revival only after tens of thousands, and thousands upon thousands of demons are cast out, blind men and women receive their sight and are healed from all types of sicknesses?

If hundreds of thousands, and thousands upon thousands, of Amish and English men and women would fall prostrate on their faces before God - in their living rooms at home, and in church services across America, and repent of their dead works and sins against a holy God,

would that be a real and true God-sent revival?

Can it be a God-sent revival, only after all churches in America put their cars away and return to horse and buggy, the German Bible, plain clothes, and head coverings?

If millions of lost people suddenly realized their lostness before God and surrendered their hearts to Jesus Christ, is that the revival we are all praying and waiting for?

Is revival only for believers? Is it mainly for unbelievers?

What does a God-sent world-wide revival look like?

If it suddenly showed up, would you know it, and join? Would you miss it?

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I would love for you to take a few minutes of your day and write to us. From an Amish perspective, what does revival look like? What is required to happen before you could say ...

“Now that is a God-sent revival?”

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We love hearing from our readers...your suggestions, responses, articles, disagreements, poems, letters, testimonies, ideas, lessons that you have learned, or anything else that you would like to share with us. We will try to publish much of what you send! We just love hearing testimonies of how people’s lives have been changed by Jesus and how the *Amish Voice* is helping you grow in your walk with God.

WRITE TO US! **The Amish Voice, 575 US Highway 250, Greenwich, OH 44837**