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The General Epistle of James

Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

B. Temptation 2: Misunderstanding & Twisting True Wisdom, 3:13-18

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth

not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

God but of the earth, unspiritual & demonic
c. Its effects: Confusion and evil

1. The wise, understanding person or teacher

- Shows good behavior
- Shows humility
- Shows wisdom

2. The false wisdom

- Its description:
Arouses envy, selfish ambition, pride, & inconsistency
- Its source: Not of

3. The true wisdom

- Its source: God
- Its description: Pure.
- Its effects: The harvest of righteousness, peace

Section III

TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS: COMMON TO ALL, BUT ESPECIALLY TO TEACHERS

James 3:1-18

STUDY 2: TEMPTATION 2: MISUNDERSTANDING AND TWISTING TRUE WISDOM

TEXT: James 3:13-18

AIM: To understand the difference between true and false wisdom.

MEMORY VERSE:

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

INTRODUCTION:

What is wisdom, true wisdom? Misunderstanding wisdom is a weakness or failure on the part of all of us, but especially teachers. The leaders of this world—politicians, philosophers, preachers, and teachers—are all guilty of twisting and adjusting wisdom to mean what they want. But what is true wisdom, the kind of wisdom that brings about the good life—the kind of life and world that we should have? Is there a wisdom that can give us a world in which all men can live in peace, love, and joy and have all their needs met, even the need to conquer death and to bring about the fountain of youth? One of the greatest temptations that ever confronts teachers is the temptation to twist true wisdom.

OUTLINE:

- The wise, understanding person or teacher (v.13).
- The false wisdom (vv.14-16).
- The true wisdom (vv.17-18).

1. THE WISE, UNDERSTANDING PERSON OR TEACHER (v.13).

There is the wise and understanding man. Note the question, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?” The term “wise man” refers to the teacher; knowledge refers to the expert, the skilled, the scientific, or knowledgeable person.²⁵ By teacher, of course, is meant anyone among us who teaches the Word of God, including ministers and teachers. “Do you want to be a wise teacher? Do you want to be a teacher of knowledge? Then here is how. You must do some things.”

First note this: some of the teachers to whom James was writing did not understand the meaning of true wisdom and knowledge. This is the very reason for this passage: to stir ministers and teachers to think about how wise and knowledgeable they really are. A wise and knowledgeable teacher will demonstrate two traits. The words “let him show” are very emphatic. They mean that the wise teacher will strongly show forth these two traits. They will be clearly seen in his life.

1. There is the trait of good behavior and conduct. This means that the wise teacher does exactly what he should. Wisdom and knowledge have to do with how a person behaves and conducts himself, not only with knowing facts and being a scholar. A person must take the facts and apply them. This is true in any field or profession, but it is especially true in the field of Biblical teaching. A Biblical teacher must live what he teaches and preaches. He must speak words of...

- morality and purity
- righteousness and justice
- help and encouragement
- strength and edification
- ministry and challenge
- salvation and deliverance
- hope and life

But as he teaches such lessons of life, he must also live a life of good behavior and conduct. He must live what he teaches and preaches. He must live a moral, pure, righteous, and just life; and he must go out to minister to the needy of his community and world. The wise teacher knows that he cannot teach one thing and do another.

“Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein” (Hos.14:9).

²⁵ A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.6, p.45

2. There is the trait of meekness. The truly wise and knowledgeable teacher will show forth “meekness.” The word means to be gentle, tender, humble, mild, and considerate, but strongly so. Meekness has the strength to control and discipline, and it does so at the right time.

- a. Meekness has a humble state of mind. But this does not mean the teacher is weak, cowardly, or bowing. The meek teacher simply loves people and loves peace; he desires to be a friend to all and to help all as much as possible.
- b. Meekness has a strong state of mind. It looks at situations and wants justice and righteousness to be done. It is not a weak mind that ignores and neglects evil and wrongdoing, abuse and suffering. Meekness actually strikes out in anger. However, note a crucial point: the anger is always at the right time and against the right thing.
- c. Meekness has strong self-control. The meek teacher controls his spirit and mind. He dies to himself, to what his flesh would like to do, and he does the right thing—exactly what God wants done.

In summary, the meek man walks in a humble, tender, but strong state of mind; he denies himself, giving utmost consideration to others. He shows both control and righteous anger toward injustice and evil. A meek man lives for others because of what Christ has done for him.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Ga.6:1).

ILLUSTRATION:

Evil men pursued Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John and a great teacher of the early Church. In those early days of Christianity, many gave their lives, being martyred for the cause of Christ. Polycarp did not resist. In fact, he even prepared a meal for those who had come to take him to his death. The proconsul insisted that Polycarp reproach Christ and say that Caesar was lord. But Polycarp replied, “Eight-six years I have served Christ, and He never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who has saved me?”²⁶

What a stunning example Polycarp was! He meekly and wisely served Christ, both in word and deed, and in life and death. We also must be humble and tender, yet demonstrate a strong state of mind.

²⁶ John Berry, Editor. Foxe’s Book of Martyrs. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1978), p.22.

QUESTIONS:

1. What traits can be seen in a truly wise person? Which of these traits do you need to develop more?
2. Discuss why meekness is not weakness.
3. Why should you be a meek person? In what areas does pride give you the most trouble? How can you use meekness to conquer these situations?

2. THE FALSE WISDOM (vv.14-16).

There is the false wisdom and corrupt teaching of this world. This is a most tragic picture. It immediately shows us that there are teachers who follow the false wisdom of the world.

1. Note the description of false wisdom and corrupt teaching.
 - a. False wisdom and corrupt teaching arouse bitter envy and jealousy. There are teachers, ministers and laymen alike, who are envious and jealous of others. In fact, false wisdom and corrupt teaching stir up a terrible division and separation between the servants of God and churches. No teacher or preacher...
 - should ever envy another person's ability, church, position, or recognition
 - should ever resent or be bitter toward former ministers or teachers
 - should ever react against being corrected because of his novel ideas for wrong behavior

Bitterness, envy, and jealousy are all wrong. They have no place among those who teach the true wisdom of God. They are aroused by a false wisdom and a corrupt teaching.

- b. False wisdom and corrupt teaching arouse a spirit of strife. The word "strife" means friction or, more accurately, selfish ambition. Unfortunately, too many of God's people—teachers and preachers included—are selfishly ambitious. Too many want...
 - to be put forward, recognized, acknowledged, and honored
 - to be known as wise and knowledgeable
 - to be seen as the teacher, the preacher, the leader
 - to be the builder, the creator, the founder, the originator of a new or novel idea and position or movement

In addition, there are those who seek to rally groups or parties of people around their position or belief. They are ambitious to be leaders and to have people recognize them as leaders, even if it means opposing the minister of God.

Note how restless the soul is in all of this. The soul is not at peace with itself nor with others. It is dissatisfied and ambitious for self, not for the cause of Christ or for the people of Christ. This is the way of false wisdom and corrupt teaching: it arouses strife and selfish ambition.

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Ph.2:3-4).

- c. False wisdom and corrupt teaching arouse a spirit of boasting and self-glorifying. Boasting does not necessarily mean that a person goes around boasting out loud. It refers more to what a person feels within his heart. If a person follows the way of false wisdom and false teaching, he focuses upon himself. His thoughts are upon...
 - preaching a good sermon, not reaching people for Christ
 - being recognized, not building up people
 - securing a position, not ministering to needs

Very simply, he either seeks or feels pride in his different belief or in the position he holds. He may flaunt it publicly, making his ideas and position known, or he may just hold it silently within. In either case, his belief and position stand opposed to the wisdom and teaching of God's Word. He has allowed false wisdom and corrupt teaching to arouse a prideful and self-glorifying spirit within him.

"When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom" (Pr.11:2).

- d. False wisdom and corrupt teaching arouse a lie against the truth. This means at least two things.
 - ⇒ First, the false teacher is inconsistent with the Word of God. He is not living and teaching the truth. He is living a lie and teaching a lie—some false doctrine, some false behavior.
 - ⇒ Second, the false teacher is inconsistent in what he teaches and does. He teaches the truth, but he does not live the truth.

2. Note the source of false wisdom and corrupt teaching: they are not of God, but of the earth, sensual or unspiritual, and devilish.

- a. False wisdom is of the earth: it centers and focuses upon the earth...
 - it follows the nature of men—men of the earth—instead of God and His Word.
 - it teaches the great ideas and principles of the earth

instead of the ideas and principles of God and His Word.

- it challenges people to seek the goals and objectives of the earth and its leaders instead of the goals and objectives of God and His Word.
- it focuses upon life now—life upon the earth—and neglects life eternal.

The point is that heavenly wisdom, the wisdom of God and His Word (the Bible), is the basis of true wisdom. Therefore, any wisdom that neglects heavenly wisdom has a serious flaw and shortcoming. No teacher, whether minister or layman, is ever to forget this. False wisdom and corrupt teaching focus only upon the earth and neglect the wisdom from above, from God and His Word.

b. False wisdom and corrupt teaching are sensual, that is, worldly and unspiritual. They tend toward bettering man's life on earth and ignore, neglect and deny that man is spirit. They have no belief—or at most a hazy belief—in life after this world.

c. False wisdom and corrupt teaching are devilish or demonic. Such things as pride, self-ambition, bitterness, envy, strife, creating uneasiness and division, and teaching false doctrine are not of God. They are of the evil one, of the devil himself. Any teacher who selfishly seeks to promote self and does these things is following and acting just like the devil acts.

3. Note the terrible effects of false wisdom and corrupt teaching. The person who follows the false wisdom of the world—who selfishly seeks position, recognition, wealth, and authority—who seeks praise for some novel idea or doctrine he has—who disputes and clashes with others—is a false teacher who only causes confusion and every evil work. Furthermore, when that person is a minister or teacher in the church...

- he causes confusion and evil in the church: people become disturbed, divided, form cliques, and begin bearing tales. They become angry and hold feelings against one another and some even leave the church and forsake God.
- he causes confusion and evil within families: various members question, wonder, and differ with other family members. They cease to grow and many return to the world.
- he causes the weak to return to the world and to forsake God and His Word: the weak in ignorance or lack of conviction forsake Christ as the true Son of God, Christ who alone can save man.
- he causes people to attach their lives to an earthly religion of ritual, ceremony, and worldly principles—all of

which die at the grave. The false teacher dooms people to an eternity apart from the Son of God, from Jesus Christ our Lord who is the Savior of the world.

The confusion and evil caused by false wisdom and corrupt teaching—by teachers who live and teach contrary to God and His Word—are endless. But this much needs to be said: the effects of corrupt teaching, of following the false wisdom of this world, should cause every minister and teacher of the church to awaken and examine their lives, beliefs, and ministries. The effects should stir many of us to repentance and confession before God.

APPLICATION:

This is a day when humility before God and His Word is needed. Why? Because there is so much false wisdom and corrupt teaching being followed. We desperately need to turn back to the worship and ministry of God alone and His Word. We need to get away from worshipping ourselves, from following our own selfish ambitions. We need to get away from seeking position, recognition, new and novel ideas, and the human comforts and ease of this life. Our call as ministers and teachers of God is to proclaim His Word and to minister to the needs of people everywhere. The confusion and evil of the world can be corrected only by proclaiming the truth of God and His Word. This we must do. And the first step is to straighten out ourselves. How? By humbly bowing before God in repentance and confession of our selfish ambition, complacency, worldliness, and lack of discipline. We must repent and confess our failure and turn completely away from it. And then we must get up and go forth in the strength of God's Spirit to proclaim the pure truth of God and His Word—proclaim His Word and nothing else.

ILLUSTRATION:

The devastation and debris left by the hurricane was almost unbelievable. But one house stood on its foundation. The reporter asked the owner, "Sir, why is your house the only one still standing?" "I built this house myself," the man replied. "I also built it according to the Florida state building code. When the code called for 2x6 roof trusses, I used 2x6 roof trusses. I was told that a house built according to the code could withstand a hurricane. I did, and it did. I suppose no one else around here followed the code."

When the sun is shining and the skies are blue, building our lives on something other than the guidelines in God's Word can be tempting. But there is only one way to be ready for a storm.²⁷ We must hold unswervingly to the

²⁷ Edward K. Rowell, Editor. *Fresh Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Co-published by Christianity Today, Inc., and Baker Books, 1997), p.147.

Word of God; we must proclaim the truth—it and it alone.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is false wisdom so terribly dangerous?
2. How can God's Word keep you from the trap of false wisdom?
3. What corrupt teaching has the Lord helped you to get away from?

3. THE TRUE WISDOM (vv.17-18).

There is the true wisdom of God. Note three significant points.

1. The source of true wisdom is God. True wisdom comes from above, not from this world, not from the princes and scholars of this earth. True wisdom does not come from seeking the knowledge and wisdom of men and of this world; it comes from seeking the knowledge and wisdom of God.

2. The description of true wisdom is clearly stated. The wisdom of God that is so superior to the wisdom of princes and scholars, that the ministers and teachers of God are to be teaching, is spelled out by Scripture in eight points.

- a. True wisdom is first of all pure. Note the word first. Purity is first in importance and the first thing that God gives to a man who seeks true wisdom. The one who is pure is pure from fault and defilement; it means moral purity; to be completely separated from impurity and wrongdoing and set apart unto God. It is not being half good and half bad, but totally pure and clean.²⁸ A truly wise person keeps his body pure, his relationships pure, and himself pure before God.

“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pe.1:16).

- b. True wisdom is peaceable, which means to bind together; to join and weave together. It means that a wise teacher is bound, woven, and joined together...

- with God
- with his fellow man
- even with himself

The wise teacher does all he can to keep peace and to make peace where it has been broken, whether between two individuals or two groups, a family, a community, or a nation. A wise teacher, a teacher of true wisdom, works to reconcile people to God and to each other. He works to bring men closer to God and to each other.

“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Ro.12:18).

- c. True wisdom is gentle. There is a tendency to say that either forbearance or gentleness is the better translation. It means that there is something better than mere justice—a gracious gentleness. The wise teacher is to be gentle and forbearing in dealing with other people.

APPLICATION:

The point is well taken: as believers, we must all be gentle and forbearing in dealing with people. The last thing we must do is criticize, condemn, censor, neglect, or ignore people. We must reach out to the world with the gospel and treat people with a *loving gentleness*. We must have absolutely nothing to do with harshness. Too many of us are harsh and critical or neglectful and withdrawn. Too many of us are wrapped in the cloak of religion, having nothing to do with reaching out to the lost. The desperate need of the hour is for all believers to reach out with the gospel in a spirit of *love and gentleness*.

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Ti.2:24).

- d. True wisdom is easy to be entreated. This means reasonable; being willing to listen to reason and to appeal; being willing to change when one is wrong. True wisdom is not stubborn or hard. Rather, the wise teacher listens to the voice and reasoning of God and of his fellow believers; and when he is wrong, he changes his behavior.

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Is.1:18).

- e. True wisdom is *full of mercy*. The godly teacher will have feelings of pity, compassion, affection, and kindness. It is a desire to succor; to tenderly draw unto oneself and to care for. Two things are essential in order to have mercy: seeing a need, and being able to meet that need. God sees our need and feels for us (Ep.2:1-3). Therefore, He acts; He has mercy upon us. Note: mercy does not discriminate; it knows no prejudice at all. It has pity upon all, both saint and *sinner*—whoever is in need.

“And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him” (Lu.10:34).

- f. True wisdom is full of good fruits. This means that the wise teacher actually reaches out to help those in trou-

²⁸ A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.6, p.47.

ble. He does not experience feelings of compassion and then push them out of his mind. He acts; he meets needs; he helps the suffering, the shut-in, the prisoner, the widow and widower, the orphan, the single parent and the single-parent child, the grieving, the poor, the destitute, the homeless, the hungry, the sinner, the back-slidden, the lost, and the wicked. The teacher of true wisdom reaches out with all the resources he has to reach people for Christ and to help them through all the problems and troubles of life.

“For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Mt.25:35-36).

g. True wisdom is *without partiality*. The wise teacher shows no preference or favoritism to anyone. He is undivided in his convictions and judgments. He knows the truth, exactly what God’s Word says, and he will not entertain false ideas or teachings. He is totally committed to following and teaching God’s Word.

“I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality” (1 Ti.5:21).

h. True wisdom is without hypocrisy. This means to be free from insincerity, pretense, play-acting, or wearing a mask. The teacher of true wisdom does not try to deceive people; he does not teach one thing and do another thing. He does not claim to be a teacher of God’s Word and then teach something other than God’s Word; he does not claim to be a minister or disciple of God’s Word and then live an impure and unrighteous life or an undisciplined and complacent life.

“In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you” (Tit.2:7-8).

3. The effect of true wisdom is the fruit of righteousness, a life and world of righteousness. But note how righteousness is brought about: by making peace. Righteousness—men living as they should, men treating each other and treating God as they should—can never come about unless we are at peace with each other and with God.

This means something of critical importance: *the greatest need that man has is for peace*—peace with each other and

peace with God. The truly wise teacher will work continuously for peace, struggling always to get men to make peace with each other and with God. How can we ever attain such a world of peace? Only by the teachers of God—ministers and laymen alike—becoming teachers of true wisdom, teachers who make peace and who lead people to make peace with God and with each other.

QUESTIONS:

1. In terms of eternity, what has the wisdom of the world gained you?
2. Why does true wisdom come only from God?
3. What good fruit has true wisdom brought about in you? In others you know?

SUMMARY:

Unrest and dissatisfaction plague millions. People stumble around in terrible darkness, groping and grasping for peace. All the while, God is the answer—and He is the only answer. But just declaring that truth is not enough to bring peace to a person’s soul. A person must gain true wisdom, which can only come from the Word of God. Therefore, the pure Word of God must be taught. People must be shown the right way to gain peace with God and with each other. Pray that the Lord will give you true wisdom so that you can live it out and share it with others. Become wise so that you can sow seeds of peace.

1. Become a wise and understanding person.
2. Recognize false wisdom.
3. Get true wisdom.

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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END

Is God Safe?

—by Ann Peachey
Detweiler

Is our world safe?

Is God safe?

Am I safe?

A lot of people say “No, our world is not safe.” But “Yes, God is.” And, “Yes, I am.”

After reading the book of Job, I disagree.

I could tell you that suffering is for your own good. (Romans 8:28, you know...) Or that it is for His glory.

But in the middle of the rubble of your world, words are cheap. Cliches are useless – and sometimes downright void of compassion. The nice little quotes that claim to neatly explain your suffering only compound the pain.



I get it. I’ve been there.

If only there was a magic formula. “Do this and this, in this order, and God will heal your pain and take away your suffering.”

Some supposedly exist. I’ve tried some of them.

Nothing has worked.

Except for turning to God. Wrestling with Him. Asking Him questions. Seeking His face. Lamenting. Grieving. Allowing myself to feel the anger and the sadness. Acknowledging what I lost

and that I am different.

But most of all, I began to understand that God is good, not because of what He does, but because He knows what suffering – our suffering- feels like. He left everything and came to experience life in a broken world. He chose to sort through the rubble with us.

He weeps with us. He is okay with our anger at the injustice of oppression because He is angered too. He has felt every emotion we feel. He remembers that “we are dust.”

And He gives grace.

In His time, He brings healing.

Not the healing that makes everything go back to what it was before our world fell apart, but the kind of healing that makes us more compassionate, more beautiful, and closer to Him than we were before.

In that way, God is safe. He is safe because He chose to experience suffering – our suffering.

And because of that, I know I can trust Him.

END

If we think God is good and trustworthy because He protects us from evil or answers our prayers, we are in for a catastrophic collapse of everything we thought was “safe”. It takes very little faith to believe God is good when everything turns out like we asked. It’s a whole different ballgame when God doesn’t save us from evil when we ask Him to.

You see, God isn’t safe. At least not in the way we think of as “safe”. He does not always protect. He does not always do what we ask Him to do. Bad things happen, even to perfectly innocent people.

It is not based on our performance. Neither is it based on how much He loves or doesn’t love us.

And it’s not random – though it feels like it sometimes. It’s not mean – though it can seem that way.



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Silence is golden...or is it? As a father of four, there are very few days in our home that have been silent, especially in the early years. I remember one afternoon we were sitting in the living room talking with a missionary and the kids were being extremely quiet. After a little while, I told Carrie we should probably go upstairs and check on them. She said, "Let's just enjoy it, they are fine." After several more minutes, my fatherly instincts would not allow me to sit any longer. I made my way upstairs to find them "ice skating" in Cammie's bedroom. They had taken Vicks VaporRub and covered the wood floor and their feet for a great afternoon of fun!!



Photo by Jelleke Vanooteghem on Unsplash

Silence is not always good! Silence is often a way out. Silence is a way to neglect our responsibilities as a mentor or boss. Silence is an excuse not to fulfill what Scripture says about the older teaching the younger. Silence is a way for us to "trust God" and not have those important conversations with our children.

When Eve was tempted in the garden by the serpent, Adam (who was most likely with her) remained silent. When Sarai failed to believe the promises of God, Abram remained silent. When his children got involved in immorality and sin, David remained silent.

The opposite is also true. When Nabal cursed David, Abigail determined it was not best for her to remain silent. When Job's wife told him to curse God and die, he knew he could not remain silent. His response is golden:

"What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 2:10b).

So how do we know when we should or should not respond?

1. We need to speak up when no one else will.

In a day when everyone is right and no one is wrong, it is easy to remain silent. Truth is relative and what right do we have to call out or correct someone else?

Truth is not relative; it is revealed in God's Word. When God gives us a platform to reveal the truth to someone who is neglecting it, we must speak. These conversations are not easy. It is much easier to remain silent, but someone must speak the truth.

Biblical example:

Book of I Timothy

2. We need to speak up in the right manner.

Reach Out. Often the best way to do this is by asking a question. For instance: "Hey, I was wondering how you are getting along? You just don't seem like yourself lately. I have been praying for you. Is everything ok?" By reaching out in this way you are letting them know you are concerned and ready to talk if they are.

Rebuke. There are times when a person needs to be rebuked. Webster defines rebukes as, "To scold or correct usually gently or with kindly intent, or to express disapproval of." This is when we sit down with someone and express our concerns about their actions or behavior.

Reprimand. As leaders or people in authority, we shy away from this one as often as we can. Yet reprimands can end up being beneficial for the person and your team. It can also cause hard feelings and hatred. This doesn't change the fact that it must be done at times.

Biblical Examples:

Bad- Peter rebuking Jesus

Good- Paul rebuking Peter

3. We need to speak up but in love.

In his commentary on Colossians, John

MacArthur says, "The speech of the new man must also be seasoned... with salt. It is not only to be gracious but also to have an effect. Salt can sting when rubbed into a wound.

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Proverbs 27:6).

It also prevents corruption. Believers' speech should act as a purifying influence..."

I received an email several years ago from a lady who informed me of the "heresy" I was preaching. She said it was her calling to straighten out and correct pastors in our area for their false teaching. That is not what I am talking about! Your desire to speak up should come from a spirit of grace and love.

Biblical Example:

Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos under their wings and discipled him (explained the way of God more accurately).

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Sixty-eight times, the Word of God refers to his children as saints. Six of Paul's letters to the church are addressed to saints.

What is a saint?

Some people use the word "saint" to refer to another as exceptionally good – someone who puts up with a lot and handles his or her situation better than most. Roman Catholics, on the other hand, believe one becomes a saint after he or she passes away – they also believe in praying to saints in heaven.

God describes "the saint" as one who is still alive on earth. Three examples:

[Peter] "*came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda*" (Acts 9:32).

"...*many of the saints did I shut up in prison...*" (Acts 26:10).

[God] "*gave...apostles... proph-*

ets... evangelists... pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints..." (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Following are a few more descriptions of saints:

"*And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection...*" (Matthew 37:53-53).

"... *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints...*" (Jude 1:14).

The Holy Spirit makes "*intercession for the saints*" (Romans 8:27).

The Antichrist will "*make war with the saints*" (Revelation 13:7).

The saints will inherit an everlasting Kingdom and judge the world (1 Corinthians 6:1-2).

So, despite what one believes the

definition of a "saint" to be ... one thing is for sure ...

Precious

*in the sight of the LORD
is the death of His Saints.*
Psalms 116:15

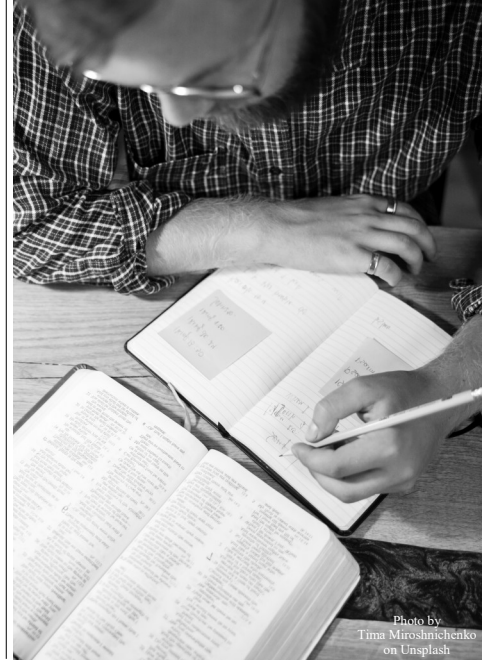


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Joy in Temptation

"*COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU FALL INTO DIVERS TEMPTATIONS*" (James 1:2).

"*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him*" (James 1:12).

These are powerful verses that may shake our thinking a bit. Don't we all admire the person who goes through life seeming like they have no trials or temptations? They always seem to make the right choices and love the Lord and are obedient in all things.

There may be such people, but very few. We all have our trials - our "thorns in the flesh." Who wants trials? Or who wants to go through temptations? None

of us do, really.

"*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and (at times) scourgeth (to afflict greatly) every son whom he receiveth*" (Hebrews 12:6).

A growing Christian will realize that God uses trials and temptations to bring us to the end of our strength and abilities. He wants us to rely on Him alone. Even Christ learned obedience. How? By the things that He suffered.

A really good attitude to have is this: When you are facing a trial, hardship, or temptation, ask God, "Lord, what do You want to teach me with this thing?" Then let God show you.

"*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward*

it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:11).

That is the key. Let these things do a good work in us. Let God break us in order to use us.

"*But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons*" (Hebrews 12:8).

Those are strong words from God.

So whatever the trial, the temptation, or the hardship that you are facing, tell God, "I don't really like this, but I know it is for my good, and anything from You will simply help me in the long run. And, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him' (Job 13:15a). Amen!"

END

As I look at the world that we live in, I see disrespect of authority like never before in my lifetime. There are whole populations of people who are saying, “We will not respect the law. We will do whatever we want regardless of what the law and those who are in authority say.”

These things are bad, but it is not my focus today. What about a believer and authority in the church? Many of you have heard authority preached all of your life.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17).

Authority is not wrong. It is not bad. In fact, authority was God’s idea. God gave Adam authority over all of the animals, over the whole earth in fact.

So why does the idea of authority in church life carry a feeling of dread, fear, or all kinds of negativeness?

It is true that the heart of man does tend to wax cold and migrate away from God as we get closer to the end of time. But that is not nearly the entire problem. The sad truth is that there has been a lot of misuse and abuse of authority within the church. Many people who are called to lead have no idea what God really says about authority.

au•thor•i•ty

the power, or right to make decisions, give orders, and enforce obedience

This is the dictionary definition of authority. It describes a policeman or many others who are in authority.

Authority in the church is often practiced this way...but is it God’s heart? No, it is not. Far from it.

In Mark 10:42-44, Jesus preached and spoke these words.

“But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. BUT SO SHALL IT NOT BE AMONG YOU: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.” (emphasis added)

These are the words of Jesus describing clearly what authority means and how it is to be practiced in the church. It is a very different description of authority from what the dictionary gives.

If those who are called to lead in the body of Christ follow these words of Jesus and minister and serve, then the whole body will be edified. The members will be drawn together and respect and honor will be brought to the leaders.

I cannot see how Jesus could have made the difference between those that rule the Gentiles and those who are called to rule in the church more clear. *“So shall it not be among you.”* Do not do it this way.

Let’s look at a man who came to Jesus with a need and observe how he saw his position of authority. A centurion, an officer in the Roman army, came to Jesus to ask him to heal his servant. He did not want Jesus to even come to his house because he felt unworthy. Then he made a powerful statement about authority.

In Matthew 8:9, the centurion told Jesus, *“I am a man under authority, hav-*

ing soldiers under me.” He goes on to describe how it worked. *“...I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.”* We would say, without hesitation, that he was a “man of authority,” or that he was “in authority.” But that is not how the centurion described himself. He said that he was a man **under** authority.

The centurion understood that the authority he had was only effective as he functioned **under** authority.

It is far more important to see and practice this attitude of authority in the church. Church leaders are, first and foremost, **under** the authority of God and the teaching of Jesus. Then they practice ministering and serving by which the body is blessed and edified. A person who can not walk in brokenness and humility is not qualified to be a leader in the church. No matter how much ability or how many good gifts a man has, he must understand his own position is **under** authority and walk therein.

When God sees His people practicing leadership His way, then He will open up Heaven and pour out a blessing. If He sees leadership practiced like the dictionary describes it, then He will resist and His blessing cannot rest upon the church.

To all my fellow church leaders:

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord (in faith and humility), so walk ye in him.”

Colossians 2:6

Praise His name!

END

THIS WAS WRITTEN BY A DEAR BROTHER THAT HAS EXPERINCED THE BLESSING OF BEING SET FREE FROM BEING DECEIVED.

I hate being wrong! It annoys me when I am wrong, especially if it is on a big issue. The truth of the matter is, we all hate being wrong. We sometimes argue because we want to prove that we are right. Being right makes us feel good.

Have you ever unknowingly been wrong, and when you found out, you were devastated? Imagine for a minute, being wrong about the most important issue in your life, and not knowing it. Then, after it is too late, you realize that you could have done something to make it turn out well instead of the worst disaster imaginable...if only you would have known.

I distinctly remember the biggest issue that I have been wrong on in my entire life. I was wrong for 32 years. I believed that I was doing the best I could to be in right standing with God so that I could go to heaven when I died. I was doing what I was told that I needed to do to gain God's approval by everyone I knew, including my pastor and my father. How could I be wrong?

It wasn't until God Himself showed me the hopelessness of my situation through sickness and a near-death experience, that I realized how wrong and how lost I really was. Upon realizing it, I cried out to God with all my heart to save me from my lost and wrong condition, and He did. He put his Holy Spirit in my heart to speak to me and communicate His heart with me. It is through the communication of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that I now have a confidence that cannot be shaken by anyone. I now know God, and trust Him further than any people or religion, even though I have been excommunicated and shunned by my own father and everyone that I had confidence in. I have been told that I have

been deceived and am going to hell.

People who are deceived don't know that they are deceived - if they knew, they wouldn't be deceived anymore. Because of this, I want to ask you; What if you are wrong about where you will spend eternity? Do you KNOW that you are right on this issue? If so, how do you know? Is it because your parents told you that you are on the right track? Or is it because your pastor told you that if you do certain things and say a little prayer, then you are a Christian and will go to heaven when you die? Or is it because you have confirmation from the Holy Spirit within you? "*Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*" (1 John 4:13).

Listen, it is not that I get a kick out of destroying people's bliss, but this is an issue that you just can't afford to be wrong on. Unless you get your confirmation from the Holy Spirit within you and the Word of God, don't trust it, because anything less than God could be mistaken. Since God is the one who will be letting you into heaven to dwell with Him forever or reject you into hell for not believing in his Son, why wouldn't you go directly to Him through His Son Jesus Christ to get your confirmation? Through Him is the only way that you will get to heaven.

If your parents or your pastor told you exactly how to be saved, and you did it because they said you needed to, you are going to miss heaven! If your relationship with Him is not personal before you die, you will not have a relationship with Him for all of eternity. The reason it is so important to get our confirmation directly from God as to whether we are right or wrong on this issue, is because we can believe with our mind and still not believe with all of our heart, mind, and soul. "*Jesus*

said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37).

If we just believe with our mind, we can learn all the right things about God, and even practice doing the right things, like I did the first 32 years of my life. My faith was in religion plus Christ, but not in Christ alone. I admired Him, but I did not love Him. A.W. Tozer said, "The Devil is a better Theologian than any of us, and is a devil still."

Unless we believe with all of our heart, mind, and soul, we will not be obedient to what Jesus told us to do. We will still be more interested in fulfilling our needs and wants than we will be about going and making disciples because our focus will still be on earthly things. "*If ye love me, keep my commandments*" (John 14:15).

So, if going to heaven is important to you, examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. "*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

According to recent studies by Christian leaders, more than 80% of Christians in the United States are likely without Christ in their heart. That breaks my heart! We only have one life to get it right. Don't settle with "maybe," or "I think so," on this matter! No pleasures in this world can compare to the value of eternal life, or with the peace and joy we experience in this life from being obedient and in unity with Christ. "*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).

END

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November

Book of Romans (Romans 6:6-23)

Taught by Michael Pearl.

The Revelation— Don't Give Up—The Best is Yet to Come! (part 5 of 5)

Chip Ingram teaches his 5th and final message on the book of Revelation.

4 Seasons of Marriage Love and Respect (part 1 of 3)

Join Emerson and Jonathan for Part I of this three-part series. Why is marital paradise lost? Why do couples feel they have left Eden and live in a jungle of sorts? Since Scripture indicates couples will have trouble in this life, why are husbands and wives unprepared? The answer is simple: they do not anticipate and accept the four seasons. Those who go through them without defeat, do so because they anticipate and accept the process.

Christian Theology - The Church (part 10 of 11)

Correct doctrine is the foundation of our faith. In this eleven-part series on Christian theology, Pastor John Marino explores what the Bible teaches.

December

Book of Romans (Romans 7:1-6)

Taught by Michael Pearl.

Friends: Love Worth Finding (part 1 of 2)

Pastor Adrian Rogers reveals why we must guard our teenagers' friendships and help them become admirable friends to others.

4 Seasons of Marriage Love and Respect (part 2 of 3)

Emerson and Jonathan Eggerichs explore who marital paradise is lost and why couples feel like they have left Eden to live in a jungle of sorts. Scripture indicates that couples will have trouble in this life—so why are husbands and wives unprepared? Learn to anticipate and accept the four seasons of marriage so they can be navigated successfully.

Christian Theology End Times (final in an 11 part series)

Correct doctrine is the foundation of our faith. Pastor John Marino explores what the Bible teaches about the end times in this final recording in an eleven part series.

January

Book of Romans (Romans 7:7-25)

Taught by Michael Pearl.

Friends: Love Worth Finding (part 2 of 2)

Pastor Adrian Rogers reveals why we must guard our teenagers' friendships and help them become admirable friends to others.

4 Seasons of Marriage Love and Respect (part 3 of 3)

Emerson and Jonathan Eggerichs explore who marital paradise is lost and why couples feel like they have left Eden to live in a jungle of sorts. Scripture indicates that couples will have trouble in this life—so why are husbands and wives unprepared? Learn to anticipate and accept the four seasons of marriage so they can be navigated successfully.

Church Membership (part 1 of 2)

In this two part series on church membership, Pastor John Marino discusses the importance of committing to the local church. Does the Bible call us as Christians to be merely spectators - or does the commitment to the church go deeper than that?

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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

Dear friends, I don't know of any Amish church denominations that teach salvation through works. I think you know better. I'm sure you weren't taught that growing up. The following verses were taken from a book of Anabaptist history.

Thus the godless (Catholics and Reformers) say to the godly (Anabaptists): O yes, you boast about your good works, act like the hypocrite in the temple, and think that therefore you are without sin. To this we reply that we can take no credit for good as natural men, but we give all glory and praise to God to whom it rightfully belongs. For it is obvious that man in himself cannot think anything good, let alone do it, as Paul says. For because of the grace of God, we know that the words which we do and carry out as men count for nothing before God on that day. In as much, however, as God does them in us through His grace and His spirit by whom all the believers are governed, they are good, just, pleasing, and acceptable to God (Hutterite leader Jacob Hutter, in a writing entitled *Plots and Excuses*, 1535).

You see, kind reader, we do not seek our salvation in works, words, or sacraments as do the learned ones, although they accuse us of that very thing, but we seek them only in Christ Jesus and in no other means in heaven or on earth. We rejoice exclusively in this only means. We trust by the grace of God to continue thus unto death. But that we abhor carnal works and desire to conform ourselves to His Word and commandment, according to our weakness, we do because He so taught and commanded us. For whosoever does not walk according to his doctrine proves in fact that he does not believe on Him or know Him and that he is not in the communion of the saints (Menno Simons, 1552).

The Anabaptists believed that salvation was not primarily a status but rather a transformation. The Reformers saw repentance as an admission of guilt, while the Anabaptists saw repentance as admitting guilt and turning away from old life. The Reformers saw faith primarily as passive acceptance of God's offer of salvation while the Anabaptists understood faith as the positive response of an open heart and life that invited the transforming work of God.

In this response is commitment to discipleship. The Anabaptists "walked in the resurrection" while the Reformers rested in "grace."
—(from a reader in Indiana)

Dear Friend,

We agree on much. I am glad to know that you and many others do believe as the Scriptures say—that salvation is by grace through faith, and not of works. I pray that more and more see and know this truth every day. Sadly, there are still very many who do indeed trust in works. For example, some believe that only those who are in a certain church or denomination will go to heaven. They are trusting in religion rather than in Jesus. Some people believe that if they attend church and pray, if they join the church, if they follow certain rules, etc., they will be saved. Certainly we can agree that this belief is not trusting in Jesus alone.

Regarding Jacob Hutter's words, it is true that man cannot think anything good unless changed by God by being born again. However, I am not sure it is very Christian to call the Reformers godless. They definitely had their faults, as did the Anabaptist leaders (and as we all do), yet they certainly were not godless.

As for the words of Menno Simons, may we all seek salvation in Jesus Christ alone, as he stated. Let us pray that many more will be turned from death to life after they believe in Christ, just as they were in the book of Acts, and then serve Jesus with the rest of their lives because they have been made new creations in Him.

In heaven, there will be no Anabaptists or Reformers, no Baptists or Presbyterians or Lutherans, no Amish or Mennonites or Methodists. There will not even be Protestants. There will only be Christians—those who were saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, based upon the Word of God alone.

Let us then unite in the same righteous cause—and proclaim God's truth to all we meet. If we come across Christians who trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, then let us join with them as brothers and sisters. If we meet those who trust in their church or a denomination or

their works or their rules and think they cannot get to heaven without these things, then let us tell them the good news that Jesus came to set them free from bondage and to give them new life, hope, help, joy, peace, love, and eternal life.

Certainly many religious, good-intentioned, hardworking people are unsaved and lost, as Jesus explained. Certainly many nice church people call Jesus Lord who do not know Him, who trust in their religion and works and self.

Let us rejoice, though, that many of both the openly wicked and the openly religious have turned from self and sin and have found new life and changed hearts through Jesus Christ alone. Let us, then, live for Him and work for Him now while we can—telling others all around us the good news. Let us not keep this to ourselves, but let us be bold witnesses to our friends, our family members, our neighbors, and even to strangers. Let us join together in serving our Lord and Savior.
—Paul Miller

There is a popular belief and picture of what a Jezebel spirit looks like. Many envision a bold, un-submissive, angry woman, with seductive eyes and with her face painted to the nines.

We are taught to believe that a woman who finds it difficult to trust her husband has this spirit. Let me share with you what a Jezebel spirit is really like.

The reason that the Word mentions her face being painted is because she is covering her true self. A person with a Jezebel spirit will never show their real face in public - at least very seldom, and only if they momentarily let their guard down. You see, Jezebel is a spirit that causes its host to fear who they really are because they have not been needed and loved as they deserved, and they have been told many lies about themselves.

The only people who see behind the sweet, charming, charismatic facade of a person hosting this spirit are those who know them very well, such as their families or coworkers. We can't truly assume that we really know a person if we haven't seen them behind closed doors. Trust me, some dear souls are paying the price of who this person is behind those closed doors.

Often the person hosting this spirit will appear to be very sweet and charming to the public eye, but only those who know them well will ever see the cruel side. The hell and the turmoil these dear folks are going thro is unspeakable. Sometimes they are suffering physically, but did you know there are worse things than being beaten? Oh yes there are, my dear friend! Having your very psyche and your mind messed with, your very sense of reality taken from you until you feel you will go insane is one of them. Trying with every effort to fix your marriage, thinking that if you only explain your heart, you

will be heard. Surely, you think, if they could understand, they would love me and trust my heart. Surely, I just simply didn't explain it well enough.

I hate to break it to you, but they really don't want to understand your heart. They can hear quite well - enough, in fact, to use all the words against you that you just finished desperately sharing with them in hopes that they would hear your heart - turning all of your hurts against you and making you the scapegoat so they can feel better.

A Jezebel spirit is a very selfish spirit. It is all about looking and being great. They really don't care about you or what happens to you along the way but they will make you feel like they do. Many are those who lie wounded at the side of the road in the wake of their journey to success.

Since this is a spirit, it can be hosted by either males or females. Shocked, are ya? Kris Vallotton actually says he has seen far more men than women with this spirit. A spirit can reside wherever there is an open door. Your greatest security against Jezebel is honesty and humility. If you are never completely forthright and you only share the good, and the amazing in your life, and leave your family feeling like their story wasn't told, chances are, you may have this spirit active in you. If you find it difficult to say, "I was wrong," and take responsibility for sin or wrongdoing, then you are at great risk.

This spirit always runs in trio with Ahab and Leviathan. They will even expose each other rather than being exposed themselves. Ahab is a spirit that tries to make everyone happy and often ends by enabling Jezebel. Leviathan is basically pride and division. If you get rid of pride, you don't much need to worry about this one. It can't operate without it.

A person with a Jezebel spirit will always be very busy "helping" other people. However, those poor people don't realize they are being groomed to be emotional supply for the person who is hosting the evil spirit.

If you find yourself emotionally drained, constantly becoming sick, lying awake at night, unable to sleep because of all the thoughts going through your head about the devastation you see in your family, your worries and fears about what you have done wrong that this person simply can't understand you, why they use you as they do, why you always feel extremely special to this person one day and manipulated and disrespected around them the next, then chances are you are a victim of this spirit.

I have extremely good news for you though! You do not need to remain under its influence! There IS a way out. Stop tolerating it! I know - it is never that simple. However, when you consider years of living in confusion, turmoil and craziness, feeling like you are literally losing your everlasting mind, you can definitely handle the anger and hatred that will be aimed at you as this spirit realizes it is losing control over you. In fact, if you doubted at all up until this point what you are really dealing with, there will be no question at this point. This is a very tough battle; refusing to be manipulated and controlled, refusing to allow your knowledge of the truth to be messed with, going with your gut instead of allowing yourself to be told what is the truth. However, once engaged, you will have so much clarity of thought, the truth will become clear and obvious, and once you have that back, you have won the biggest part of the battle.

The Word tells us that in the end days, people will be lovers of themselves

rather than lovers of God. If you see anyone with an agenda, promoting a certain denomination above God, supporting abuse, promoting the suppression of women, you are looking right into the headlights of a Jezebel spirit.

If you see someone who is jumping from one ministry to the next, always busy trying to help people at the expense of their own families, using people along the way for their own benefit, attacking people who they perceive as a threat to their own success, then look out. That is where you will find this spirit.

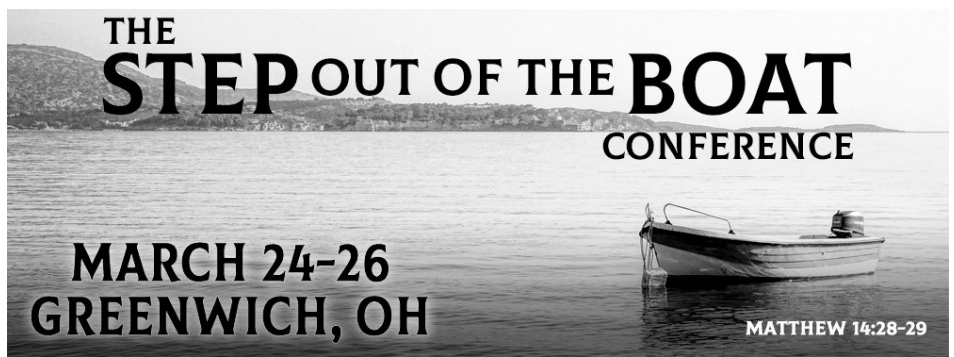
We need an army of people with the spirit of Jehu! Jehu tells Jezebel's eunuchs to throw her down! We will not tolerate this spirit! It is an anti-Christ spirit, and has its roots in false religion, free-masonry, and the Illuminati. Remember, we are not dealing with flesh and blood. We are dealing with the powers of darkness. We need to come into agreement with heaven and out of agreement with the spirit of this age.

I know this will look like mixed up religious drivel to many. Go ahead and laugh, and have a wonderful day! I'm glad I brought some humor to you!

For those of you who have a sick feeling in the middle of your gut, because it made way too much sense to you, and you are realizing, to your horror, that you have been facing this battle, you are in my prayers. Feel free to message me. There is healing and there is hope.

If you felt sick inside for a different reason, maybe this made you feel uneasy...simply begin to humble yourself before God. Find some accountability partners. Find a certified counselor or psychologist, and they will help you to walk through the deep pain of the past. It wasn't your fault that you were abused. There is hope and there is help. There is no shame in that. We all need healing and hope and we all need accountability and help. You have what it takes.

END



Earlier this year—in March, we had our very first ever *Step Out of the Boat Conference* in Greenwich, OH. Let me say ... it was amazing!!! About fifteen people made their way to the front and shared a personal testimony of when they stepped out—stepped away from their comfort zone—and followed the Lord with all their heart. It was such a powerful and moving time that we felt led of God to have another one in March of 2022. We are advertising early so you can round up your family and friends.

During the conference, we will provide childcare and food. All you have to do is find a motel room in the Ashland, OH area. If you are unable to pay for a motel room, let us know early and we will do our very best to connect you with a church family who will provide housing for you.

Why Step Out of the Boat Conference?

My dear friend, if there ever was a time for men and women to step out of the boat and be used of God to make a difference, it is NOW.

It is so easy for all of us to lose focus of God and eternity, and get caught up in the NOW. Our workloads are overwhelming, bills need paid, family members need attention, and unplanned emergencies pop up. The truth is, we get so caught up in the pressures of life that even when God does try to talk to us, His voice gets pushed back, drowned out, ignored. Some of us have not heard God's voice in years. If He were to speak, we wouldn't even recognize His voice.

So my question is, do you want to be in the same state one year from now? Five years from now? I can assure you, that if you do nothing, you will be in the same state when you lie on your death bed, 10, 20, or 50 years from today.

The heart and goal of this conference is:

1. to hear what God is doing in other people's lives
2. to fellowship and spend time with other Christians
3. to once again hear God's voice and follow Him
4. to refocus on the things that matter most
5. to wake us up to reality

Won't you plan on coming? The conference will begin on Thursday evening, March 24 and end on Saturday noon, March 26. The registration cost is \$25 for an adult, \$40 a couple or \$60 a family. Put it on your calendar. If the devil comes along and wants you to overwrite your plans with something else, tell him "No."

If you have any questions, or you would like to register, please call our office at (419) 962-1515. See you at *Step Out of the Boat Conference!* —Joe Keim

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Methods of Bible Study

—by www.gotquestions.org

There are several different Bible study methods we can use to study in an organized or systematic way. For the purpose of this article, we will classify them into two broad categories: Book Studies and Topical Studies. Before discussing the different types of Bible study methods, it is important to recognize that all of them have certain things in common and must follow certain hermeneutic rules or principles in order to avoid misinterpreting what the Bible says. For example, whatever type of Bible study method we use, it is important that the study carefully takes into consideration the context of the subject or verse being studied, both within the immediate context of the chapter or book itself and within the overall context of the Bible. Our first goal must be to understand what the original or intended meaning of the passage is. In other words, what was the human author's intended meaning, and how would his original audience have understood what he wrote? This principle recognizes that the Bible was not written in a vacuum, but is an historical document written at a specific point in history with a specific audience in mind for a specific purpose. Once the true meaning of the passage is understood, then we should seek to

understand how it applies to us today.

Book Studies: This Bible study method focuses either on a complete book in the Bible, or specific part of a book, such as a specific chapter, a range of verses, or a single verse itself. With chapter and verse-by-verse methods, and with the study of an overall book, the principles and goals are the same. For example, in order to do a thorough book study, we must necessarily also study the context of individual chapters and verses. Likewise, in order to correctly study a particular verse, we need to also study the overall message of the chapter and book that verse is found in. Of course, whether it is on the individual verse level, or a complete book study, we must always consider the overall context of the whole Bible as well.

Topical Studies: There are many varieties of topical studies that we can do. Some examples include biographical studies, where we study all the Bible says about a particular person; word studies, where we study all the Bible says about a particular word or subject; and geographical studies, where we learn all we can about a particular town, country, or nation mentioned in the Bible. Topical studies are important for understanding all the

Bible teaches on a particular subject or topic. We must be careful, though, that the conclusions drawn from a topical study do not come from taking verses out of their original context in order to imply a meaning that could not be supported by doing a verse study or book study. Topical studies are helpful in systematically organizing and understanding what the Bible teaches on specific subjects.

In studying the Bible, it is really quite beneficial to use different Bible study methods at different times. Sometimes, we might want to devote extended time to do a book study while at other times we can benefit greatly from doing some type of topical study. Whichever type of study we are doing, we must follow these basic steps:

- 1) Observation-what does the Bible say?
- 2) Interpretation-What does the Bible mean?
- 3) Application-How does this biblical truth apply to my life, or how is this passage relevant today?

No matter what method of Bible study we do, we must be careful to rightly divide the Word of God so that we are workmen that need not be ashamed (2 Timothy 2:15).

END