



MAP ♦ P.O. Box 128 ♦ 575 US Highway 250 ♦ Savannah, OH 44874 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ January 2018

LIVING IN THE STRONGHOLD OF DECEPTION

True Judgment

Part 5
of 8

First Peter 4:17: *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?* Judgment and suffering go hand in hand according to the will of God. First Peter 4:19 says: *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* What is the house of God? Is 1 Peter 4:17 saying that God is mad at the church and is going to judge us because we failed in some area in our lives? No! Judgment begins because we are His children!

First Corinthians 3:16: *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* When we are born again (or born from above or born of the Spirit), we have the Holy Spirit in us. We also still have that which fights the Holy Spirit within us; it is called the flesh or sin nature. This is what has to be judged because our sin nature does not choose God or His ways. The first Adam represents this.

The choice is ours. Which one do I follow? Do I walk after the Spirit or after the flesh? One is death, and one is life. *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Romans 6:23)

If we are Christians, God will allow circumstances in our lives that are not pleasant according to our way of thinking; He even allows us to fall. God is judging us because He loves us.

**Judgment must begin
at the house of God**

Sometimes, we think we are being attacked by the devil. Yes, the devil will try to make us think this, so we take our eyes off Jesus and turn our eyes on him. When judgment occurs, God is growing us up to the stature of the fullness of Christ. The more judgment or suffering, the more we come into the knowledge of

the Son of God and into His glory and victory as well as Death and resurrection; this is what it is all about.

My friend, if we do not allow this judgment now, we will be judged in the future. Today is the day of salvation. There is a great white throne judgment (Read Revelation 20:11-15). Let us choose life today.

If this judgment does not happen in our lives, we will have eyes but will not be able to see. We will have ears but will not be able to hear. We will never be able to do the will of God. It is easy to learn the Word of God with our sin nature, which the devil also knows; but to learn it from the heart is the power of God, which gives us life and saves us.

This can only be accomplished by the work of the cross in our lives.

The Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see and our ears to hear. In Acts 9:16, the Holy Spirit is telling Ananias how much Saul (who will become Paul) must suffer for the sake of the name of Christ. Paul suffered both from without and from

within. The Lord did not have Ananias tell Saul what a great apostle he was going to be, but He had Ananias tell Saul how much he must suffer for the sake of Jesus' name. Why? So Paul wouldn't glory in his flesh or sin nature. If an apostle or a prophet is not suffering for Christ's sake today—yes, even in America—he or she will go in the power of the flesh and will become a false apostle or prophet. This is the same with all the gifts that the Lord has given to His body, and this is true of all Christians. God help us! Many begin on the right path, but end up on the wrong one.

One may say, "I will never end up on the wrong path." Didn't Peter say the same thing in Matthew 16:22? Are we better than Peter? Oh, but the flesh is so strong! God help us! Thank God for the word and operation of repentance.

Second Corinthians 12:1-2: *It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. Paul had a powerful experience of the revelation of Jesus Christ. He heard and understood things by this experience that he could not describe or explain with human wisdom or with human speech.*

Because of the abundance of revelation, he was given a thorn in the

flesh. Paul's flesh could not have any part in this experience. His flesh could not get any glory whatsoever. Do we glory in our ministries today and show others all the things we are doing and all that is happening? All this will be tried by FIRE in me and in you.

There had to be suffering in Paul's flesh of some kind. If this suffering didn't take place, his sin nature would glory. He asked the Lord three times to remove this thorn in the flesh. Could it be that the church thought Paul didn't have enough faith to remove the suffering in his life? Maybe he didn't fast enough. Maybe he didn't confess the Word enough. Maybe he didn't believe enough. Maybe he didn't give money to Peter's ministry. Maybe he had some hidden sin. Maybe he didn't pray enough, and that was why God did not remove that suffering. Does this sound familiar? God have mercy and give us wisdom! God didn't remove the suffering, but instead told Paul, *My grace is sufficient for thee* (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Yes, we are saved by His grace through faith as He gives us revelation of Himself. That is why a thorn is allowed in our lives. Also, so the sin nature that is still in us doesn't glory or boast.

This is especially true for those whom God has called into any kind of leadership.

If this thorn or suffering is not given to us, we will corrupt this holy

salvation that is of God, and we will offer up strange fire. I have seen it too many times. Let us suffer according to the will of God, and we will experience the glory of God, and the true holy wisdom will flow like a mighty river!

Paul gloried in his infirmities so that the power of Christ might rest upon him, for he knew that when he was weak in the flesh, he was strong in the Lord. In Greek, "weak" means to be feeble in any sense; to be diseased, impotent; to be made weak. What? Paul gloried in this? By this means, true grace operates in us, and our sin nature doesn't get any glory. We become His workmanship, and we will not boast in our self-effort.

Infirmity means almost the same thing. So you see, brothers and sisters, any doctrine that says that any manifestations of suffering means we don't have enough faith is a doctrine of error. This doctrine is blind to God's ways and blind to truth. I would never write this if I had not experienced this. No, these infirmities will not overtake our lives because of the power of God, but they will keep our sin nature from getting any glory. That is why Paul gloried in his infirmities; he could be a partaker of the glory of God. He had eyes to see and ears to hear, which is a sign of a true apostle.

Somebody might say, "God took care of all my sin and my sin nature on the cross. I don't have sin and a sin nature anymore." Yes, the cross did take care of the sin problem, and our mind said yes, but our heart, or inner man, has not caught up with our mind. Read Romans chapter 7. We try to change that which does not line up with our mind by self

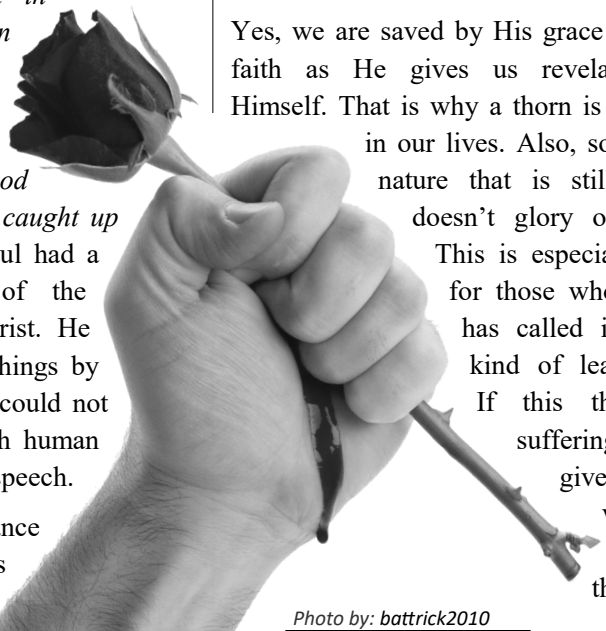


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Since our beginning in 2000, many people have written to us, asking to be added to our mailing list, while others have sent us names of their friends and family members. We think it's important for us to tell you that the cost of *The Amish Voice* 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 along side of us by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit as well as highly appreciated. In order to continue receiving the Amish Voice, please keep us informed of any changes to your address. Thank you. —Joe Keim

effort. We get confused and try all the latest fads; it won't work. Instead of being led by the Holy Spirit, we are being led by self-effort for self-exaltation. We need the mind of God in this. ASK, SEEK, and KNOCK. Read Luke 18:9-14. Again, we become His workmanship.

First John 1:8 says, *If we say that we have no sin* [speaking about our sin nature], *we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* We know that operating in our sin nature brings sinful results. If we confess this to God about ourselves, the workmanship of God takes place, and we grow in this great salvation. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

When we, like Paul, understand the

revelation of Jesus Christ, we see our sin nature. Our sin nature becomes real to us because it opposes the work of the cross. Therefore, we confess our unrighteousness to God and not to man. Man can't help you. We start to learn the truth, and this truth will make us free, because it comes from God by His workmanship in us. This is called being led by the Holy Spirit unto good works that were foreordained that we walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

The biggest problem in the church today is we want to do God's work with our sin nature, and our flesh is getting the glory. This is the desire of Satan: to be like God and above God. We think we are free, but

we operate in great bondage. This has always been the greatest problem.

My friends, today, God is setting true ministry in the body of Christ. God has severely dealt with those who come into ministry, so that no fleshly work gets the glory. These are true apostles, true prophets, true evangelists, true shepherds and true teachers. They know their sin nature; they also know God's way, which is the cross. They know truth, and they know what is not true. They know the difference between light and darkness. They have been trained according to God's training. They hear from God. These are the hidden ones God can use.

—D. Wickey, (602) 448-8528

Lawyer, Lightning, and Luther

—By Paul Miller

Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483. He was born on St. Martin's Day, and so his parents named him Martin. Hans Luther, Martin's father, was a miner. Hans and his wife, Margarete, were able to send Martin to school. Hans had high hopes for Martin and was pleased that he was studying to become a lawyer.

On July 2, 1505, Martin Luther was returning to the University of Erfurt when he was caught in a thunderstorm. You will remember that Saul of Tarsus had a sudden change of heart due to divine intervention, and so it was with Martin Luther. A bolt of lightning hit the ground near where Luther was, knocking him to the ground. Afraid, Luther called out to St. Anne, saying that if he would be kept safe through the storm, he would become a monk.

On July 17, he entered the Black Monastery to become a monk in the strict Augustinian Order. Martin Luther became a good and dedicated monk. He wanted desperately to find peace with God. He knew that he was a sinner and that God was angry with him, and so he strictly followed the rules in an attempt to please God. He fasted, prayed, kept his vows, slept on the floor, and was as religious as he could be. He confessed his sins – even sins that he was not sure were really sins. He wanted nothing to stand between him and God, but he never found peace.

At the age of twenty-seven, Luther had an opportunity to visit Rome, and looked forward to finding answers there. However, he was more disappointed than ever when he saw the corruption, irreverence, and immorality in Rome among the priests.

Luther returned to the monastery and was then sent to study at the University of Wittenberg, where he earned his doctorate degree and became a professor of theology.

How many today are content with a little religion? It is rare to find one like Luther, intent on doing whatever he could to find peace with God. If today's Christians sought God's fulness as sincerely as Martin Luther sought God's peace, we would be vastly different people. John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, was another one who sought God for years until He found peace in Jesus.

As in the days of Luther, people will not find true peace with God through church, through activities, or through denying oneself. Do you have real peace with God, or are you content with religion and church? Luther was soon to find the answer he had been looking for, and the answer would eventually lead both to his breaking with the church of Rome and to the rise of the Protestant Reformation.

—Paul Miller

Dear reader, we would like to hear your interpretation of 1 John 2:15-16: *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.*

We will print your letter in the next Amish Voice, if it gets to us on time.

Live Conference Calls and Past Recordings

UPCOMING DISCUSSIONS—JOIN US LIVE

Join us for a *live conference call* on the first Sunday of every month at 8:00 P.M. EST. Simply dial (302) 202-1110, and then enter code 409703.

1. February: *Getting Along With People*
2. March: *Twenty-One Leadership Character Traits*

PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS—RECORDINGS

If you missed any of our *previous conference call discussions*, dial (641) 715-3800, enter code 89752, and listen to the recordings. Simply talk into the phone when the recording is over and leave us a message. Tell us what you thought or what you would like to hear.

1. Paul Helmuth shares his testimony
2. Jonas Yoder leads us in a discussion about Christmas. Should we celebrate it? Why or why not? How?
3. Charles and Diane Breznau, *Healing of the Heart Ministries*

Little Star

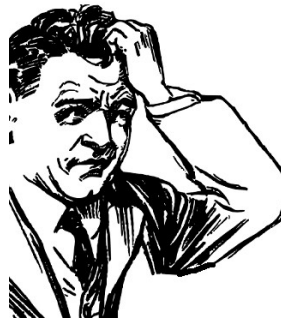
This is a poem, written by Esther Keim, after her miscarriage on Valentine's Day, 1996. Writing this poem helped a lot with the emotional healing of the heart.

I was glad to know that you named me Little Star,
As it will help me when I shine for you in a land afar.
Just to know that you cared enough for me,
Even though you knew I'd never be.
Thanks, big bro and sis for praying for me
Even tho' you will never get to hold me on earth;
And I am sure you're sorry I had to die.
I'll be waiting for you in my home beyond the sky.
And I'm sure my mother and my dad
Were wondering would I be good or would I be bad;
Now they don't have to worry at all,
As I'm already in heaven having a ball.
Even tho' you'll miss holding me in your arms,
I have a better home beyond the stars.

—Signed, Little Star

In 2 Samuel 12:22-23, King David said: *...While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*

Men Talk Specifics, Woman Talk Randomly



Am I the only man that notices that most conversations are dominated by men? That most of the time when there is a group of men and women, the ladies say little compared to the guys. Sure, the ladies will chatter away in a corner if they get a chance, but not in a group conversation.

I feel this all starts by men in general who don't understand how woman communicate. When a woman talks about something, the man is immediately planning a way to fix it—to make whatever it is she's talking about, better. I see the light go out in the woman's eyes when she timidly ventures to say something and the guy immediately has a solution to a problem she didn't even know she had.

Guys talk to guys about specific things. Guys offer suggestions to guys about specific things. Guy thanks guy and goes home and tries the suggestion and is thankful. Then guy sits down with wife and wife talks. Wife usually isn't specific. Wife just wants to talk. Talking releases emotions for wife. Guy has no idea how to listen without making it better. Guy tells wife she needs to do so and so. Light in wife's eyes flickers, then goes out.

While I am definitely still learning the process, it is the hardest thing for a man to do—to simply listen and shut up. The wife is trying to connect by just talking. Offering our male solutions seldom helps, unless she asks for help. Men compartmentalize, woman generalize.

Many a good man is trying desperately to connect with the wife, but he keeps shooting himself in the foot. Hint, just shut up, smile and nod. Offer no solution unless she asks for it, no matter how hard you have to bite your tongue. It's completely unnatural for a man. But it's key if you want to connect deeply. We HAVE to let them go to bring them close. We are controlling by default. It's not a strong point. It's simply a fault. —Ernest Schwartz

willing to follow Him no matter what. When I told the Lord that I was willing to let Him give me a new heart, He acted on my request. I needed to be born again. Simple, old language, but sometimes the simple things are best. Jesus said a long time ago that we must be born again, the same Jesus that said that gave me a brand-new heart when I asked for it.

After that, I wanted to follow Jesus. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me*

(Matthew 16:24). For me, that meant laying everything else at His feet. No longer do I care what people think of me. If I love Jesus, it means I'm going to talk about Him – a lot. If someone loves another person (a boyfriend or girlfriend), they think about them and talk about them – a lot. If someone loves their work, a brand of machinery, or a particular type of food, they talk about it a lot. One thing I know and hang on to is Jesus's words that if we are ashamed of Him, He'll be ashamed of me. I do not want Jesus Christ to be ashamed of me.

If you have not already done so, my

friend, I encourage you to ask Jesus to give you a new heart. *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). Ask Him make you willing to follow Him. If you are already born again, ask Jesus to show you how to love Him more. Pour out your heart and life for your best friend, Jesus Christ. It's a special relationship to guard and nurture, even more so than we do with our earthly friends. May the Lord Jesus Christ richly bless your relationship with Him.

—Jeremiah Zeiset

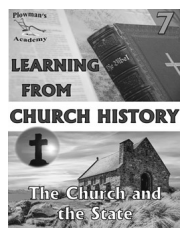
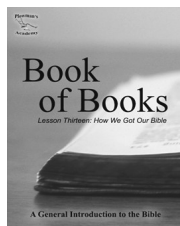
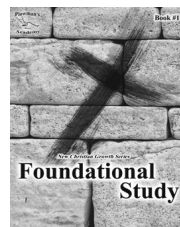
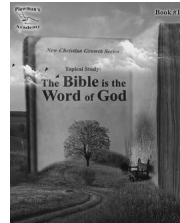
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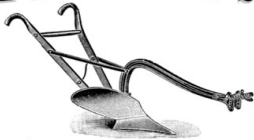


When a train goes through
a tunnel and it gets dark,
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Feedback and Response Section

1

Dear Writers of the Amish Voice, growing up in the Amish, I was always taught that the only way to heaven was through Jesus Christ and being born of the Spirit; I was taught that the ordinances of the church were simply a helpful set of guidelines – not the way to heaven. It sounds like the writers of your magazine grew up in churches that are different and not familiar to me.

Look around yourself. God has an ordinance in everything from the sun, moon, and stars to the seasons; the list could go on and on.

Joe Keim responds: First and foremost, I celebrate the fact that you were taught, from a little boy up, that salvation is in Jesus Christ alone. You used the term *being born of the Spirit*, which Jesus clearly communicated to Nicodemus and to all generations since then.

Having been in ministry of evangelism for almost thirty years, I have had many opportunities to discuss scriptures with many groups of Amish people, scattered throughout thirty-one states in the US. There are those who, like yourself, say the gospel is clearly preached and explained in their setting – that is, by faith alone, grace alone, and in Christ alone. Again, I celebrate with you and all of heaven and earth.

Jesus preached: *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me* (John 14:6).

Peter preached: *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved* (Acts 4:12).

Paul preached: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9)

There is another group, however, a second setting of Amish churches, who do not preach, nor do they understand the same gospel you believe. In this setting, the church rules and traditions are always at the forefront. They use fear and control to keep their members in line. Yes, they do preach the name of Jesus and quote scripture about the new birth; however, they do not explain, nor do they understand the new birth. Therefore, individuals, in this setting have a warped and twisted understanding of the gospel. They believe the new birth is partly Jesus, partly baptism, partly membership in the Amish church, partly staying unspotted from the world, and partly following a detailed list of do's and don'ts. It is this belief that says when individuals are lying in their coffins before their own

I know that churches aren't perfect and are far from it, but I see that as a reason to keep working, not a reason to leave. I believe our churches have God's blessing, which is why the devil is working so hard to destroy them.

I am writing to ask that your writers of the Amish Voice examine their motives carefully and to make sure they are not using their writing to sooth their own consciences.

In closing, I will say this: I hope that through the grace of God and saving blood of Jesus, we can one day all meet in heaven.

—M.H. Ohio

people, in their original dress pattern, after having kept up with all their parts, that somehow, they are or will have become born of the Spirit. This is a false gospel! The apostle Paul had plenty to say about false gospel creeping into the church. To the Galatian church, he wrote: *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.*

The scriptures give us a clear example of how the *gospel of Christ* was being perverted in Act 15:1, *and certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.* That is the very same thing as saying, except you get baptized, you cannot be saved; except you become, live and die a member of the church, you cannot be saved; except you follow a lengthy list of man-made rules, you cannot be saved. The apostle Paul gives a very strong warning, concerning this idea of adding to or perverting the gospel: *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we [that is, the apostles] have preached unto you, **let him be accursed.** As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preaches any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, **let him be accursed*** (Galatians 1:8-9).

What is the gospel? Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:1-3:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that ⁽¹⁾ Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that ⁽²⁾ he was buried, and that ⁽³⁾ he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. (1 Cor 15:1-4).

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That's it! If you or I add anything to the gospel – death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ – we have just perverted the gospel.

Concerning structure in the church: I agree with you in saying that God is a God of structure. If He weren't, the sun, moon and stars would have crashed into *planet earth* a long time ago. God gave us a clearly defined outline for the **Head of the Church**—Ephesians 1:22, 5:23, 25, 27; **Church Offices**—Acts 14:23, 1 Timothy 3:1-7; **Relationship Between Offices**—Acts 6, 1 Timothy 5:17; and **Relationship Between Churches**—Acts 24:17; Romans 15:26-27; 1 Corinthians 16:3; 2 Corinthians 8-9. I also agree that each local church must come up with common sense structure, but this is also where it gets tricky. When the church begins to enforce traditions and personal preferences on its members, it will soon water down and pervert the pure and simple gospel.

Putting pressure on church members to conform is legalism, and is the opposite of grace. The apostle Paul warns us of legalism:

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men (Colossians 2:20-22)? Legalistic people may appear to be righteous and spiritual, but legalism ultimately fails to accomplish God's purposes because it is an outward performance instead of an inward change.

To avoid falling into the trap of legalism, we can start by holding fast to the words of the apostle John: *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand (Romans 14:4). But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10).*

I welcome your honest and scriptural reply to my response.

—Joe Keim

2

Dear Friends, We are sending a donation to you. We have been on your mailing list for a couple of years, and we greatly enjoy reading the *Amish Voice*. It is always packed full of the truth. It brings great joy to our hearts when we see our people come to the truth, understand salvation, and be free from the stronghold of religious deception and traditions.

It brought sadness to our hearts as we read the articles in the feedback and response section of the last copy. Our prayer is that Jesus penetrates and weakens the stronghold of religious

Paul Miller responds:

Dear AMT, thank you for your letter, your gift, and your prayers. Thank you, too, for caring about the lost. It is good to know that there are indeed many like you who have been changed by God's Holy Spirit, and who have been changed from spiritual death to spiritual life. As you stated, though, there are many, many more who are lost in religion. It has been this way since the early days of the world, and this can certainly be seen when Jesus dwelt among us and often had conflicts with

deception over our people and commissions the holy angels to do battle with the principalities of the darkness. And we also pray that the Lord will strengthen his servants in this land and send revival to His people and bring a harvest of souls – Amen. All glory to God!

We would like a copy of *Jesus Came to Save Sinners*, and we would like to personally thank you for all of the effort your ministry puts in to make the *Amish Voice* available.

— AMT, OH

the religious leaders of His day, who thought they could please God by obeying some rules and cleaning up the outside instead of having their hearts changed.

Continue to pray and scatter the seeds of the gospel, that others might find forgiveness, peace, joy, and eternal life in Christ Jesus alone. God's people need to be revived, and the lost need Jesus. We join you in praying for a harvest of souls by the power and Word of God. May those lost in religion and sin find new life in Jesus. —Paul Miller

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Continued from the last issue...

Temper

Then there is *temper*. I wouldn't give much for a man that doesn't have a temper. Steel isn't good for anything if it hasn't got temper. But when temper gets the mastery over me, I am its slave, and it becomes a source of weakness. It may be made a great power for good all through my life and help me. Or it may become my greatest enemy from within and rob me of power. The current in some rivers is so strong that it makes them useless for navigation.

Someone said that a preacher will never fail to reach the people when he speaks of temper. It is astonishing how little mastery even professing Christians have over it. A friend of mine in England visited a certain home. While he sat in the parlor, he heard a noise in the hall. He asked what it was and was told that it was only the doctor throwing his boots downstairs because they weren't properly polished. "Many Christians," said an old clergyman, "who bore the loss of a child or of all their property with the most heroic Christian fortitude are entirely vanquished by the breaking of a dish or the blunders of a servant."

I have had people say to me, "Mr. Moody, how can I get control of my temper?"

If you really want to get control, I will tell you how. But you won't like the medicine. Treat it as a sin and confess it. People look upon it as a sort of affliction. One lady even told me she inherited it from her father and mother. I suppose she did. That is still no excuse for her.

When you get angry next time and speak unkindly to a person and realize it, go and ask that person to forgive you. You won't get mad with that person for the next twenty-four hours. You might do it in about forty-eight hours, but go the second time. After you've done that

about half a dozen times, you'll change your behavior, because apologizing makes the old flesh burn.

A lady said to me once, "I have gotten so much in the habit of exaggerating that my friends accuse me of exaggerating so often that they no longer believe me."



She said, "Can you help me? What can I do to overcome it?"

"Well," I said, "the next time you catch yourself lying, go right to that person and say you have lied, and tell them you're sorry. Say it is a lie. Stamp it out, root and branch. That's what you want to do."

"Oh," she said, "I wouldn't want to call it *lying*." But that is what it was.

Christianity isn't worth a snap of your finger if it doesn't straighten out your character. I've grown tired of all mere lip service and sentiment. If people can't tell when you are telling the truth, there is something radically wrong, and you had better straighten it out right away. Now, are you ready to *do* it? Bring yourself to the point of dealing with it whether you want to or not. Do you know someone who has been offended by something you've done? Go right to them and tell them you are sorry. You say you are not to blame. Never mind, go right to them and tell them you are sorry. I have had to do it many times. An impulsive man like myself has to do it often, but I sleep all the sweeter at night when I get things straightened out.

Confession never fails to bring a blessing. I have sometimes had to get off the platform and go down to ask a man's forgiveness before I could continue preaching. A Christian man ought to be a gentleman every time. If he is not, and he finds he has wounded or hurt someone, he ought to go and straighten it out at once. There are many people who want just enough Christianity to make them respectable. They don't think about this overcoming life that gets the victory all the time. They have their blue days and their angry days, and the children say, "Mother is in a bad mood today. You will have to be very careful."

We don't want any of those touchy blue days with their ups and downs. If we are overcoming, others will have confidence in our Christianity. The reason many men have no power is that there is some cursed sin covered up. There will not be a drop of dew until that sin is brought to light. Get right inside. We can go out like giants and conquer the world if everything is right within.

Paul says that we are to be sound in faith, in patience, and in love. If a man is unsound in his faith, the clergy takes the ecclesiastical sword and cuts him off immediately. However, if he is unsound in love or patience, nothing is said about that. We must be sound in faith, in love, and in patience if we are to be true to God.

How delightful it is to meet a man who can control his temper. It is said of William Wilberforce that a friend once found him in great agitation, looking for a written message he had misplaced for which one of the royal family was waiting. Just then, as if to make it even more trying, a disturbance was heard in the nursery.

"Now," thought the friend, "surely his temper will give way."

The thought had hardly passed through his mind

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when Wilberforce turned to him and said, “What a blessing it is to hear those dear children. Only think what a relief, among other hurries, to hear their voices and know they are well.”

Covetousness

Take the sin of *covetousness*. There is more said in the Bible against it than against drunkenness. I must get it out of me – destroy it, root and branch – and not let it have dominion over me. We think that a man who gets drunk is a horrid monster, but a covetous man will often be received into the church and put into office, who is as vile and wicked in the sight of God as any drunkard.

The most dangerous thing about this sin is that it is not generally regarded as horribly wicked. Of course, we all have contempt for those who hoard their wealth, but all covetous men are not misers. Another thing to be noted about covetousness is that the old are more prone to it than the young.

Let’s see what the Bible says about covetousness:

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (Ephesians 5:5)

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6:9-10)

For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom

the Lord abhorreth. (Psalm 10:3)

Covetousness enticed Lot into Sodom. It caused the destruction of Achan and all his house. It was the iniquity of Balaam. It was the sin of Samuel’s sons. It left Gehazi a leper. It sent the rich young ruler away sorrowful. It led Judas to sell his Master and Lord for thirty pieces of silver. It brought about the death of Ananias and Sapphira. It was the blot in the character of Felix. What victims it has had in all ages!

Do you say, “How am I going to impede covetousness?”

Well, I don’t think there is any difficulty about that. If you find yourself getting very covetous, very selfish, wanting to get everything you can into your possession – just begin to give things away. Just say to covetousness that you will strangle it and rid it out of your very nature.

A wealthy farmer in New York who was known for hoarding his wealth and being a very selfish man was converted. Soon after his conversion, a poor man came to him and asked for help. He had lost everything and had no provisions. This young convert thought he would be generous and give him a ham from his smokehouse. He started toward the smokehouse, and on the way, the tempter said, “Give him the smallest one you have.”

He struggled all the way to the smokehouse as to whether he would give a large or a small one. In order to overcome his selfishness, he took down the biggest ham he had and gave it to the man.

The tempter said, “You’re a fool.”

But the farmer replied, “If you don’t keep silent, I’ll give him every ham I have in the smokehouse.”

If you find that you are selfish, give something away. Determine to overcome that spirit of selfishness and to keep your body under control, no matter what it may cost.

Henry Durant told me he was hired by Goodyear to defend the rubber patent. He would receive half of the money that came from the patent if he succeeded. One day, he woke up to find that he was a rich man. He said that the greatest struggle of his life then took place as to whether he would let money be his master or if he would be the master of his money. He had to decide whether he would be its slave or make it a slave to him. At last he got the victory, and that is how Wellesley College was built.

Are You Jealous or Envious?

Go and do something kind for the person of whom you are jealous. That’s the way to cure jealousy. It will kill it. Jealousy is a devil and a horrid monster. The poets imagined that Envy dwelt in a dark cave, being pale and thin, hiding in the corner, never rejoicing except in the misfortune of others, and hurting himself continually.

There’s a fable of an eagle that could outfly another, and the other didn’t like it. The latter saw a sportsman one day and said to him, “I wish you would bring down that eagle.” The sportsman replied that he would if he had some feathers to put into his arrow. So the eagle pulled one out of his wing. The arrow was shot but didn’t quite reach the rival eagle. It was flying too high. The envious eagle pulled out more feathers and kept pulling them out until he lost so many that he couldn’t fly. Then the sportsman turned around and killed him. If you are jealous, the only one you can hurt is yourself.

There were two businessmen with a longstanding rivalry between them that included many bitter feelings. Then one of them was converted. He went to his minister and said, “I’m still jealous of that man and don’t know how to overcome it.”

The minister replied, “Well, if a man comes into your store to buy goods, and you cannot supply him, just send him over to your neighbor.”

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He said, "I wouldn't like to do that."

"Well," the minister said, "you do it and you will kill jealousy."

He said he would. When a customer came into his store for goods which he did not have, he told him to go across the street to his neighbor's store. After some time, the other man began to send his customers over to this man's store, and the breach was healed.

Pride

Pride is another of those sins which the Bible strongly condemns, but that the world hardly recognizes as a sin at all.

An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin (Proverbs 21:4).

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand

join in hand, he shall not be unpunished (Proverbs 16:5).

Christ included pride among those evil things which proceed out of the heart of a man and defile him.

People have the idea that it is just the wealthy who are proud. Go down some of the back streets, and you will find that some of the very poorest are as proud as the richest. It is the heart, you know. People who don't have any money are just as proud as those that do. We have got to crush it out. It is an enemy. There's no need to be proud of your face, for there isn't one that will survive ten days in the grave. There's nothing to be proud of, is there? Let's ask God to deliver us from pride.

You can't simply fold your arms and say, "Lord, take it out of me." You must work with Him.

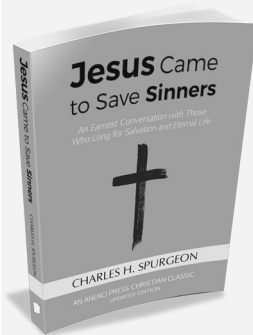
Conquer your pride by cultivating humility. Paul exhorts us to *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering* (Colossians 3:12). Peter reminds us to *be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble* (1 Peter 5:5). And in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches, *Blessed are the poor in spirit* (Matthew 5:3).

This article was taken from the book, **The Overcoming Life — by D. L. Moody**. In the coming months, we will be printing each chapter, one at a time. You can either read the chapters one at a time as they come out in *the Amish Voice*, or order the entire book now.

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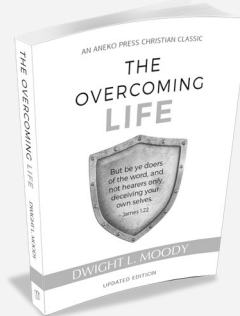
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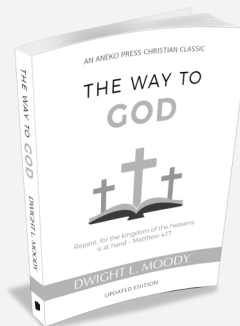


1. *Jesus Came to Save Sinners*, by C. H. Spurgeon. Every excuse, reason, and roadblock for not coming to Christ is examined and dealt with. If you think you may be too bad, or if perhaps you really are bad and you sin either openly or behind closed doors, you will discover that life in Christ is for you, too. You can reject the message of

salvation by faith, or you can choose to live a life of sin after professing faith in Christ, but you cannot change the truth, either for yourself or for others. You and your family need to embrace God's truth, claim it for your own, and be genuinely set free for now and eternity. Come and embrace this free gift of God, and live a victorious life for Him.



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This is Part 1 of 2 on a Biblical Response to Sexual Abuse in Anabaptist Communities.

Relating to Perpetrators

(those who commit the wrong)

I am shocked at the manner in which many Anabaptist churches are dealing with sexual abuse and the perpetrators.

I do not wish to point fingers at any particular church or church group. I do not wish to stir up strife. I do not wish to see divisions among people and church groups. I do not wish to make people angry at God or the church.

But I am saddened and concerned. Very concerned. Concerned enough to write this.

We need to start paying attention to what is actually going on in our churches. We need to understand what sexual abuse is, and then act on Biblical principles with a compassionate and loving spirit.

What the church needs to understand about sexual abuse:

1. Sexual abuse is a sin.

This is obvious to most people. Yet, some churches aren't calling it that. Why do I say that? Because they aren't dealing with it on a sin level. In the case of sexual sin, excommunication is commanded (1 Corinthians 5:11-

13). How churches and their leaders can somehow get around this explicit command is something I simply do not understand.

There is something terribly wrong when a church cares more about what color of cars they drive or whether or not the beard is worn than it does about sexual sin in the lives of its members. Even the world calls sexual abuse evil and wicked. Why can't we?

2. Sexual abuse is, in most cases, an addiction.

Most people don't realize that a perpetrator rarely stops with "just one" victim. Often, it becomes a lifelong spiral of sin and shame that starts because of pornography or childhood abuse that was never dealt with. If the church would realize that sexual abuse often stems from sexual addiction, it would change the way abuse is dealt with.

Too many times, the perpetrator is told to "apologize" for their sin. Supposedly, an apology is all that is needed to redeem the situation. It is supposed to "take care of it."

Think about it: It's like telling an alcoholic to stand up in church and apologize for drinking. Do you really think that man won't touch another drink again? Probably not. Not unless he has had a true heart change and has been healed from his addiction by Jesus.

What the alcoholic really needs is a community of people to rise up and help him work through whatever is driving his addiction. He needs time away from alcohol. He needs Jesus.

In the same way, sexual addicts who abuse children need to be away from children. If they are raping women, they need to be away from women. If they are abusing boys, they need to be away from boys. They need time to work through the pain that is driving their

addiction. I'm sorry; but an apology for sexual abuse is not the only thing that is needed. Sexual addicts need Jesus and a community of believers who want to help them overcome by the power of Jesus Christ.

3. Sexual abuse is a crime.

Yes, it is. Sexual abuse is a violent crime, and it needs to be treated as such. If a person we loved was murdered, we would report it in a heartbeat. But if a person's spirit is murdered (and yes, it really is that serious), we somehow think it doesn't call for such drastic measures.

I don't know of any place in the Bible that indicates that we are not supposed to report evil such as sexual abuse. According to 1 Corinthians 6, suing and taking our brother to court is unscriptural. But the Bible is clear: a brother or sister in Christ will not be sexual predator (Eph. 5:5). True, they might be a "brother or sister in the church" but they are not a brother or sister in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Repeatedly throughout the New Testament, we are told to obey the government. They're actually called "ministers of God". Their calling is to execute judgement on the evildoers (Romans 13:1-5 and 1 Peter 2:13-15). If we do evil, we are to expect judgement.

Ephesians 5 gives us instruction concerning sexual abuse: "Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God...Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. Don't participate in the things these people do. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead,

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expose them.” (vs.3, 5-7, and 11)

Some people use Matthew 18 as an excuse to “hide” sexual abuse from the authorities. They say, “I can’t report abuse because I believe in forgiveness.” Or, worse yet, sometimes “forgiveness” gets pushed on the victims by the church or perpetrator in order to keep the abuse hidden. “You just need to forgive,” they say.

I’m all for forgiveness. Seriously. I know of no other way to heal from sexual abuse.

But forgiveness does not erase physical consequences for sin. The Bible is clear: we reap what we sow.

Think about David, the man after God’s own heart. He committed sexual sin, and though God forgave him, he still paid dearly for it. The child that was born to David and Bathsheba died. And his sons became involved in all kinds of immorality including rape and incest.

Another example to think about is the thief who was crucified beside Jesus. Jesus forgave him, but Jesus’ forgiveness didn’t erase the consequences of the thief’s sin. The thief still died for his crimes. When Jesus forgave him, the eternal consequences were forgiven, but not the physical consequences.

I believe that you can forgive and still report abuse. I don’t think it’s a contradiction at all. But, reporting sexual abuse should NEVER be done as a way to get revenge. Rather, it should be done because (1) the Bible commands us to obey the government and (2) to protect the vulnerable and innocent among us.

So what should the church’s response be to sexual abuse?

Excommunication

The Bible is very clear that no sexual sin will enter the kingdom of heaven (Eph. 5:5, Heb. 13:4, Rev. 21:8). Excommunication for sexual sin is commanded in 1 Corinthians 5. In a sense, when a person commits sexual sin, they are “excommunicating” themselves

from the fellowship of the church and of God. Why? Because sin separates us from God.

Excommunication should be carried out with the purpose of saving the person’s soul from eternal punishment. The goal of excommunication is restoration to Christ and the church. Therefore, it must be done with love.

The incident must be reported.

The Bible commands obedience to the laws the government has set up (Romans 13:1-5 and 1 Peter 2:13-15). Reporting abuse is the law of the country in which we live. According to Romans 13:1-2, disobedience to the government laws results in damnation. That is strong language. God does not deal kindly with those who “cover” sexual abuse. Refusing to report evil is taking part in that evil (Eph. 5:11).

The epidemic that we are facing today, is, in part, a result of refusing to admit and report for the sake of business, church, or family image. I ask you to honestly check your motives for refusing to expose evil. Most of the time it is because we care more about “looking good” than we do about obeying God.

Rally around the perpetrator and the perpetrator’s family.

What do I mean by this? Don’t let the perpetrator “rot” in jail. Visit them often. Make sure their emotional, physical, and spiritual needs are being met. They need time to process life. They need a counselor or someone who is willing to lead them to Jesus. They need accountability in prison. They need people who will care about their heart. They need to know that they are loved in spite of their actions.

The perpetrator’s family also needs the same kind of loving care. We must not “leave them in the dust.” Likely, they’ll need financial help. Be involved in their lives. Take the little boys fishing or hunting. Make them “family.” Don’t push them away because of their family

member’s sin. Speak life to them. Genuinely care about the spouse that is “caught in the middle.” Tell them it’s okay to miss their spouse. Don’t let the situation change your friendship. Take the family to visit their loved one in prison. Be there for them. Be Jesus to them.

The focus needs to be on repentance and restoration of relationship with God.

Excommunication without love will do no good. Reporting crimes without compassion for a perpetrator’s soul will do no good.

We must remember: the goal is repentance and healing in Jesus Christ – repentance for sin and healing from sexual addiction and the pain that is driving it. Any other goal will not be successful in helping reduce the abuse rates in our circles and protecting the vulnerable and innocent.

A community who is the hands and feet of Jesus is key to these sticky situations. A community of believers who, like Jesus, is passionate about caring for the hearts of the hurting.

What if the church would operate like this? **What if sexual abuse would be dealt with on a sin level? What if it would be dealt with on an addiction level? What if it would be dealt with on a crime level? What if, in all of this, the perpetrator would experience the love of God through the response of the church community?**

Do you want to know what I think?

I think it would change everything.

I think we’d have people knocking on our doors, wanting freedom from the sexual bondage that is driving them to abuse children. I think they’d even turn themselves in to the police. Why? Because they would know they’d be loved in spite of what they did.

Pushing abuse “under the rug” as many Anabaptist churches have been doing for the past century is anything but

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Perpetrators, cont. from previous page

love. Love doesn't refuse to help someone find freedom and healing from sin and shame. Love doesn't refuse to expose sin because of an image or reputation it wants to protect. Love doesn't stand around and let a person go to hell.

What scares me the most about all of this is that there are "good" church members who are going straight to hell because of other "good" church members refusing to love them enough to excommunicate, report, and help them find healing.

I ask you: Is the blood of the perpetrators and the victims on our hands?

Only God knows.

But one thing I am sure of. **Jesus is the answer to this mess.**

And you and I are His hands and feet. Let's start working. Because we have a lot of work to do.

—Ann Detweiler

Do Not Harden Your Heart

—By David Wilkerson

The Bible clearly warns, "Today, if you can hear his voice, do not harden your heart as they did in the days of provocation." (see Hebrews 3:7-8) In other words, do not ask as Israel once did in her unbelief, "Can God furnish a table in this wilderness?" (see Psalm 78:19).

Do not question the Lord's integrity or his commitment to you, even though you find yourself constantly battling in your mind. God told you that he would raise you up to be a testimony. He told you that he has allowed certain things in your life but that all things work together for good because you love him and are called according to his purpose.

And now the Lord is calling you to get up. He is calling you to lift your head and sing that song he has put within your heart. You are the Bride of Christ, and God stakes His reputation on keeping you and establishing a testimony of victory inside of you.

Therefore, settle it in your heart today: "He is my glory and the lifter of my head. Even though I might be depressed when I go to bed at night, he is the One who will lift my head in the morning. He is the One who will give me strength to go through another day. If God has planted a dream in my heart, it will become a reality, for he has set before me an open door that no man can close. No matter how many voices rise up against what God has spoken to me, I will not harden my heart in unbelief!"

So do not lose heart in the midst of the secret war you are fighting. Refuse to listen to the lies. Don't give up! Rather, hear God's voice calling you today. He will be faithful to supply all you need—strength to get through the day, courage to stand in the marketplace, faith to believe for all your needs.

—David Wilkerson

Word of Judgment

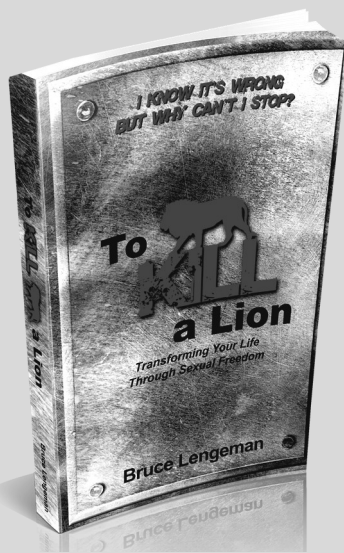


Jesus makes two powerful statements in John 12:47-48 concerning judgment. He says: 1) *I judge him not*, and then He goes on to say 2) *The WORD that I have spoken, the SAME shall judge him in the last day.*

My friend, the WORD, which we hold in our hands, has also been edged in eternal stone, and one day, the WORD will stand as a witness in eternity. For that reason, we must read the WORD, understand the WORD, and make a choice to either abide by the WORD or be judged by the WORD. Thank you, Lord, for giving us the WORD.

—Joe Keim

Do you struggle with lust or other sins and addictions?



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January

How to Resist the Devil

Charles Stanley explains that James 4:7 says to submit to God and resist the devil. We can't truly submit to God unless we resist the devil, and we can't truly resist the devil unless we are submitted to God. These must be done simultaneously.

Ye Must Be Born Again

Joe Keim discusses the New Birth. Jesus was very clear: if you want to see and enter the kingdom of God, you must be born the second time (John 3:1-7). The Scriptures go on to tell us the second birth is supernatural, meaning the event cannot be manufactured by ministry workers or any other family member. It is strictly a work of God. Furthermore, the new birth, according to Peter 1:23-25, is only possible when someone first plants the incorruptible Seed – God's Word – in a lost person's heart. From there, God will take the Seed and bring the new birth to fruition; that is, if the lost person is willing to accept God's gift of forgiveness and everlasting life.

Faith Without Works is Dead

Pastor John Bouquet explains that while no amount of good deeds can save a person's soul, a genuine salvation by faith should always result in good works. This sermon is based on James 2:14-20 and helps the listener understand the difference between works salvation and salvation by faith alone, grace alone, and Christ alone.

Dying to Self

The concept of "dying to self" is found throughout the New Testament. It expresses the true essence of the Christian life, in which we take up our cross and follow Christ. Dying to self is part of being born again; the old self dies and the new self comes to life (John 3:3-7). Not only are Christians born again when we come to salvation, but we also continue dying to self as part of the process of sanctification. As such, dying to self is both a one-time event and a lifelong process.

February

Faith Active in Works

Pastor John Bouquet preaches from James 2:22: *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?* Abraham's faith fulfilled Scripture. What Scripture? The Scripture that said *Abraham believed God; and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.*

A Covenant of Redemption

Listen as pastor and author Bruce Lengeman speaks on the fulfillment of the Old Testament as it is revealed in the New Testament.

Saying "Thanks" vs. Being Grateful, Parts 1 and 2

We can say "thanks" but not be grateful. Emerson Eggerich explains that we can mouth words while our hearts are elsewhere. We are fixated on ourselves. We have probably all seen this in ourselves. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:2 that people can be "lovers of self . . . ungrateful." We can even sing a song of thanks while in church, but inwardly dwell on the hurt and offense we feel toward someone who wronged us the day before.

March

Abiding in Christ vs. Unhealthy Controls

Listen to Bruce Lengeman's teaching on how we can abide in Christ, therefore allowing us to walk in the Spirit, as opposed to letting unhealthy things in our lives control us.

Faith for the Family

The most powerful and influential people on earth are parents of faith. Adrian Rogers explains the importance of faith in the family's life. Find out what you need to raise a champion of faith of your own.

The Gifts of the Spirit I and II

Jeff Schreve explains that when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in a new believer, not only does He seal that believer for eternity, but He also gives them spiritual gifts. They are ready now to be used to do God's work.

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Love for the Lord Jesus

—By Jeremiah Zeiset

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. (1 Corinthians 16:22)

I've been thinking a lot lately about what it means to love the Lord Jesus. Everyone wants to be loved, and Dwight L. Moody once said that if you can convince a man that you love him, you will win a friend for life. Think about it. If you can convince a man you care for his soul, he will be open and honest with you, but in no other way will he do so. If you are in business and you demonstrate that you genuinely love your customers, they will be loyal to your business. If you show love to your children, they will readily want to listen to you and obey you – little convincing with a stick will be needed. If you genuinely love your spouse, he or she will be delighted to be in your presence, and will be your best friend forever.

But Jesus said unless we love Him more than all of these, we are not worthy of Him. *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me*

is not worthy of me (Matthew 10:37). Exactly how much do we need to love Jesus? More than anything else.



I want to love you more

I have to be honest, friends. In all the churches I've been, whether Anabaptist, or evangelical American churches, the biggest lack seems to be of love for Jesus Christ. If men, women, and children only loved the Lord, everything else would take care of itself. No longer would we feel the need to address outward appearance and put up guards to keep people "in their places." No longer would

children rebel against parents. No longer would preachers spend so much time talking about things that really don't matter. Honest, it's true! If churches – and again, I'm not singling out any specific church because all are equally guilty here – would spend the majority of their time helping people in the arena of the heart, helping them understand how to love the Lord, then we'd finally see genuine unity and amazing peace in the hearts and lives of our people. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!* (Psalm 133:1).

Where to do we begin? How can we find such a love for Jesus Christ? I don't know the answer for each individual person, but I do know my own experience. I knew Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins, but for a long time, it was head knowledge only. It's not enough to know about the Lord, we must know Him and be known of Him: *the devils also believe, and tremble* (James 2:19) Knowledge reached my heart when I asked the Lord to change my heart, to make me

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