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The General Epistle of James Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

	<p>CHAPTER 2</p> <p>II. TEMPTATIONS & TRIALS: COMMON TO ALL CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, 2:1-26</p> <p>A. Temptation 1: Showing Partiality & Favoritism, 2:1-13</p>		
<p>1. The charge against showing partiality</p> <p>2. The picture of partiality: Two unbelieving church visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. One rich—one poor b. Partiality shown to the rich c. Prejudice shown to the poor <p>3. The wrong of partiality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It sets one up as a judge b. It reveals evil thoughts c. It discriminates against the poor: A people especially loved by God 	<p>1. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.</p> <p>2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;</p> <p>3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:</p> <p>4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?</p> <p>5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom</p>	<p>which he hath promised to them that love him?</p> <p>6 But ye have despised the poor, Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?</p> <p>7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?</p> <p>8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:</p> <p>9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.</p> <p>10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.</p> <p>11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.</p> <p>12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.</p> <p>13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.</p>	<p>d. It shows an insulting, disgraceful attitude</p> <p>e. It shows foolish behavior: It honors those who are oppressive & who slander the name of Christ</p> <p>4. The warning against partiality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It is sin; it violates the royal law of love b. It makes one guilty of the whole law c. It is just as serious as adultery and murder <p>5. The motivation to avoid partiality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We will be judged b. We will receive exactly what we have done: A reciprocal judgment, reaping what we sow

Section II

TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS: COMMON TO ALL CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS

James 2:1-26

STUDY 1: TEMPTATION 1: SHOWING PARTIALITY AND FAVORITISM

TEXT: James 2:1-13

AIM: To make a strong determination: to show love equally to everyone in the church.

MEMORY VERSE:

“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.” (James 2:8).

INTRODUCTION:

In chapters two and three, James discusses various temptations and trials common to all believers. One of the strongest temptations—and one of the most destructive sins in human history—is that of showing partiality or favoritism to one person while discriminating against another person or even a whole group of people.

How many times have we:

- ⇒ seen tattered or dirty clothing and avoided a person?
- ⇒ heard poor speech and considered the person not worth listening to?
- ⇒ looked at a handicapped person and thought that he or she could not contribute anything worthwhile to the church or to society?
- ⇒ judged a person because of skin color or nationality?
- ⇒ excluded certain people from a party or social gathering?
- ⇒ condemned a person based on rumor or gossip?
- ⇒ considered ourselves better than other individuals?

Such actions must not be allowed within the church and among believers. We must avoid partiality and favoritism at all costs. James paints a very strong picture—a convicting picture—of an all too common scenario in the church. And we must take his words very seriously.

OUTLINE:

1. The charge against showing partiality (v.1).
2. The picture of partiality: two unbelieving church visitors (vv.2-3).
3. The wrong of partiality (vv.4-7).
4. The warning against partiality (vv.8-11).
5. The motivation to avoid partiality (vv.12-13).

1. THE CHARGE AGAINST SHOWING PARTIALITY (v.1).

What does it mean to show partiality? It means to favor some people over others or to pay special attention to a person because of his wealth, social standing, position, authority, popularity, looks, or influence. Note that this charge is given to believers...

- to brothers
- to those who have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Lord of glory

Of all people upon earth, the very people who should not show partiality are believers. The reason is clearly stated in verse one.

1. Everyone who is in the church is a brother—everyone stands on an equal footing before the Lord Jesus Christ. Wealth, status, social standing, position, appearance—nothing matters except all men coming to the Lord Jesus Christ and worshipping Him.
2. Everyone who has faith in our Lord Jesus Christ bows before Him as Lord. This means that the person bows before Christ as a servant or slave. We all come to Him on an equal footing; no one is higher or more acceptable than anyone else. All are His servants or slaves. Note exactly who Jesus Christ is: He is *the Lord of glory*.

⇒ Jesus Christ is the Lord who rules and reigns in glory, majesty, perfection, dominion, and power. The person who believes and worships the Lord of glory, no matter his status, realizes that he is as all men, as nothing. Therefore, he does not elevate himself nor anyone else above other people, no matter how poor or lowly they may be.

⇒ Jesus Christ is the Lord who left the glory of heaven to come to this corruptible world to save all men. All believers must do just what the Lord of glory did: humble themselves and reach out to bring all men to the Lord Jesus Christ so that they might be saved—reach out to the poor and lowly as well as to the rich and high.

The charge is clear: believers—those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory—are not to show partiality or favoritism. It is strictly forbidden.

“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).

ILLUSTRATION: We must never favor one Christian brother or sister over another. Everyone in the church must work together, each one showing the love of Christ, helping to meet each other’s needs.

A farmer was feeding his animals one day when he noticed one of the recently born piglets was a little smaller than the others. The large piglets were contentedly feeding from the sow. But when the smaller pig tried to get some milk, it was pushed aside by the mother.

After two days of this, the larger piglets also pushed aside the runt pig. As the farmer was feeling sorry for the little piglet, he could not help but make a comparison to the church. "Church people can act just like pigs," he mused, "shoving aside those who are treated with contempt by the world." Then he wisely prayed that the lesson God had brought him would be planted firmly in his own heart. "Dear Lord, help me not to be like the pigs. Help me to love those who are hurting and feeling alone. Help me to care about their needs."

QUESTIONS:

1. What really gives a person status with God?
2. What should be our attitude toward the poor? Toward the rich? What do you need to change to be more consistent in your attitude toward others?
3. Whom do you need to act more kindly toward in your church? How can you do that this week?

2. THE PICTURE OF PARTIALITY: TWO UNBELIEVING CHURCH VISITORS (vv.2-3).

There must be no misunderstanding about what is meant by partiality. Two unbelievers visit the church. One man is sharply dressed, so much so that it is immediately noticed that he is somewhat wealthy. He has on the finest of clothes and an expensive gold ring. The other man is shabbily dressed, and it is immediately noticed that he is very poor. The clothing he is wearing is filthy and worn. The man is so poor that he is actually a dirty, smelly beggar.

The point is this: What happens when these two men visit the church? The picture painted by Scripture is that of showing partiality to the rich man. The rich man is escorted to a good seat. But the poor man is told to stand or be seated away from everyone else at the footstool.

APPLICATION:

Note that the two men represent the extreme ends of wealth and poverty. If partiality is not to be shown in this case, then it is never to be shown. How often has a poor person visited a church and not been welcomed with open arms? How many of us...

- have felt uncomfortable and uneasy around him?
- have ignored, neglected, and shunned him?
- have failed to greet and welcome him?

This is not of Christ. It is wrong.

"Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy" (Ps.82:3).

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to show partiality? In what situations are you tempted to show favoritism?
2. If someone is shunned in your church, how do you think that person is going to react? How would you react?
3. Who in your church seems to be less accepted than others? What can you do to correct the situation?

3. THE WRONG OF PARTIALITY (vv.4-7).

There are five things wrong with showing partiality and favoritism.

1. Showing partiality sets one up as the judge of men (v.4). It makes one as God; it says who can worship God and who cannot, who is acceptable to God and who is not. Only God Himself can determine whom He will or will not accept.
2. Showing partiality reveals evil thoughts (v.4). The person who shows partiality focuses upon mundane and changeable things. Such thoughts are corrupt because they focus upon corruptible things and neglect the person entirely. It says that material things such as clothes are more important than the person himself. This, of course, is foolishness. Yet it is exactly how most people behave, for most people in the world do show partiality. Believers are never to show partiality, not to a single soul. We are to look at the person himself. What matters is his life, his health and soul, his body and spirit. What matters is that he be saved and come to know the love, joy, and peace that only Christ can bring.
3. Showing partiality discriminates against the poor and lowly, a people who are loved by God (v.5). This verse is not saying that God does not love and care for the rich and high. He does, but He also cares for and loves the poor and lowly. Believers are not to shun them nor shut them out of the church.

"I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor" (Ps.140:12).

4. Showing partiality shows a disgraceful attitude (v.6a). It dishonors, humiliates, shames, disgraces, and insults the

poor and lowly person. Just think of the hurt and pain within the heart of the person who is publicly discriminated against—the pain and hurt when he sees us shun, bypass, ignore, and withdraw from him. No believer is ever to make a person feel unwelcome or of little value and worth.

5. Showing partiality shows foolish behavior (vv.6b-7). Two things are said about the rich that need to be heeded.

⇒ The rich and high usually oppress the poor and they readily grab what they can, using the very laws of the land to do it. The idea is that they use the law unjustly in order to protect and increase their wealth and power.

⇒ The rich and high usually blaspheme the name of Christ. They blaspheme His name by denying, mocking, ridiculing, persecuting, neglecting, ignoring, and rejecting Him as the Savior of the world.

The point is this: Why would the church and its believers show partiality to such people over the poor of the earth? There is no question, a list of sins could be drawn up and discussed about the poor as well. But why show partiality to the rich who are the very ones who oppress the needy of the world? The church and its believers are not to discriminate and show partiality or favoritism to anyone.

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble” (Ps.41:1).

ILLUSTRATION:

How can you better show Christ’s love to everyone without partiality? By truly caring about the souls of people. Listen to this terrific example of what one pastor did:

A pastor was praying about the lack of growth in his church. He was deeply burdened about it. The Lord answered him saying, “I love sinners too much to send them to your church.”

After much prayer and repentance, the pastor began to seek out sinners in the community. These people soon began asking him spiritual questions, looking for direction. The pastor invited one of these couples to church.

Though the couple had never been to church, they came one Sunday morning because they felt the pastor’s genuine concern. But the awful truth about his congregation was quickly demonstrated. Two of the deacons who had been busily seating people now whispered, “Pastor, two people have come into our church and, well, we don’t know what to do. The lady has on a very short dress and the man looks like a rough character.”

The pastor went to see. There was the couple he had invited. To the surprise of the deacons, the pastor was truly glad to

see them. He said to the couple, “Come with me. You will be my special guests today. Sit right here on the front row. And after church, please come to my home. My wife has prepared a good meal.” The couple was saved that very service!

May God help each one of us to have this attitude!

QUESTIONS:

1. What foolish sins are at the root of partiality? In which of these areas do you have room for improvement?
2. Think of an instance when a poor or lowly person was shunned in society. What happened? How should the situation have been handled?
3. Why are the rich viewed as better than the poor in most societies? How can you prevent yourself from having this dangerous attitude?

4. THE WARNING AGAINST PARTIALITY (vv.8-11).

There are three warnings.

1. Showing partiality is sin; it violates the royal law of love (vv.8-9). The great law of God is the law of love:

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Le.19:18; see Lu.10:29-37).

Note how important this law is: it is said to be the great “royal law according to the Scripture.” It is royal for at least three reasons.

- a. It is the royal law of God’s kingdom. It was given by God Himself and reinforced by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, when He came to earth.
- b. It is the great law that embraces or includes all other laws. That is, if a person loves God and loves his neighbor as himself, he will automatically be obeying all the other laws.

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Ga.5:14).

- c. It is the very commandment that leads to eternal life.

“Beloved, let us love one other: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” (1 Jn.4:7-8).

The point is this: believers are to love people, not show partiality, discriminating against some. Showing partiality is sin and it makes us transgressors of the law.

- Showing partiality makes a person guilty of the whole law of God (v.10). How is this possible? How can a person be guilty of all the law if he breaks only one law? Men follow God or else they do not follow God. There is no such thing as subtracting the laws that one does not like and keeping the laws that one does like. Every law has been given by God. They all form a whole pattern, a complete style of life. They are all necessary to point one in the right direction and toward the right goal. Thus, to offend in one point or to slip from one law makes one short of the goal.

This is significant for us to notice and heed, for it means... •

- that we cannot pick and choose what laws we will keep and what laws we will violate.
- that we cannot build up a merit system with God by keeping most of the laws and be allowed to break a few of the laws.
- that we cannot become more acceptable to God because we keep most of the laws and break only a few.
- that we are not more righteous than other people because we keep more laws than they do and break fewer of what men call the more meaningful laws.

The point is this: showing partiality makes a person a terrible law-breaker, the most serious offender imaginable.

- Showing partiality is just as serious a sin as adultery and killing (v.11). This is an example of what has just been said. But note: the verse may also be saying that partiality is equal to murder. Partiality is a sin that selects and favors one person over another. It ignores and neglects another person. It casts him into oblivion, wipes him out; treats him as though he were nothing, absent, or non-existent. Thus, it is comparable to murder. It is the same root, the same cause, the same selfishness, the same lust, the same sin as killing.

This stresses the seriousness of showing partiality. Scripture is clear in its warning: the church and believers are not to show partiality or favoritism to anyone. We are to love all people no matter their social standing or wealth.

QUESTIONS:

1. What one law is critical to the Christian life? What are some practical ways you can love the unlovely this week and avoid the sin of partiality?
2. Discuss why partiality is such a serious sin. What other commands are broken by showing partiality?

5. THE MOTIVATION TO AVOID PARTIALITY (v. 12-13).

There are two things that should stir us to love and care for all people, showing no favoritism whatsoever.

- We will face the judgment of God (v.12). Therefore, we should speak and act like people who will stand before God to give account for what we have done.
 - ⇒ We should speak love and kindness to all people.
 - ⇒ We should do or show love and kindness to all people.

Who a person is—his social standing and wealth, clothing and appearance—is to have no effect upon us whatsoever. We are to receive people, actually reach out to them through our speech and behavior, no matter who they are. God is going to judge us on the basis of how we have loved and reached out to people, regardless of their status or appearance.

- We will receive a reward for our behavior. God is going to treat us exactly as we have treated others. If we have shown mercy, then He will show mercy to us; if we have not shown mercy, then He will not show mercy to us. And note: there is only one thing that will be victorious over judgment and that is mercy. Therefore, we must be merciful in order to escape the terrible judgment of God.

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mt.6:14-15).

ILLUSTRATION:

The story is told of a scorpion wanting to cross a river. Since he could not swim, he asked the fox to carry him on his back. The fox was not willing at first, because of the threat of the scorpion’s sting. But the scorpion said, “Why would I sting you? That would drown both of us.” The fox agreed to carry the scorpion, but the scorpion did sting the fox midstream. The fox chided the scorpion, saying, “You foolish creature; now we will both die. Why?” The scorpion only replied, “It’s my nature.”—SOURCE UNKNOWN

Because the scorpion did not show mercy, he brought about his own death. Likewise, believers, when they do not show mercy to others, bring about their own ruin. May God help us to have His merciful nature and to show it to others at the needed hour. We must love and care for all people, showing no favoritism whatever.

QUESTIONS:

1. What will God consider important when He judges Christians? What motivates you to show Christian love to people? Do you think you will

QUESTIONS (continued):

receive a reward or condemnation for how you have treated others?

- 2. Why does God require us to show mercy? Whom do you have trouble showing mercy to? How can you improve in this area?

SUMMARY:

The Apostle John in his first epistle had some very strong words to say. He said that if anyone says that he loves God, but hates his brother, then that person is a liar. We simply cannot hate our brother, whom we can see, and love God, Who is invisible (1 Jn. 4:20). Partiality is more than serious; it has eternal consequences. No one can be a Christian believer if he ignores the words of James in today's passage. We simply must heed:

- 1. The charge against showing partiality.
- 2. The picture of partiality: two unbelieving church visitors.
- 3. The wrong of partiality.
- 4. The warning against partiality.
- 5. The motivation to avoid partiality.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES:

(Reflection and Response)

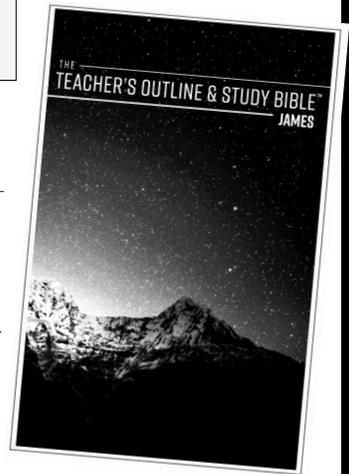
- 1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
- 2. The thing that I need to work on the most is:
- 3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
- 4. Closing Prayer of commitment: **END**

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What Went Wrong?

—by John Weaver

I wrote an article recently about sexual predators in the church. Tears came as I read some of the testimonies of abuse. How incredibly sad.

I have long asked God, “Why is there so much sexual sin among the plain people?” Seemingly, among the most conservative ones, the problem is even worse. Why Lord? Why? I believe that God showed me the answer. I welcome your thoughts.

I know from my own experience that an undisciplined mind is where sins of a sexual nature begin. (I never touched anyone inappropriately.) Everything good or bad, starts in the mind. If we as much as look at a woman to lust after her, we are guilty of adultery. All done in the mind.

In Romans 12, we are told...not just told, we are earnestly implored (beseech), to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God... and to not be conformed to the world, but to be transformed, by the RENEWING Of OUR MIND. It’s all about our mind.

As I was growing up in very conservative groups, I heard a lot about not being like the world, meaning anyone who was not

part of our groups. I cannot remember ever hearing any teaching on the last part of verse two. It was always the first part, “be not like the world.” It was never about being transformed, or having a new mind.

I believe that God showed me what He thinks when people take His clear instructions in scripture, and reinterpret them in another way. It is what the Pharisees did. It is what many of the ultra conservative groups do as well.

They recite, “Be not conformed to this world,” but then ignore the rest of the verse and insert a whole list of do’s and don’ts that are supposed to keep a person from the world, focusing on dress and all kinds of outward appearance. This is all done with the same unregenerate mind. God is not pleased.

Jesus had harsh words for the Pharisees for focusing on the outward appearance, when the inside was full of corruption. That is the way I grew up. Sadly, the same teaching continues. Not surprisingly, the same results continue as well.

In Romans chapter 1, we read of people who become vain in their imaginations

(mind) and their foolish hearts were darkened. God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own heart.

Much more is in that chapter about men who knew God but did not glorify Him as God. It says that God gave them over to a reprobate mind. This is talking about homosexuality, but it is not limited to that. It is also about other forms of sexual sin.

God said that in the new covenant, He will write His laws in our hearts, and put them in our minds. He takes away the heart of stone and gives a new soft heart of flesh. I believe that the epidemic of sexual sin in many groups today is the result of not pursuing the new heart and mind that God promised to us, and instead focusing on the outward appearance, making laws and rules to supposedly combat the “world,” while allowing Satan access to the mind. The results are tragic and disastrous.

We are never a match for Satan with our corrupt old nature. It takes a new nature within—the new heart and mind that God freely gives to those who earnestly seek Him. And then, we can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us. (Philippians 4:13) Amen!

Hid with Christ...in God!

—by Joe Keim

I would like to encourage you with a scripture passage that God impressed on my heart the past few days. It is reminders like these that will keep us on track and heading in the right direction, particularly during these difficult and dark days in history.

The Holy Spirit says, “*Set your affection (mind) on things above, not on things on the earth*” (Col 3:2). Let’s be honest, it is so much easier, and natural, to walk in the flesh - to be consumed with the

things on earth. On the other hand, it requires a lot of hard work and continuous effort to walk in the Spirit - to set and keep our mind on things above. But let us consider the results of the two very opposite approaches. The first approach results in mental turmoil and unrest. The second results in life and peace.

The Spirit of God goes on to say in the very next verse, “*For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God*” (Col 3:3). Is that not that awesome?! Not

only does God tell us to stay focused in these days of great confusion, but He promises us double protection. He says that our life is (1) hid with Christ, and (2) in God. Imagine Jesus putting your entire being in His cupped hands and then closing them, hiding you completely. The Father then walks over and cups His hands around the hands of Jesus, wholly encompassing them. Double protection! Peace. No worries. Securely held and cherished in the hands of our Mighty Creator and Savior for all eternity!

For generations it was common to control hurts, protect a certain version of the truth, protect eyes from seeing and ears from hearing. Whole generations have passed into eternity never dealing with hidden trauma. They were taught how to cover things up, how to be someone they were not, how to portray a perpetual lie, how to live with abuse, hurt, lies, deceit, and wickedness that never die inwardly, directing a way forward through life.

Trauma, inner hurts, physical, mental or spiritual wrongs (whether started as a child, or at any other stage of life), when stuffed away on the inside of a person, can work on that person shaping, molding, changing, them into someone they were not designed to be.

Whenever a child is made to believe that he or she must hold on to something, to keep secrets of any kind, shape, or form (especially when resulting from trauma), that soul is scarred over and over. The pain is never far away. Secrets buried alive never die.

MY INITIAL TRAUMA

In 1976, when I was eight years-old, my family went to Trinidad in the West Indies as missionaries. A revival/evangelistic tent meeting was conducted in Chaguanas, Trinidad for seven weeks. During that time, twelve Indian men who stood in resistance to the gospel, cornered me at a pond and gang raped me. Those men left me for dead—but not before instilling into me the fear of future hurts toward my family if I ever spoke up about what they did to me. This took place in June 1976. I kept the secret until February 2020. For 43 years and 8 months, I lived with buried secrets. In February of 2020, demons were cast out, lies were released, and both miraculous physical and emotional healing began taking place.

Even though my struggle started at a pond in 1976, deep generational secrets perpetuated through manipulation and church-controlled cover-ups had been passed on to me from my dad. Secrets that have affected our lives being rooted in pain, carried back as far as the early 1950's with my dad, and yet further back through secrets carried by my grandfather.

THE COVER UP

Along the banks of the Susquehanna River, were two cousin churches that were Mennonite and Brethren. A man from the Brethren background by the name of David, was then having his way with some boys from the area, some of which were in these churches. One of those boys was a ten-year-old boy from the Brethren church.

The man, David, was able to abuse the boys because he was known by the families. The family of the ten-year-old-boy knew David. After the boy was abused, he did not feel safe at home, and since he was being loaned out to work on a neighboring minister's farm, he began to spend more and more time away from home. His family began to see him as someone lifted, or who thought himself better than them. The minister farmer introduced the boy to a man named Ralph. Ralph became a friend of the boy, and in time the boy opened concerning David. The minister and Ralph, at that time, were in the Mennonite church.

Some of the leaders attempted to keep things quiet. They decided to watch David, to control him, to hold him accountable. All seemingly good things, except the man was never changed on the inside, and the violated boys never received healing.

In 1951, many churches became involved in a revival in Lancaster County, the im-

pact of which is still being felt to this day. Ralph invited the boy to the meetings. He was dealing with a lot of shame and hidden emotions. He felt moved and went forward to receive Christ as his Lord and Savior.

At that meeting Ralph put his arm around the boy and told him that everything would be OK.

The boy was taught to hide his emotions away. He grew into a man, experiencing many things, both good and bad. By 1972, he had a wife and four children of his own. On one specific day, he, along with his family, visited the farm of his friend and mentor, Ralph, who by this time had married a sister of David and had two children of his own. At that time, David was living in a trailer on his brother-in-law Ralph's farm. He had been watched by the Brethren and Mennonites for many years.

On this day, the boy, now a man, went for a walk around the farm. When something caught his attention, he was drawn towards the trailer. At the trailer, he found David abusing an 11-year-old boy, the son of his mentor, Ralph. Memories flashed back into his mind of what this very same man did to him as a child. He entered the trailer, took the 22-caliber rifle that was leaning just inside the door, approached the man, and shot him in the back of his head. The boy gathered his clothes about himself and ran out, not realizing what had happened. David fell to the ground incapacitated, yet still alive. The man being stuck in his mind with past hurts from the 50's came to himself, realized what he had done, and saw David lying at his feet. He dropped the 22 caliber and walked out the door, continued his walk as if nothing had happened. He walked onto the porch of the main house, placed his hand on Ralph's shoulder, and said, "Everything is going to be OK."

That man rounded up his family and made the long trip back to Northern Michigan, where he was living at that time. He never spoke of what happened in that trailer. Soon, he received news that Ralph's son had shot his uncle and then committed suicide. An investigation had commenced. The police had thought that maybe another person had been in the trailer, but it could not be proven. In the end, they figured that the boy walked into the trailer and shot his uncle in the head, then went outside and hid himself among some chicken crates and took his own life.

The man in Michigan went back to Pennsylvania for the funeral, but never spoke about what happened. In time that man was sent to Trinidad as a missionary. That man was my dad, Charles E. Geesey.

In October 2019, my dad was lying on his death bed, and asked for his son. At the time, I was extremely sick. I was living in a farmhouse with a woman who was not my wife, waiting to die from Parkinson's disease. I was sick emotionally, physically, and spiritually. It was later said that I was already dead—they just forgot to tell me, so I was lingering around taking up space and time.

In the year preceding, my health had deteriorated so much that I had only been outside the farmhouse three times, and had never left the property.

A family member found me and took me to see my dad. I was in worse shape than him. His main concern was for me. A nurse came in, and together they started to convince me that I was worth saving. I promised to reach out and get some help. The nurse left us to visit. That day my dad, for the first time, told me about what happened to him as a child, and about what he had done in 1972.

David survived the gun shot and lived to be 90 years of age, dying in 2006, a member of the Brethren church. He lived

needing health care for the rest of his life. To my knowledge, he had never confessed his actions towards all those boys. He was a secret that no one ever spoke about. His crimes took place in the early 50's and 70's. David never married, therefore never had a family of his own.

Through David's actions, and the cover-ups of well-meaning church leaders and others who were familiar with what happened, the trauma went on in the hearts and lives of David's victims and their families. David never spoke about what happened. The church never spoke about what happened. My dad never spoke about what happened. My dad's father never spoke about what happened. Keeping secrets became a generational issue that has affected the hearts, minds, and lives of many people.

In time, the trailer was removed from the farm. Between 1987 and 1989, a house was built in that area. Ralph, his wife, and daughter moved into the house. Ralph was still holding many hurts himself, perhaps shame and regrets. Possibly overcome by grief, he may have begun to think that it would be better if he and his family were gone. One day, in June 1989, he took a weapon, went upstairs, entered his daughters' room, and shot her dead. He went downstairs, entered his room, and shot his wife dead. He then turned the gun on himself and shot himself dead.

The whole family dead, murdered, suicide. Who can make sense of it all? Many Mennonites gathered, to the sum of nearly 500, and along with others, laid the family to rest. End of story. Just don't talk about it. Think happy thoughts. Let it go. Time will pass. Time will heal all things. Everything will be ok. Except it was not ok!

Secrets buried alive never die!

THE HEALING

After 1989, my family never spoke con-

cerning Ralph and his family. My father and I became estranged more and more emotionally. Time went on with everyone carrying secrets which we dared not speak about, and shame that we were not designed to carry. There was desire to do right, even a love to serve God, yet there were continual failures which seemed to always knock us back down, ultimately creating a deep sense of remorse and guilt which affected our health in ways that we did not even realize.

Eventually I sat down with my dad at that hospital, and he began to release things that had haunted him, and things that he felt impacted me as his son. I also made some confessions to him. On that day, my healing journey began. Dad died two weeks later. Months afterward, a letter came to light, in which years before, he had briefly penned some words telling his story. Those words on paper made their way to me, and with them came more healing.



In February 2020, I moved from that farmhouse, and with the help of friends from the English, Amish & Mennonite communities, I removed myself from the woman that I was living with. Two weeks later, I was completely healed from Parkinson's, and several other ailments that I had been afflicted with. Shortly after that, I spoke to a man in Lancaster County for the first time concerning the trauma that I went through in 1976. At that time, God brought my mother and my stepmother together and healed them through forgiveness which each received and gave. My mother then asked for my forgiveness, for not helping me when I needed it in 1976. They knew

Continued on Page 14

Our world of people could, in some sense, be divided into two groups: leaders and followers. Leaders cannot lead without a following and followers cannot follow without a leader. It takes both.

I do believe that the greatest leaders are also some of the best followers.

While there are tens of thousands of books, videos, and seminars available to mankind showing us how to lead and how to become better leaders, the vast majority of people continue to live and die following others. Too often, they do so blindly.

The masses, of which I speak, live all around us, sit next to us in church, finish college with degrees, and have families. They are everyday people, but they are followers. Leading is not their thing.

Followers do not like to muddy the waters. Somehow, they hope that all things will miraculously come together without much effort on their part.

Followers do not like speaking up, fearing they might get hurt or hurt someone else.

Followers do not like making big decisions, fearing they might fail.

And so, the easy thing to do is just coast along, singing as they go, “Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily. Life is but a dream.”

Here are some facts for you to consider:

1. Certain leaders in our world know right well that the masses can be led as sheep to the slaughter. They know that, and they are doing it every day. It gives them a high and makes them feel even more powerful!

2. Followers, now is the time to rise up. This is not JUST about you and me. This is about our children and our children's children. God forbid that we should sit idle and do nothing to fight the evil that lies before us. We must keep on paving the way.

The very best gift that you can give to your children is to stand up and be a strong, godly, relentless, great leader! Do it for the sake of your family! Do it for yourself! Do it for Jesus Christ, our dear Lord, who bled and died for our sins! This world desperately needs leaders.

Let us consider some of our relentless leaders of the past and how they shaped the future for us...those who would be born after them. Even today, thousands of years later, their determination, zeal, and focus impact our lives from day to day.

Noah

Leaders do what is right even if they are all alone!

In Genesis 6, we are told that the entire world population was going in the wrong direction. Did that stop Noah from doing the right thing? Not a chance!

Abraham

Leaders embrace the unknown!

In Genesis 12, Abraham was asked to leave his comfort zone and trust God to lead him to an unknown land. At this point, Abraham was 75 years old. As most know, it is hard for older people to uproot and move, and even more so when they don't know where they are going. But here's the thing; great leaders are risk takers, and they embrace uncertainty! Why? Because they know the truth.

Joseph

Leaders endure, regardless of the circumstances!

Starting in Genesis 37, we are told that Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brother. His employer's wife had him cast into prison. But in the end, Joseph became the leader of all Egypt—second only to Pharaoh himself. I believe it is fair to say that Joseph set his eyes on the prize; he refused to let any person or circumstance distract him, even during times when most would have given up.

Moses

Leaders look out for their people!

After 400 years of slavery, Moses walked up to the pharaoh and demanded that he let his people go - not once, but ten times! The Red Sea did not hold him back. Walking in circles for 40 years did not hold Moses back. He did whatever he had to do to lead, and lead well.

Joshua

Leaders rule by setting the example!

In Joshua 24, Joshua assembled the people and told them what he and his family would do. Joshua tells them in verse 15: “*And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*” Great leaders do not have to threaten their people, but rather inspire them by their own example.

David

Leaders are not afraid!

Short, young, and red-headed would best describe David in 1 Samuel, chapter 17. But even more than that, David was not afraid to tackle lions and giants. In verse

45, we are told, “Then said David to the Philistine, ‘Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.’” What happens next is absolutely bazaar! David puts a stone in his sling, whirls it at Goliath, and the armored giant falls to the earth. Leaders lead without fear, because they know their power comes from God.

Isaiah

Leaders rise to the occasion!

Isaiah did not wait around for God to call him to take charge. Instead, he said to God, “Here am I, send me!” This only happens when people get up out of their chair and submit to the need at hand. They are always ready to make it happen at a moment’s notice!

Daniel

Leaders are more concerned about where things are headed than they are about the circumstances!

In Daniel chapter 6, we read how others allowed jealousy to get in the way of making wise decisions. These evil men set a trap and tried to get Daniel killed. Daniel refused to cave in, even when it meant he would be cast into the lion’s den. Like Joseph, he kept his eyes on God and His righteousness. Great leaders follow Daniel’s example and remain steadfast in their convictions, regardless of what happens.

John the Baptist

Leaders are not afraid to call out evil when they see it!

In Matthew chapter 3, John is preaching about Jesus and baptizing disciples. When the religious quacks show up to put him in his place, he calls them a generation of vipers. Real leaders are transparent. They are brutally honest and tell it like it is.

Jesus

Leaders are servants!

Jesus, in John 13, shows us how to be a real leader by stooping down and washing the dirty feet of his apostles. When He finishes washing all their feet, He says in verses 13-15, “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” Some of this world’s greatest leaders have learned to serve their followers, rather than whip them into obedience.

Peter

Leaders do not allow past failures to stop them!

After denying his Lord three times, Peter goes out back and cries his heart out. Too many would have given up at this point and went home. They would have dwelt on their weaknesses, rather than their strengths. Not Peter! In Acts chapter 2,

Peter begins to preach about Jesus, and 3,000 souls fell on their faces before God and repented of their sins. It was the beginning of a huge revival. This is a good reminder that great leaders do not wallow in self-pity, nor do they allow their mistakes to hold them back. Instead, they learn from their mistakes and become even better leaders than before.

Paul

Leaders are zealous and hang on to what they believe is right!

Whether we talk about Paul’s life as a Pharisee, or his life as a Christian, he was zealous in what he believed. Even after he got excommunicated from the church, thrown in prison, shipwrecked, beaten, and left for dead, he always got up and kept on moving. Nothing in life was going to hold him back from serving his master, Jesus Christ. Real leaders believe what they know is true. They care more about other people than they do about their own flesh and needs.

END



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Message by Michael Pearl.

You are Beautiful

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

Marriage

(part 1 of 3)

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

Christian Theology - God the Son

(part 4 of 11)

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

June

Book of Romans (Romans 3:21-31)

Message by Michael Pear.

You are Called

Whether you know it or not, you have a calling. You may not have thought about it in exactly those words, God has a plan for your life — and it's not a secret. In this message, you'll learn that you have the potential through your identity in Christ to make a difference in ways you never thought possible.

Marriage

(part 2 of 3)

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

Christian Theology - God the Spirit

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July

Book of Romans (Romans 4)

Message by Michael Pear.

The Revelation—What's the World Coming to?

(part 1 of 5)

Chip Ingram cuts through the imagery and the metaphors in the book of Revelation to deliver one of the most compelling and inspiring presentations on this often misunderstood part of Scripture. This series puts life into perspective and brings a clarity, and purpose, to your everyday struggles like never before. If you long to make wise choices, live your life with a steadfast purpose, and experience joy and peace, even in the midst of uncertain and chaotic times, this is a great place to start!

Marriage

(part 3 of 3)

Christian Theology - Mankind - part 1

(part 6 of 11)

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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

Quit Trying and Trust

A call to holiness of heart and life

—by Rodger Moyer

We believe in God Who created heaven and earth.
We believe in God Who gave stars and moons their birth.
We believe in God with Whom nothing is impossible.
We believe in God Who is holy, loving, and with Him,
that all things are possible.

We believe in God Who is always faithful and unchanging.
We believe God is in control of this world and is reigning.
We believe God's will always come through.
We believe God's mercies everyday are new.

We believe God's grace is sufficient for all our need.
We believe God can comfort the sick, the hurting, and set us
free indeed.
We believe God can convict sinners that are lost.
We believe God can bring us through though temptation tossed.

We believe God can forgive all our sin and give us new life.
We believe God for answered prayer in the midst of strife.
We believe God for the healing of our bodies.
We believe God takes nobodies and make them somebodies.

We believe God is pleased by the faith we are bringing.
We believe God is rejoicing over His children with glorious
singing.
We believe God transforms us into His image.
We believe in a God we can know, what a precious privilege.

Then why can't we believe God can cleanse our hearts from
original sin?
Why can't we believe Him to change us completely within?
Why can't we believe He can truly make all things new?
Why can't we believe in victory over temptation each day
through?

And why do we continue to try getting rid of our sinfulness on
our own?
Why do we continue to try getting victory over the sinful
attitudes shown?
Why do we not trust God to make our hearts right?
Why don't we let Him turn this darkness into light?

Maybe it's because we don't truly believe in God's power
to do it.
Maybe it's because we like our sin too much to be through
with it.

Maybe it's because we don't believe the promises of God's
Word are true.

That faithful is He Who calls us Who will this work do.

Oh friends, let us quit trying and trust Him,
To break the habits and cleanse from all sin?
Why not trust Him to take away whatever it might be,
The anger, the pride, the lust, and set us free?

Will you stop trying to change your own soul?
Will you stop trying to make yourself whole?
Will you stop trying to make excuse for who you are and what
you do,
And let Jesus cleanse you, fill you, through and through?

So, go back and read the first five paragraphs of this poem,
And understand and believe God for this blessing and not
try it alone.

For the same God, the same blood, the same Spirit, has given
the call,
For He can give us pure hearts, make us holy, oh just give
your all!

Yes, we will still be human with all the infirmities and flaws,
But with holy motives to guide us, His glory continually
our cause.

So, go ahead, and just trust Him now, trust Him today,
And you will experience the more excellent way.

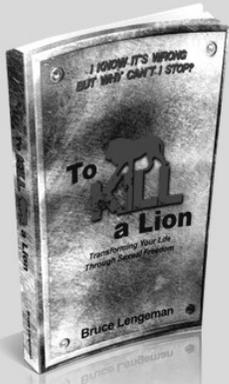
You will be filled with love like never before.
You will be filled with victorious power over the inward war.
You'll know a peace that passes all understanding.
A peace and love you will always find expanding.

So why not trust and pray with all your heart,
And die to sin and believe, for that is your part?
And to humbly trust and before Him bow,
And say, "O Lord, do the work in me now!"

Don't just believe that God can do all the rest,
And not believe Him to make our hearts their very best.
Loving others and Him with all you are and can.
Today, tomorrow, let this faith in Him never end.

May I live and die with this message on my heart!

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I recently read a comment of someone who thought that questioning traditions and studying history is wrong and a waste of time. Most of us have read the Bible for years, and we take it for granted that the things our churches teach are correct. That is what I thought, too. But I guess I am just one of those people who like to know why. Answers like, "We've always done it this way," are not satisfying to me. I want to know the reason behind how things work and why things work like they do, be it relationships, church regulations, or farm machinery.

You see, it is possible to read the Bible and not be changed. But when someone who is hungry for truth starts really taking it in and studying it, that is when Scripture becomes alive. There is nothing wrong with trying to understand why things work like they do or why traditions were started. Some things are really fascinating and some are actually totally different than what we had always been told. Why should we study and question?

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-4, 14).

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5-8).

“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13).

What I have observed in this short life of mine, is that if we don't study the truth, origins, and whatever else we have questions about, it will be to our detriment. If we don't know the truth, we will fall for lies and false teachers. If we don't line things up with Scripture, we are in great danger of being deceived. In our studying, there also needs to be balance. If we research something from every angle and line it up with Scripture, we will be much more able to detect lies, false teachings, and sayings that are taken as truth. Satan is a deceiver and has had much practice throughout history. It is therefore wise for us to study and question to make sure we are standing on the truth. We all want to hear those words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

END

that something had happened to me, but they did not know how to help me. I forgave her. I also asked my mother to forgive me for blaming her and my dad for all the hurt, and she forgave me.

In July 2020 I moved to Ohio and began a journey of spiritual renewal and emotional healing. I also began to write my story, and in so doing, intend to release a new period of healing for others who have faced emotional and physical trauma.

God removes the power brought on through trauma, deep rooted pain, affliction, oppression, and secrets. Only the devil wants these things covered up, only Satan wants families to live in defeat and shame. It's time to step out of the boat and fall wholly into the hands of Jesus. It's time to give up the pain and hurt, and receive His healing, His cleansing, and His peace. Full redemption is found in the arms of love.

My desire is to release this same healing. Only God can cast down the chains of generational curses, bondage to men, hurts, pain, sorrow, past sins, condemnation, shame. Only God will bring peace to broken hearts; the kind of peace that in turn has the victim praying for the perpetrators. Not prayers of curses but for forgiveness, and for healing. Only God can heal a victim so that true forgiveness and inner healing can take place.



*Secrets buried alive,
never die, but when
released in Jesus' name,
the power that the
secrets held must die!*

END

according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

But, God has good news for everyone. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15).

The Gospel is clearly stated in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

“...I declare unto you the gospel...by which also ye are saved...that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures...”

The Bible clearly states that God provided His Son, Jesus Christ, who became flesh and dwelt among us, “to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Since Jesus was fully God and fully man, perfect and without sin, He fulfilled the righteous requirements of God in relation to mankind. Christ’s birth, life, death, and resurrection provide the remedy to sin and death for all mankind.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to

repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

But not all accept the gift He offers. The way of salvation is provided, but many reject it, as they reject the Holy Spirit and Christ.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

The Bible states clearly that no man comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ.

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

God’s requirement for all people is that they must repent (agree with God, turn from sin and turn to God), and believe Him to the point of trusting in Him as Lord and Savior.

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

If anyone chooses to turn from their sins, they tell...

“how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9b)

and trust completely what Jesus has done for them,

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:9)

God’s Spirit will then place them “in Christ,” guaranteed to never receive the punishment their sin deserves.

Repentance (turn from sin, turn to God) and faith (belief-trust) are the two essential elements of God’s required response to His Gospel.

Are you ready to repent of your sin, and believe God’s Gospel?

If so, communicate that to Him in prayer.

Just praying a prayer does not save you.

Turning from your sin, turning to God, and trusting in Him does save you.

Then read the Bible, pray, and obey Him.

If you would like to talk with someone about God’s free gift of eternal life, or if you have questions, please e-mail us at: northwoodsvista@gmail.com

This message prepared by Bob Freeman (website: mynorthwoodsvista.com)

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Repentance and Faith

—By Bob Freeman

God's Required Response to His Gospel

Genesis 1:1 says,

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

The Bible says that God created everything that is, including you and me. Since He created us, He owns us and we are responsible to Him. God created us in His image and His desire was for us to have a perfect relationship with Him. But Adam and Eve, the first created people, chose to disobey God. Their sin damaged man's perfect relationship with God. All people, since Adam and Eve to the present, fall short of the glory of God. All are under condemnation because of sin which separates all mankind from the holiness and righteousness of God.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Sin is any thought, attitude, or action which is contrary to, or falls short of the character of God in His holiness and perfection.

People sin because they are all sinners.

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14).

People are sometimes caused to sin because of the temptation of Satan.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

A person MUST understand that God is absolutely holy and perfect.

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15-16).

God cannot tolerate anything or anyone who is less than holy. In order to satisfy His righteous demands, the debt of sin must be paid.

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the

presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thesalonians 1:8-9).

Since the wages of sin is death, all people are destined for hell, a place of eternal torment and suffering. Revelation 20:10-15 says,

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man

Continued on Page 15