

Do You have Genuine Love for God's Truth?

Roger Kendall—August 26, 2017

I have a question for you, which is the title of my message this morning:

➤ **Do you have a genuine love for God's Truth or the Truth of God?**

God's Truth, which we know is expressed in the Scriptures and in His Word.

I really appreciate the hymn that we sing, *Oh How Love I Thy Law*. That's the attitude that a true Christian—one who is serving God in Spirit and in Truth—will say; that they love the Law, love the Truth of God and they strive to follow it.

That's not the way that's in the world. As we know, the world is pretty much cut off from the Truth of God because of God's plan. On the other hand, we find that the Truth is hated by many and they consider the Truth of God to be nothing but something to be 'trashed' in the streets.

I say that in a very dramatic way, but let's read what the prophet Isaiah said about the Truth of God and the attitude that people generally have toward God and His Truth.

Isaiah 59:4: "None calls for justice, nor does anyone plead for Truth..." Another way we can say this is, no one is seeking the Truth; no one is concerned about the Truth.

"...they trust in vanity and speak lies.... [not the truth] ...They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity" (v 4). Because of this attitude that they have against God's Law and lacking the love of God's Law, the prophet writes:

Verse 13: "In rebellion and denial of the LORD, and turning away from our God, talking perversity and revolt, conceiving and speaking from the heart words of falsehood."

Again, a continued statement regarding *the deceitfulness and the hatred the people have toward God's Word!*

Verse 14: "**And justice is driven backward, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth has fallen in the street...**" If something falls into the street, it becomes 'gutter trash.'

In other words, it's something to be trampled under foot. This is the attitude that many people have against God's ways, His laws and His Truth.

"...and uprightness cannot enter... [the Truth of God is shut out] ...Yea, truth fails; and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey...." (vs 14-15).

Isn't that the truth? In the modern world today, if you go into a forum—small or great—and begin to mention the Bible, mention the Truth of God's Word, keeping His commandments:

- you will be attacked
- you will be put asunder
- you will probably will be driven out of the establishment

That's not in every case. There are those out there who are striving to serve God in love. Generally speaking, the Truth of God has "...fallen in the street..."

"...And the LORD saw, and it was evil in His eyes that **there was no justice**" (v 15). This is an issue I want to talk about:

- What about our attitude toward God?
- Do we really love His Truth in the way that we ought to be doing?

Over the many years since the founding of the Church in 30_{A.D.}, many people have come into the Church, been baptized and received God's Holy Spirit, only to fall away; to go back into the world and perhaps to go back to no religion or no spiritual life at all, or to go back into the traditions of the world. They've gone from the Light of God's Truth, into the darkness of this world, and they wonder why their lives are the way that they are. Many have left the true Church of God to go back into worshipping God according to *their own* ideas and thoughts to take on false doctrines and the traditions of the world! We know what those are.

{note sermon series: *The Mystery of Protestantism*}.

Let's understand that in many cases, people are striving to do what they think is correct, but they've been deceived. Satan is the 'great deceiver' and they're not walking in the Truth, because many times their pastors and ministers are teaching them falsehoods and lies, not the Truth of the Bible.

This has happened down through time, even beginning with the apostles. This is not a recent happening. It was happening in the very New Testament Church, within maybe 30 years after Christ returned to heaven and the Church was started.

The question I have for us today is: **Why have people, after receiving God's Holy Spirit and accepting the Truth of God, given it up?**

When I was here in the '90s before I went to Big Sandy, there were well over close to 200 people meeting in Montpelier, Vermont. Many of those

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people, I do not know where they have scattered to, but most of them are not presently serving the true God in the way that they had been doing. They've forsaken the Truth and the true worship of God.

Christ explains very clearly how He is to be worshipped (John 4:23-24). I think you know what Christ explained to the woman at the well: *God is Spirit and the only way that you can worship God correctly, is to worship Him in 'spirit and in truth!'*

In spirit we understand because God is Spirit so you don't worship God in some man-made or some physical means that you think is right because He is spirit. Finally, because He is spirit, you obey His voice and you worship Him according to His Word, according to the Truth that's in the Bible.

- Why are we still here?
- Why are we still in God's Church?
- Why are we still being faithful?
- Why are we still being loyal?
- Why are we dedicated to keep our journey to the Kingdom of God?
- Why are we still not turning back to the ways of:
 - ✓ deceit?
 - ✓ wrong thoughts?
 - ✓ wrong ideas?
- What's holding us on the course?
- What's helping us to recognize that we need God and we need His Truth?

We don't know all the specific reasons or answers to the above questions, because a person's relationship with God is a very personal thing. It's:

- based on a one-on-one relationship
- based upon a calling
- based upon being converted
- continuing that walk with God

It's a very personal thing.

- Why do some people leave?
- Why do people stay?

I believe that one of the most deciding factors that may help us to understand this is the fact that once a person is baptized and receives God's Holy Spirit:

- Do they have a genuine love for God?
- A genuine and sincere love for the Truth?

There are other aspects of it, but that can very well explain a core element of why we are here and how we love God's Law. We love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30), and we love each other, as the second great commandment states. What does it mean to love God with all your

heart, with all your soul, with all your being? *It means:*

- to hear His voice
- to follow His words
- to believe God
- to believe His Word

Is it not the inspired Word of God? ***This was not given to us by men, but by the Spirit of God!***

Let's confirm what I'm saying regarding the Word of God. It's not something that man has put together. *It's from God!*

2-Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is **God-breathed...**"—*inspired Word from God!* It's from God Himself, right from His mouth.

"...and is profitable **for doctrine...** [teaching the very Truth of God] ...**for conviction...**" (v 16). Conviction is another element that is very important for one who is going to stay the course and not be diverted into things of the world or other elements.

"...**for correction...**" (v 16). Doesn't the Word of God correct us when we go astray? It teaches us the 'straight and narrow path that leads to righteousness.' *Yes, it does!*

"...**for instruction** in righteousness" (v 16). So, the Word of God has been put together—Old Testament and New Testament—as a communication from God to us, individually and collectively on:

- how we are to know God
- how to love God
- how to serve Him
- how to love His Truth

The Truths that are in the Bible!

Verse 17: "So that the man of God... [one who truly serves God, who loves God] ...may be complete... [mature, to rise to a level of perfection] ...fully equipped for every good work."

We can see that the Word of God truly is from God. For those who believe and follow it's teachings are going to be blessed. They may have not been called in this time, but if they follow the Words of God, believing in His Truth, even though they're *not* baptized and receive His Spirit, God will still bless that person, because they are doing some things that are correct and right.

Why do I hold that the love of God and His Truth are important? 2-Thess. 2 is referring to the coming of the Beast Power (Rev. 13). There's an interesting section in 2-Thess. that explains His coming:

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2-Thessalonians 2:8: "And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of His coming)." We do know that is the Beast Power who will be taken out by God in His appointed time.

Verse 9: "Even the one... [the Beast Power] ...whose coming is according to *the* inner working of Satan, with all **power** and **signs** and **lying wonders**." What did it say in Matt. 24 regarding the fact that even to the extent that even the 'very elect' may be deceived?

These are going to be powerful signs. These are going to be things that just can't be explained by the normal things that are going on in life. It's going to be an incredible time that's coming: very daring, very careless and very difficult. How is the Beast Power coming?

Verse 10: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing...[Why?] ...because they did not receive the love of the Truth, so that they might be saved."

We can say that this applies only to the world, the uncalled—which it does—but it also will include those who have had fellowship with us in the past and who are no longer with us.

Verse 11: "And for this cause, God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe *the lie*."

It's interesting that there's not a whole message on what the lie might be, but it's basically the fact that *this beast* says he is 'God' or, going back to Satan's lie in the Garden of Eden that you are gods. There's all kinds of places that we can go to find out what the lie is or the fact that we're all saved automatically and God is just going to grant salvation to everyone. Is that true? We know that that's not true. *That's not in the Word of God!*

Verse 12: "So that all may be judged **who did not believe the Truth**..." There's the key! God's judgment will be upon those who do not believe the Truth.

"...but who took pleasure in unrighteousness [sin]" (v 12). Brethren, God has called you and me and He's called many, many people for the very purpose of making us firstfruits in the Kingdom of God. That's something that the world does not appreciate, because they read certain Scriptures and they don't put the Scriptures together accordingly. We must hold fast:

- to the Truth of God
- to love God
- to serve Him with all of our heart
- to serve Him with all of our being

- to love Him with all of our being

Do you recognize what that entails? ***It's a 24/7 job, occupation! That's our life!***

Not things in the world, but to really, truly, serve God and to endure the trials and the perilous times in which we're living. ***We must never quit or give up!*** We must always *keep going forward* to the Kingdom of God, recognizing the forces around us are trying to deceive us, to take us off the track so that somehow we will compromise the Truth:

- we need to *find* the Truth
- we need to *keep* the Truth
- we need to *defend* the Truth
- we need to *even die* for the Truth, if we are called upon to do so

That's how important the Truth is! We need to be zealous for the work that God is doing in each and every one of us. God is working with us and He's doing 'the work.' God has a plan and we in the Church are a part of that.

1-Corinthians 15:57: "But thanks *be* to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We can't do it by *our own* works. We can't do it by our own thoughts and ideas. God through Jesus Christ gives us the victory over sin, over this world and over the lies and deception that we see all around us. Look in the world today:

- Who do you trust for truth?
- Where to do you go to find the correct news of what's going on in the world?
- Who is the true 'truth-sayer' out there?

Verse 58: "So then, my beloved brethren, **be steadfast**... [standing strong] ...immovable... [like the Rock of Gibraltar] ...always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in *the Lord*."

That's quite a statement that we are to stand firm in the Truth and not allow compromise or lies and deception.

It's interesting that in 2-Cor. 8 Paul exhorts us to prove the sincerity of our love for God and love for each other. He's also appealing to our love for the Truth, because that's what it is.

2-Corinthians 8:7: "Now even as you are abounding in every way... [Paul is encouraging and praising the brethren] ...in faith, and word, and knowledge, and *in* all diligence..."

In other words, not only in words but in deed. Basically, they are actively pursuing the life of a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

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"...and in the love *that* you have for us—so you should also abound in this gift" (v 7). The love that we have is a gift from God. The love that we have, this is Divine love. This is not some secular or human love. It's the love that comes from God.

Verse 8: "I am not saying *this* as a command, but ***I am exhorting you through the diligence of others in order to prove the genuineness of your love.*** How do you prove the genuineness of your love?

- by your words
- by your deeds
- by your attitude

It's more than that. *It's your core values!* It's what's inside.

The Truth of God changes a person. The Truth of God sets a person on their path in life. It guides them. It shows them how to live with the morals and the ethics. All justice, all things that are Truth, come from the Bible, come from the Scriptures. Once we understand the morality and the Truth of God's Word and how it affects us, then it becomes part of us. Therefore, it becomes part of us it means that it's not subject to change by what somebody else thinks. We have proven the Truth from the Word individually.

There's many messages that could be given here, but let's review and understand that the Truth of God is critical to our relationship with God, to our understanding of how to live. More than that, it's important that we understand and live by it as a way of life, not just some course of events that's just going to 'bounce off of us.' It is essential that we accept and believe that the Word is from God (2-Tim. 3).

In there it mentioned conviction. Conviction is a fact that which you hold fast because you have proven the Truth. Conviction is something that is not a preference. A preference is subject to change, but conviction is something that's locked in you; it's a part of you. Once you are convicted of the Truth, it should be standing strong, immovable, as we just read. That's what Paul is talking about. That's what we need to prove:

- Is that in you?
- Is that in me?
- Is the love of God immovable and in us?

We clearly understand that God's Word is the Truth!

John 17:17, where Christ said in the prayer to His Father before He was crucified: "Sanctify them in Your Truth... [to make them Holy for a Holy purpose; to cleanse them, to prepare them for righteous work] ...Your Word is the Truth."

Christ clearly shows us where the Truth is. By following the Truth we become sanctified, prepared for a righteous Holy work. We come to know God:

- Who He is
- His nature
- His character
- His very mind

through His Truth, which allows us:

- to discern right from wrong
- to discern Truth from error
- to discern the falsehoods and lies from that which is the correct understanding

It gives us discernment so that we can now see the Light of God's Word, not the darkness of Satan's world. We see the Light! We can walk in righteousness, and we can avoid unrighteousness or sin.

Jesus Christ is the Word (John 1:1). Jesus Christ is the Word and because He was the Word, He is the source of Truth. We know that to be true.

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him... [Thomas] ...'I am the Way, **and the Truth**... [Jesus Christ is the Truth] ...and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

Peter said in the book of Acts that ***there is no way of salvation except through Jesus Christ!*** That is the Truth. The masses in this world hate that statement. They revolt against it. They despise it, but it's the Truth.

"...no one comes to the Father except through Me" (v 6).

- Do you believe? *Yes, we do!*
- Is it the Truth? *Yes, it is!*

Christ came to be a witness of the Truth for three and one-half years of ministry to form His Church, to raise up His Church, but also to be a witness to the Truth. He mentioned this to Pilate just hours before He died. He came to reveal the Truth.

John 18:35: "Pilate answered Him, 'Am I a Jew? The chief priests and your own nation have delivered You up to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, so that I might not be delivered up to the Jews. However, My kingdom is not of this world.' Pilate, therefore, answered Him, 'Then You are a king?' Jesus answered, 'As you say, I am a king. **For this purpose I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, that I may bear witness to the Truth...**'" (vs 35-37). Christ is the very One Who reveals Truth.

He was the God of the Old Testament. He inspired the writings of the Old Testament and the laying down of the commandments (Exo 20_[transcriber's correction]; Deut. 5). He brought the Truth.

“...**Everyone who is of the Truth hears My voice**” (v 37).

- you love the Truth
- you love God
- you hear God
- you follow what He wants us to do

The Truth of God is universal. What I mean by that is that it exists separate from the individual or from any nation, and it applies to every single person all over this planet, past and future, at all times and in every place. That's what I mean by universal. The Truth of God is universal.

God expects all people to obey and to follow the letter of the Law as expressed in the Old Covenant. Otherwise, it's lawlessness or sin. If it's not of God, then it is of this world and generally speaking, may be of sin. God's Truth is perfect, correct and absolute. These are terms that we can apply to the Truth of God. It's pure and without fault or any error.

Let's read the Psalmist's proclamation regarding the Word of God, the Truth of God. This is a Psalm of David that we sing: *O How Love I Thy Law*.

Psalm 19:7: “The Law of the LORD is perfect, **restoring the soul...**” It puts a person back in harmony with God. It puts a person back in walking the path of righteousness, not the ways of this world. That's what it means.

“...the testimony of the LORD is sure... [absolute, correct] ...making wise the simple” (v 7). Does it not give us wisdom? Understanding? *Yes, it does!*

Verse 8: “The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart...” The Truth of God brings us joy, because we know that we have found the most precious elements that we could find—the Word. God has called us. He has given us His Spirit. We can rejoice.

“...the commandments of the LORD are pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true...” (vs 8-9).

We can see here that God's judgments are also true and they are lasting forever. I should mention that the Truth of God *will endure forever*.

Verse 10: “More to be desired than gold...” How much gold do you think the Truth of God is worth? I don't think there's enough gold on this

planet nor in thousands of planets that would be worth the value of the Truth that God has.

“...yea much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (v 10). It's good! It's right! Yet, how many people look at the Law of God as being a burden, being an anchor on their heads. It takes away from their personal freedom.

We believe and understand the Truth of God through His Holy Spirit. I want you just to put down some Scriptures about the Law of God:

- God's Law is the Truth (Psa. 119:142)
- God's commandments are the Truth (Psa. 119:151)
- God's words are true and they endure forever (Psa 111:7-8)
- The laws and judgments are true and righteous (Psa. 19:9)

There are many other places we can go, but I wanted just to mention those. All through the Scriptures you'll find the Law, the Truth of God and the Word of God expounded as being precious and so very valuable to each one of us.

- Why can a person come to understand and believe the Truth of God?
- What does it take? *It actually takes God opening our minds!*

You just can't go pick up a Bible and be able to go in there and not find the Truth of God. *The Truth of God is locked* until the time of addressing the issues of revealing it to the world. On the other hand, for those who are seeking God, God answers that. Believe me, it's important that we seek God. It's through the Holy Spirit, our calling, being baptized and receiving God's Holy Spirit, that we can know God and we can understand His Truth.

1-Corinthians 2:11: “For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, **the things of God no one understands except by the Spirit of God.**” Didn't we not say that we have to worship God in Spirit and in Truth? Here, we have to have the Spirit of God to be able to do that. God makes that available to those who are 'called and chosen.'

Verse 12: “Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God; which things we also speak, **not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Holy Spirit in order to communicate spiritual things by spiritual means**” (vs 12-13).

This is quite the revelation, but it's true. John 16:13 says that the 'Holy Spirit will lead you

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into all Truth.' The Holy Spirit that comes from God will 'lead us into all Truth.'

I read that Scripture and I'm saying, if that being the case, how does it work with us as individuals? *It takes time! It's part of conversion!* It's over time that the Holy Spirit will lead us into more and more Truth. ***The more you obey God, the more He will reveal to you!*** He will open your mind to greater understanding and the depths of what's in the Bible and what's in the Scriptures.

We not only have to love God and to love His Truth, but we have to study the Scriptures. We have our part to play. The knowledge of God doesn't just come down to us as some 'download' that God gives us from the 'great computer in the sky' and download all it's Truth and knowledge. *No!*

How do we find the Truth? *Here a little, there a little, precept upon precept, line upon line (Isa, 28:10)!* In other words, we search the gold mine to find the gold. We go into the Bible and we search out the Truth. This is our part:. We've got to search for the Truth. Once we have God's Holy Spirit, we need to search and prove the Truth.

2-Timothy 2:15: "**Diligently study** to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, **rightly dividing the Word of the Truth.**"

- you go in there with pick and shovel
- you live your life
- you hunt for the gold
- you apply it in your life
- you make it a part of you
 - ✓ your morals
 - ✓ your ethics
 - ✓ your decisions
 - ✓ your judgments that you make

1-Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things. Hold fast *to that which* is good." That means that when you come into the Church of God or into the Body of Christ, it's not what ***the group thinks or believes***, it's what ***you think and believe***. You need to do it personally and be convicted of the Truth. Once you are convicted of the Truth you love God, you love His Truth because you know that there is no other alternative.

I need to go back and think about what happened in the breakup of the Worldwide Church of God back in the late 90s. That was a test for the people of God.

- Are you with God?
- Are you not with God?
- In terms of the breakup that occurred, it was over the Truth of God—wasn't it?

- What were the doctrines that were being hashed over, beaten over and changed? *The Sabbath! The Holy Days! The Passover!*

All these were being manipulated, changed and torn asunder by unscrupulous deceivers who began to believe. The impact it had on many was that they began to believe and to accept what was being said.

- Why did they choose to believe what they had heard before was not true?
- What was the element in their minds?
 - ✓ they did not prove the Truth
 - ✓ they were not convicted of the Truth
 - ✓ they did not come to love the Truth
- Did not Christ give the warning (Matt. 24:4-5)?
- Did He not say that 'many deceivers will come in My name'?

He warned the disciples in the Church to beware of deceivers, people who would come as 'angels of light.' Satan's agents come as angels of light. Satan's agents come as 'angels of light.' It means that it looks good. Oh, it's possible. It's probable.

- Does it match with the Word of God?
- Is this part of what we know to be true because we've proven the Truth?
- If it's not, what do you do with it? *You cast it out!*

So many people did not do that. Only apostles gave warning to the Church that these times would come upon the Church and they needed to be prepared.

2-Timothy 4:1: "I charge you, therefore... [Paul is talking to Timothy individually, but he's talking to us as the Church] ...in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the living and the dead* at His appearing and His kingdom."

When does that come? *When Christ returns!* Thank God He's going to return because this world is in sad shape.

Verse 2: "Preach the Word! Be urgent in season and out of season; convict... [to *instill a strong, firm, belief*] ...rebuke... [bring up and make people aware of sin] ...encourage, with all patience and doctrine. For there shall come a time when they will **not tolerate sound doctrine...**" (vs 2-3). Is he talking about the world? *No! He's talking about those in the Church of God!*

"...but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves *a great number of teachers, having ears itching to hear what satisfies their cravings*" (v 3). Their selfish carnal nature is

still there. It's having an upper hand, and it's overriding the very works of the Spirit and of the Truth.

Verse 4: "And **they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth...**" Is that not what happened in the 90s for many people in the Body of Christ, the Church?

"...and they shall be turned aside unto myths" (v 4)

Peter pretty much goes over the same points that we just read here, but he brings out some other elements that we need to look at.

2-Peter 2:1: "But there were also false prophets among the people... [during the time of Israel and all that it went through there] ...as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, personally denying the Lord who **bought them...**" With what? *His shed blood!* It took a lot of blood to buy them. He bought them so that they could be saved.

"...and **bringing swift destruction upon themselves.** And many people will follow as *authoritative...*" (vs 1-2)—*being correct.* This is what you do. They'll follow this as being 'authoritative,' but notice:

"...their destructive ways; *and* because of them, the **way of the Truth will be blasphemed.** Also, through insatiable greed they will with enticing messages exploit you for gain; for whom the judgment of old is in *full* force, and their destruction is *ever* watching" (vs 2-3).

There is a consequence for breaking God's Law and going the way of Satan the devil. There's a price to pay for that. Peter begins to give warning to what happens to one who falls away:

Verse 17: "These *false prophets...* [false teachers] ...are fountains without water..." In other words, *no Holy Spirit, no Truth* in it.

"...clouds driven by a storm, for whom is reserved the blackest of darkness forever" (v 17). That's a condemnation of those who accept these false teachings and go the way of the world.

Verse 18: "For they speak bombastic *words* of vanity, enticing *others* through *the* lusts of the flesh by granting indulgences to sin, *and* *ensnaring* those who had indeed escaped from those who live in deception. While promising them freedom, they themselves are actually slaves of corruption because by whatever anyone is overcome, he is also held in bondage" (vs 18-19).

I remember seeing a video from people who came out of Worldwide Church of God into Grace Communion Church. I don't know if you saw it or not, but it was made quite a few years ago. They were so happy. They were joyful and they expressed

the fact that now they were free. They loved the freedom that they now had, that they felt that they did not have when they were in the Worldwide Church of God. "...**While promising them freedom, they themselves are actually slaves of corruption...**" That is what's happened to them. They're 'held in bondage.' We should continue to pray for people that we know and perhaps they might yet repent. *It's not over until it's over!*

Verse 20: "For if, after escaping the moral defilements of the world through *the* knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again become entangled in them, and are overcome, the final end is worse than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing *it*, to turn back from the Holy commandment *that was* delivered to them. But the *pronouncement found* in the true proverb has happened to them: *The dog has returned to eat his own vomit; and the sow that was washed has returned to her wallowing place in the filthy mire*" (vs 20-22). A very descriptive language. Peter is being actually correct in what he's telling us.

They truly forget. People truly forget what it says in 1-John 5: 3: "For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments **are not burdensome.**" *The laws of God are not grievous; they are for the benefit of the person!* The Laws of God are:

- not grievous
- not a burden
- not a weight
 - ✓ they are a delight
 - ✓ they're a joy

because of what they produce if they're followed correctly!

Paul was also warning the Christians; Hebrews 3:12: "Beware, brethren, lest perhaps there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in apostatizing from *the* living God."

He's talking to the Church. He's talking to those who have been baptized, who have God's Holy Spirit. He says, 'Beware, brethren, lest you become double-minded and you apostatize, you break from the Truth of God.'

Verse 13: "Rather, be encouraging one another each day, while it is called 'today,' so that none of you become hardened by *the* deceitfulness of sin. For we are companions of Christ, if we truly hold the confidence *that we had* at the beginning **steadfast until the end**" (vs 13-14).

The words are very clear, here, that we need to hold fast. We need to be steadfast in our love for God, our love for His Truth and not waver at all, but

recognize that there are elements out there who will try to deceive us and lead us astray.

Heb. 10 is a fairly lengthy section. I would like to read this into the message because it really entails the consequences of one who once knew the Truth, gives up that Truth and goes back into the world.

Hebrews 10:22: "Let us approach *God* with a true heart, with full **conviction** of faith..."—a *deep solid belief that's not subject to change!*

"...our hearts having been purified from a wicked conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water" (v 22). The process of salvation that God cleanses us, cleans us up as we believe and repent of our sins and God continues to work with us.

Verse 23: "Let us hold fast without wavering *to the hope that we profess*, for He Who promised *is faithful*." God will not go back on His part of the contract, the covenant that He has with us.

Verse 24: "And let us be concerned about one another, and *be stirring up one another* unto love and good works." That's part of what we are to be doing.

Verse 25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, even as some *are* accustomed to do; but rather, encouraging *one another*, and all *the more* as you see the day drawing near. **For if we willfully...**" (vs 25-26). It's not willingly, but willfully. That means *to give up on God*. That's what that word means.

"...go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins" (v 26).

Is not this the 'unpardonable sin?' *Yes, it is!* It's against the Holy Spirit, against the Truth of God. Christ said that you could blaspheme Him and it was not the 'unpardonable sin,' but if you blaspheme the Holy Spirit, that's the 'unpardonable sin.' Interesting. He was talking about Him as a man, not necessarily as God.

Verse 27: "But a terrifying expectation of inevitable judgment and of fierce fire, which will devour the adversaries *of God*." That's the consequences of those who are the enemies of God and do not accept Christ and go the way of Satan the devil.

Verse 29: "How much worse punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, *as an unholy thing...*"

That's what we talked about ***willfully rejecting God!*** That's what that means. We really have to make a personal mental focus of rejecting God. After receiving the Truth, what are the consequences? *There's no room for repentance after that!* You can't repent. That's the point. Repentance is 'not in the cards' anymore for you. You don't want to repent because you love the way of Satan the devil.

"...and has scorned the Spirit of grace? For we know Him Who has said, "Vengeance *belongs to Me*. I will recompense!" says *the Lord*.' And again, '*The Lord will judge His people*'" (vs 29-30). It's just something many people fail to know. God is also judge and He will judge the people.

The Apostle John in 1st, 2nd and 3rd John encouraged the brethren to continue to walk in the Truth. I want you to read that as an assignment. Over ten times John says to '***walk in the Truth***.' He also came to warn because of the work of the antichrist. He warned of the antichrist who is to come, who is to come to deceive the Church and to pull the people into the way of sin, because he said the work of the antichrist was among them (1-John 4:1-3)

All the apostles warned the Church; yet, many did not heed, did not listen or did not accept the apostle's words.

In conclusion, after going through this understanding of the consequences of rejecting the Truth, what are some of the reasons that we can understand of why people have left the Truth? The Scriptures do give us some insight into why people have left the Truth! Is it an excuse? *No!* This is what occurs. I'm going to go through some these now and perhaps we can have a few minutes of discussion if anyone has some things to add to this list.

In other words, what brought them to lose the Truth and to begin to walk in 'spiritual darkness?'

1. They lost their first love (Rev. 2:4)

They no longer put God first in their lives. They thought other things in their world were more important than serving and putting God first.

2. They began to look to false teachers rather than the Word of God for Truth

As Paul said, 'twitching in the ears, something new.' Something kind of exciting and revealing, but it's not of the Truth (2-Tim. 4:3-4).

3. Lack of daily study and prayer

If you don't stay close to God, is He going to stay close to you? *No!* You have to stay close to God and then, God will be close to you. If you stop prayer and study, you're moving away. You're

moving toward the darkness. It's something we do daily, because we love God and we want to know more of His Truth. In those prayers we need to pray for more understanding and more of Truth so that we can walk more perfectly.

4. Failure to repent of sins

Pretty soon certain sins are looked upon as not being very important and they say that we can continue to live in sin. We can have one foot in the Church and one foot in the world. We can just compromise and God will understand. I've heard that terminology. What does that do? *It pulls you closer to the world!*

5. Many are pulled away by the cares of this world (Matt. 13:22)

- businesses
- making of money
- concerns of what am I going to do not looking at the Kingdom of God

6. Fail to endure because of trials and persecution

That's a big one!

- health trials
- job problems
- family problems

People get so ensconced in their trial that they don't turn to God for help. They don't endure the trial thinking that it's a curse from God and they then, fall away. That's happened to many that I know.

Matthew 24:13: "But the one who endures to the end, that one shall be saved."

7. Lack of commitment to the Truth

Commitment is to *set the goal and to not be diverted from it.*

Matthew 6:33 says, "...seek first... [keep on seeking, an on-going seeking daily] ...the Kingdom of God and His righteousness..." That's a very proactive verb—to be active in commitment to reach the Kingdom of God.

8. Lack of conviction

That is the lack of solidifying the Truth in you so that it becomes a part of you. If you don't have the conviction, if you don't have a commitment *you are in danger of:*

- hearing a false lie
- believing it
- making it your own.

In conclusion: We need to recognize the danger that we, too, could fall into the pit of

unbelief, falling into an attitude, a way that truly leads us away from God. We need to truly love God and to love His Truth:

- with all of our being
- with all of our strength
- with all that is within us

When we hold fast to the Truth, it will then become part of our very nature so that we can become like God! That's how important the Truth is!

Do you have the true and sincere genuine love for the Truth of God?

Scriptural References:

- 1) Isaiah 59:4, 13-15
- 2) 2-Timothy 3:16-17
- 3) 2-Thessalonians 2:8-12
- 4) 1-Corinthians 15:57-58
- 5) 2-Corinthians 8:7-8
- 6) John 17:17
- 7) John 14:6
- 8) John 18:35-37
- 9) Psalm 19:7-10
- 10) 1-Corinthians 2:11-13
- 11) 2-Timothy 2:15
- 12) 1-Thessolians 5:21
- 13) 2-Timothy 4:1-4
- 14) 2-Peter 2:1-3, 17-22
- 15) 1-John 5:3
- 16) Hebrews 3:12-14
- 17) Hebrews 10:22-27, 29-30
- 18) Matthew 24:13
- 19) Matthew 6:33

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 4:23-24
- Mark 12:30
- Revelation 13
- John 1:1
- Exodus 20
- Deuteronomy 5
- Psalm 119:142; 119:151; 111:7-8
- John 16:13
- Isaiah 28:10
- Matthew 24:4-5
- 1st, 2nd, 3rd John
- 1-John 4:1-3
- Revelation 2:4
- Matthew 13:22

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *The Mystery of Protestantism*

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