

How Can a Man or Woman Be Right with God? I

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- How is it possible?
- What should we do?
- What does God require?
- What does God do?

*This is also going to help us understand how in that right standing, **what we do and what God does!***

Micah 6 is where the question is asked: **What must I do to please God?** We know that in 1-John 3 it says that God answers our prayers *because* we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

- How can you be right with God?
- How do you handle it when you have a guilty conscience?

A lot of people have guilty consciences even though God has already accepted them.

Micah 6:6: “With what shall I come before the LORD, *to* bow myself before God the Most High? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my life? He has shown you, O man, what *is* good. And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?” (vs 6-8).

- How do you do that?
- What does the New Testament show us?

We are going to see that there are certain actions that God must take, and certain actions that we must take. What we do is not a function of ability, talents or personality; it is a function of the spirit because there’s a *spirit in man*. Here is what God is seeking to do:

John 4:19: The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, but you say that the place **where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem**’” (vs 19-20). We’ll find out it’s not a place, it’s not a thing, but it is based upon Spirit and Truth.

Verse 21: “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father.’”

Now with the coming of Christ, you can worship God **wherever you are**. The temple is no longer a building, but you become the receptacle of

God’s Spirit. **You then become a mini temple of God**, which is quite something to consider when you understand it.

Verse 23: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when **the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth...**” That’s what it has to be.

- not in ritual
- not in works
- not 10,000 rivers of oil (Micah 6:7)
- not the offering of your first born (Micah 6:7)

“...for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner” (v 23). God is seeking those who are seeking Him.

This is the beginning of the process of God working with people. {note sermons: *Spirit of God/Spirit of Man—7 Spirits of God* #s 1-2} The seven candles before the throne of God is not the seven churches. Those are the eyes of God (Rev. 4-5) that go ‘to and fro through the earth seeking those who are seeking Him.’ God is doing something on one hand, and then we must do something on the other hand. God works through the circumstances to do it.

Verse 24: “God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in Truth.” Not in ritual or physical things, but from the heart.

Matthew 6:33: “But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God...” We are to do that, true. But here is our part in finding God:

Matthew 7:7: “**Ask...**” First of all, you ask and pray to God, whatever your circumstances are:

- you may have trials
- you may have difficulties
- you may be seeking the Truth
- you may be seeking to understand the Bible

You ask God!

“**Ask** and it shall be given to you...” (v 7). Remember that the answer that comes may not necessarily be the answer that you thought you would get.

“...**Seek**, and you shall find. **Knock**, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened” (vs 7-8). **God will hear!**

Will God hear the prayer of any repentant person in the world who’s wanting to seek God?

Yes! Some Churches say that God does not answer the prayers of people not in the Church of God; that's not true! Otherwise, no one would be in the Church of God, because prayers had to be answered before people were in the Church of God.

Lots of times people will ask, they seek and they don't get the answer they are looking for, so they go someplace else. If there is a response to God, then God responds further. We have the Word of God and we start with this: our first prayer may be, 'Help me to understand.'

One woman said that she went to this Presbyterian church every Sunday for 20 years, and every Sunday she asked: 'Why don't we keep the Sabbath?' She needed to act upon that question and start seeking. When she finally started seeking, she found. Let's see how God deals with us. It has to do with faith, and faith requires action. Let's see how this comes about.

John 6:28: Therefore, they said to Him, 'What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, '**This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent**'" (vs 28-29). Isn't that interesting; Jesus says that *the work of God is to believe!* Here is a *spiritual work* and you are to *believe in Jesus Christ*: what He said and what He taught.

Even some evangelicals today say that the Gospel was only for the Jews, so therefore, 'everything in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John we can ignore, because the Church started on Pentecost and after the Holy Spirit was given, that's what we go with.' They gradually take away, *take away, take away* so that the only thing that you do is just 'believe in your heart and you shall be saved.'

We're going to see what God does require, because He does require certain things and God responds and does certain things Himself. So, the first thing we are to do is believe in Jesus Christ. Then He amplifies this a little more, telling them that the Moses was not *the Bread from God*.

Verse 35: "Jesus said to them, '**I AM the Bread of Life**...' [this has overtones toward the Passover] ...the one who comes to Me..."—you *must come* to Jesus Christ.

- we are to *believe* in Him
- we are to *come* to Him

In *seeking* God, we *come* to God! We will see then that *God spiritually comes to us!* Here's what Jesus tells those who have difficulties and problems:

Matthew 11:28: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are *overly* burdened..."

- the labor of sin
- the labor of trials, troubles and difficulties

Lay all your burdens upon God, for He cares for you!

"...and I will give you rest" (v 28). What is that *rest*? He shows you what righteousness is, what sin is, what is right, what is wrong, and *He gives you His Spirit* so that you know what God wants you to do and know what God will do for you.

Verse 29: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy, and My burden is light" (vs 29-30).

Let's see how Jesus expressed His being the Bread of Life.

John 6:35: "...the one who comes to Me shall never hunger... [you'll always be spiritually filled] ...and the one who believes in Me shall never thirst at any time. **But as I said to you, you also have seen Me, yet, you do not believe**" (vs 35-36).

But here's what God does when you do that, v 44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him..."

- God is working
- God is seeking those who seek Him
- God will answer the prayers of those who pray to Him

Of course, it has to be *in sincerity and in truth!* Here is a working action between you in seeking God and God in seeking you.

"...and I will raise him up at the last day.... [talking about the resurrection] ...It is written in the prophets, '**And they shall all be taught by God.**'...." (v 44-45).

Everything we learn from the Word of God is the teaching of God. God is teaching us! But we need His Spirit so that it becomes a permanent part of us.

"...Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, **comes to Me**" (v 45).

In order to make sure that there are very few failures, *everyone has to come through Christ*. We are going to see *how* that takes place.

Verse 63: "It is the Spirit that gives life... [the Holy Spirit of God] ...the flesh profits nothing...." Think of this in the way that people worship in other 'religions' and other so-called Christian churches.

- Does it profit anything to crawl on your knees for two miles to go worship before an idol of the virgin of Guadeloupe? *No!*

That's a physical thing!

- Does it accomplish anything to flagellate your back with small scourges so you can experience the sufferings of Jesus? *No! you're experiencing your own suffering!*
- Does it accomplish anything for those who in the Philippines during the Easter season to be crucified on a cross?

Of course, every year they take pictures of those who are crucified—somehow they survive—and somehow this is supposed to make them more righteous. *NO!* It's not Spirit and Life; *it's the words of Christ, the flesh profits nothing!* That's what we need to understand.

"...The words that I speak to you, *they* are Spirit and *they* are Life" (v 63).

- What happens when we read the Word of God?

Here we have His spoken word!

- What happens, what is the connection, between the words that we're reading and your mind, spirit and heart?

Only these words in the Bible can really convey what God wants to be conveyed to us, because there *His* words. So, there is a spiritual interaction:

Your spirit—the spirit of man—must be seeking and responding to God, and God's Spirit must come to you to make that connection where you begin to understand,

Can you look back to when God was calling you, and there was a time when it was almost like a light being turned on to understand? That was a *spiritual connection* that God made with you. Not yet through begetting, because of baptism, but to lead you as long as you're seeking God. The words are *Spirit and Life*.

Verse 64: "But there are some of you who do not believe.'...." So, another person could take the same Bible or hear the words of Christ personally—like back then—and not believe, because they are not willing to do what God says.

Let's see how we are in the world, and what God has to do to break that cycle. Our human nature is a combination of our own inner sins—which everyone has through the law of sin and death that we call human nature. It's a combination of what is in the world around us of whom Satan is 'the god of this world.' It is also called *the spirit of fear* and *the spirit of bondage*. That comes from Satan the devil. That is not talking about a possession necessarily, but that is talking about the influence of the world around you. Satan is the one who is deceiving the whole world.

Isn't it true that when you get out in certain

places, certain things happen and certain things begin affecting you in a sinful way? I don't want to say *satanic*, but it appeals to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. There are certain occasions that you find yourself in where you want to get away from it. Why? *Because of the influence that is there!*

Satan has a lot of helpers in bringing this influence. Today we have all of the technology, the media, Internet; all of these things Satan is able to use. As well, God is able to use and does use.

So, let's just look at the world. Here you are in the world; you don't know which way is up or which way is down, but you're seeking God. You're seeking Him and He's seeking whom He is going to call, because you have to answer the call. Then God has to do something—which only God can do—that is based on your true inner heart and mind of the reality: Do you really want to know God? *God has to do something!*

Ephesians 2:1: "Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world..." (vs 1-2). Whatever the world said, you did. Whatever the world did, you did.

"...according to the prince of the power of the air... [Satan's control] ...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; **among whom also we all once had our conduct...** [How?] ...in the lusts of our flesh..." (vs 2-3).

You can have lusts of the flesh that will be bad and you know it's leading you to evil, and you become disgusted with it, and you start repenting of it and seeking God. Then God will start dealing with you. But if you're just left in the lust of the flesh, you will continue that way and ultimately that leads to death.

"...doing the things willed **by the flesh and by the mind...**" (v 3). A lot of these things appear good.

How about all of these 'success' programs that you see advertised on television? *That appears to be good, but it leaves out God!* So, man is able with the nature of *good and evil* to accentuate the good over the evil, but that does not necessarily mean that he is spiritual or understands spiritual things. On the other hand, you have people who can accentuate the evil and go into evil more and more and eventually get all wrapped up in the depths of Satan. So, you have those two extremes in human nature.

Will God deal with someone who is in the depths of Satan? *He dealt with the Apostle Paul*, didn't He? A lot of people at the other end, where they're doing 'good works' and 'good things' as far as human nature is concerned—and understand that

Satan loves ‘do-gooders’ to carry out his plans—some of them are so involved in doing ‘good’ that they can’t see the evil of their own human nature. They’re not seeking God. So, you have the whole spectrum of different things going on in the world “among whom also we all once had our conduct...”

God has to do something, because we are doing things willed by the flesh, willed by the mind “...and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the world*” (v 3).

But here is God’s intervention in our lives, but only after we respond in seeking God; then God responds in answering us.

Verse 4: “But God, Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us.” That ties in with ‘*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him may have everlasting life!*’ Not a guarantee if you’re not faithful.

So, He loved us, v 5: “Even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace.)”

What one thing can anyone do to get out of the clutches of Satan other than repent? *Nothing! Repentance is a work of faith and a work of belief*, as differentiated from a work of ritual or a work of commandment-keeping. This is a change of heart and mind, so you have to respond to God. It’s by God’s grace that He deals in your life.

Verse 6: “And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.... [that’s obviously yet in the future] ...so that in the ages that *are* coming He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace you have been saved...**” (vs 6-8).

Saved from what? *Satan the devil and human nature!* This **does not mean saved in the sense that you are now a spirit being!** Salvation is a process; *by grace you have been saved!*

“...**through faith**, and this *especially* is not of your own selves... [it doesn’t come from within you] ...**it is the gift of God**” (v 8).

Let’s examine the words *through faith*: What does faith require? *Obedience!* You have belief, which is the foundation of faith, then you have to obey. By faith Noah built the ark when he was warned of God (Heb. 11). So, you have faith, and you have works followed by the faith. Faith by itself without the works required by faith will not save.

Protestants have it all wrong. They say it’s by faith, or it’s by grace alone, and there’s nothing you can do, you just have a good feeling in your

heart. You go on the way that you go and you come to church every Sunday and keep Christmas, New Years, Easter and all of this. *You haven’t acted in faith toward God!* That’s the wrong kind of faith. It is a gift of God; you can’t work it up yourself.

Verse 9: “Not of works...” Let’s understand something very, very important in our relationship to God: *Not of works that you originate, like we read in Micah 6!*

- Should it be 10,000 rivers of oil?
- Should it be rams and lambs slaughtered without end?
- Should it be the offering of your firstborn?

No! You’re to walk humbly with the Lord your God!

- How do you do that?

Verse 9: “Not of works so that no one may boast.” If you want to understand that verse completely, study the whole book of Job. Job had to learn that any righteousness he had *came from God*.

Let’s look at several other verses so we can understand about being saved. We’re going to see, as explained in Eph. 2, that salvation is a process. First, you must be rescued from Satan the devil and your human nature. Next, you have to be put in right standing with God through repentance and baptism. We’re also going to see that the process of conversion between the point of being called and baptized until the point of death or resurrection is a process.

1-Corinthians 15:1: “Now, I am declaring to you, brethren, the *same* Gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, *and* in which you are now standing.”

- we’re standing in the Gospel
- we’re surrounded with the grace of God

Verse 2: “By which you are also **being saved**... [it’s a process] ...**if**... [it’s a condition] ...you are holding fast *the* words that I proclaimed to you; otherwise, you have believed in vain.”

Let’s see the finality of it, and that there are three steps to salvation:

1. **saved** from Satan and sin
2. **are being saved** through the process of your life of being faithful to the end
3. **shall be saved** at the resurrection

Romans 5:8: “But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood... [put in right standing] ...we **shall be saved from wrath** through Him” (vs 8-9).

- What is the *wrath*?

- What is the ultimate wrath of God?
- *The Lake of Fire, the second death!*

Verse 10: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, we **shall be saved by His life.**”

Because He was resurrected from the dead, we will be resurrected from the dead. The resurrection is the ultimate of salvation, because you are then a spirit being.

- being saved
- have been saved
- shall be saved

shows the whole process of conversion, growing and overcoming!

God is doing something very special God is doing something with those whom He has called; *who upon repentance have received the Holy Spirit of God!* He is doing something within us that is **His work** but requires our active participation and cooperation.

Ephesians 2:10: “For we are **His workmanship**, being **created** in Christ Jesus...” *That’s something!* The creation of God is still going on within us to build Godly character. That’s why ‘once saved always saved’ is not quite so!

Once saved always saved **IF** you are faithful and **IF** you grow in grace and knowledge, because He’s called us to eternal life. What we do after we are called and receive the Holy Spirit of God is growing in grace and knowledge and developing the character of God looking forward to the resurrection of eternal life. We need this before we can have that.

This is why that everything we do: living our lives, Sabbath services, Holy Days—all of these things—are there so we can develop the mind of Christ through “...**His workmanship created in Christ Jesus...**”

“...**unto the good works...**” (v 10). What are the *good works*? *The fruits of the Spirit and obedience in the Spirit!*

Galatians 5:22: “But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (vs 22-23).

In this workmanship that God is doing and the good works that we have, these are *spiritual works*. That’s why you’ve heard me say that *we are to*:

- **walk in faith**
- **believe in hope**
- **live in love**

This is something that we grow in, practice and do daily. Of course, with our human nature we are going to fall short. So therefore, with the grace of God we have access to God and forgiveness and repentance.

Ephesians 2:10: “...unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand...”—because this was His plan, which was predestined before He created man, but we are not plugged into that predestination plan until we repent and receive the Spirit of God. Otherwise, it would be fatalism and there would be no such thing as free choice. It would be a vain thing for God to say, ‘I set before you life and death and good and evil, therefore, choose life so you may live.’ God gave free choice and we have to choose.

“...in order that we might walk in them” (v 10). That is to **walk in faith, believe in hope and live in love!**

Let’s see this explained by Paul in a different way; let’s begin at the entry level with God working with us and God responding to us. Remember that Jesus said that He was ‘the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no man comes to the Father except through Me.’ **That is the only way**, and it’s not how people think of Jesus, or their version of Jesus, it’s:

- how the Bible shows the complete Word of God
- how God shows that we are to believe in Jesus and who the real Jesus is

After Paul denounces all of the things that men have done, all of the societies that they have made and created, which is filled with all wickedness and things. It seems as though there’s more wickedness, more violence and more occultism is coming into the average things on television and even ads. All of those things play on the mind, and Paul is saying here in Rom. 2, that the end result is death. There are some people who knowingly get involved and knowingly are doing these things to corrupt other people.

When we come to the point that God is going to be dealing with us, let’s see how that comes about:

Romans 2:4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance...”—because He’s put up with us with all of our carnality, sins and difficulties before we start seeking God.

“...and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?” (v 4). This is why every person has got to come and see and realize that the evil and the wickedness of their own human nature and repent! When you repent, it is God Who leads you to see the difference.

It's not a matter of being sorry for being caught. It's a matter of a complete abhorrence of self, of the flesh, of the lust, of the satanic world. And that God is leading you out of this world, out of sin and leading you to repentance. Yes, even after conversion, you come to deeper and deeper repentance through the rest of your Christian life, because you then understand more of the depths of sin and the greatness of God, the evil and wretchedness of iniquity and wickedness, and the righteousness of God.

So, God is seeking those who are seeking Him. Those who are sincere and true He leads to repentance. However, those who don't, Paul gives a warning:

Verse 5: "But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God's righteous judgment."

There is going to be a final reckoning. You can only run from God so long. You can only ignore the inevitable Truth for so long.

Notice what's going to happen, v 6: "Who will render to each one according to his own works." ***No one will escape!***

What kind of works did we see we're to do? *The good works of God:*

- as defined by the spiritual Godly character
- as defined by His laws and commandments

Verse 7: "On the one hand, to those who with patient endurance ***in good works*** are seeking glory and honor and immortality—***eternal life***; on the other hand, to those who are contentious and ***who disobey the Truth...***" (vs 7-8). What is Truth?

- Your Word is Truth
- Your commandments are Truth
- Your Word is true from the beginning

"...but obey unrighteousness..." (v 8). The unrighteousness comes from:

- the lust of the flesh
- the lust of the eyes
- the prince of the power of the air

and you are obeying all of these things! All of these impulses! All of these sins! What happens to them?

"...indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish—upon every soul of man who works out evil, both of *the* Jew first, and of *the* Greek... [showing the difference] ...***but glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good...***" (vs 8-10). There we have good works and works good.

"...both to *the* Jew first, and to *the* Greek,

because **there is no respect of persons with God**" (vs 10-11). Always remember that! Everyone who is faithful to God has an inside track to God. But no man has an inside track to God that he dispenses to other people. Does that make sense? *God has opened it for all people!*

(go to the next track)

Verse 12: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law..."—to the people that God never gave the Law to; He gave it to Israel up to this point and Israel sinned and were carried off into captivity. Then it came to the Jews.

"...and as many as have sinned within *the* Law shall be judged by *the* Law" (v 12). If you know, you're responsible. What did Jesus say about the servant who knew to do good and didn't do it? *He should be beaten—corrected—with many stripes!* The one who didn't know to do good, shall be beaten with few. He's still going to have his troubles and difficulties because he's sinning against God. 'The wages of sin is death,' and difficulty between the time of sin and death.

Verse 13: "**Because the hearers of the Law are not just before God...**" What does it mean to be *just* before God? *To be in right standing with God!* A lot of people hear the Law and say they don't have to do the Law. They heard it, but don't do it!

"...but **the doers of the Law shall be justified**" (v 13). How does that square with grace? A lot of people think you're saved by grace and there are no works; it's not of law. Is this a contradiction that "...the doers of the Law shall be justified"? What does this mean? How do you answer that? *You go back and it shows you:*

Verse 4: "...**the graciousness of God leads you to repentance.**"

- What do you repent of? *Sin!* Peter said to 'repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins.'
- What do you do when you repent of sin? *You cease sinning!*
- What is sin? *The transgression of the Law!*

When you repent, you start keeping the laws and commandments of God as He intended them to be kept. Otherwise, you can't be in right standing before God! Maybe you never thought of it that way, but there it is right there:

Verse 13: "...**the doers of the Law shall be justified.**" Then Paul goes on to show how important the laws of God are, even for people who were never given the Law.

Verse 14: "For when *the* Gentiles, which do not have *the* Law, practice by nature the things

contained in the Law, these who do not have *the Law* are a law unto themselves; who show the work of the Law written in their own hearts..." (vs 14-15).

{Note Appendix R: What is meant by "the Works of Law"? (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*) also found at afaithfulversion.org}

"...their consciences bearing witness, and their reasonings also as they accuse or defend one another)" (v 15).

Rom. 3 is very important in understanding the dual operation that God is doing and that we must do.

Romans 3:9: "What then? Are we of ourselves better?... [those who consider themselves Jews] ...Not at all! For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—ALL—with being **under sin**, exactly as it is written: 'For there is not a righteous one—not even one! There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God'" (vs 9-11).

That is everyone who is out there in the world living in sin; they're not seeking after God. Try this sometime: Go to some night spot on Friday night—God forgive you for going—but start talking about God and see how many are interested in God. They're out there 'seeking the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life,' and are being hypnotized into this world's system with all of the music and flashing lights and everything. They are totally under the control of Satan the devil.

I have found that people who have the Spirit of God is that one thing they cannot tolerate is rock music. Why? *Because that is against the Spirit of God!*

Verse 12: "**They have all gone out of the way**; together they have *all* become depraved. There is not *even* one who is practicing kindness. No, there is not so much as one! **Their throats are like an open grave**; with their tongues they have used deceit; *the* venom of asps *is* under their lips, **whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways**" (vs 12-16). Just do a 'bird's eye-view' around the world.

- Is there destruction and misery around the world? *Yes!*
- Are they seeking after God? *No!*
- Do they have a form of God that they are after? *Yes!*

I have to say one thing about radical Muslims: they have a zeal for what they are doing. It would really be nice—aside from the violence that they spawn—if people would be that zealous for the *true God! Not to kill other people, but to have a*

mindset and willingness to serve God to the ultimate capacity that they could! So, don't anyone say that Fred is endorsing suicide bombers.

When you compare that to a Laodicean attitude that many in the Church have today, what a comparison. We have the Truth and how we are acting upon it as compared to those who are deceived and don't know the Truth and are acting upon what they have been taught in the way that they believe. Can you imagine that when those suicide bombers are resurrected in the second resurrection and they see everything that they've been told that's going to happen? It's going to be plenty of water for those who live in the desert. It's going to be lots of food, peace and plenty. Only one thing: No! You don't get 72 virgins!

Now, there has to be the Law for two functions:

1. to show the righteousness of God
2. to show transgression and what sin is

Verse 19: Now then, we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, **so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.**"

In other words, no one is going to tell God what to do! Study the book of Job, because he was going to tell God that he wanted 'an umpire to referee between him and God, because surely his [Job's] works were good.' They were. You read everything that he said about himself and there wasn't one thing wrong. But the problem was that he forgot that **God** created him, **God** gave those laws, **God expected him to do it**, and the righteousness that Job had had nothing to do with his own personal being. But God gave it! And furthermore, 'Job, if you're good, why don't you look out into the heavens and see what I [God] have created; why don't you see what I have done!'

Then you know what happened. God told him, '**If** you can clothe yourself with glory, **if** you can correct the wicked and make him dust, **if** you can make yourself have majesty, **then** I will declare to you that you can save yourself.' That's when Job repented and came to his own senses.

A lot of people don't understand the book of Job. I know that when I first read it, I didn't understand it. The first time I read the book of Job I thought that God was wrong. I was looking at my life and how I was striving to do what was right, and then I looked at what Job did and I didn't understand the difference. Job's life was so much better than anything that I could even possibly think of. But he didn't realize that ***it was God Who gave him the strength and power to do it, and created him!*** "...and all the world may become guilty before

God.”

Verse 20: “**Therefore, by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him...**”

Romans 2:13: “...but **the doers of the Law** shall be justified.” How do we understand that? *First there has to be repentance and then keeping the commandments of God!* Here Paul is talking about a work that we do, like there would be some ‘great work’ that you would do (Micah): bring 10,000 vessels of oil before God; crawl on your knees a half mile to the temple, beat your flesh.

Law does not justify! Law cannot justify! Why? That is not the function of law. Only God can justify through the sacrifice of Christ and His shed blood, because that’s the instrumentality of justification to put you in right standing with God.

Romans 3:20: “...for through *the Law is the* knowledge of sin.” It tells us right and wrong, and we need to keep it so that we don’t sin, but that doesn’t make us right before God. **God has to make us right before Him;** He does it through Christ.

Let’s talk about righteousness; there are four kinds of righteousness:

1. the **letter of the Law**, if you obey
 2. the **Spirit of the Law**, which equals spiritual righteousness
 3. the **justification of God**, which puts you in right standing with Him
- When you are put in right standing with Him, you are counted righteous through Christ.
4. the **imputed righteousness** that God gives you when you have God’s Spirit

We’ll look at all of those as we go on. What we are talking about is a hard Scripture for me to understand when I first read it.

Verse 21 (KJV): “...the righteousness of God without the law...” How can you have righteousness in the absence of law. Without means *the absence of*. I didn’t understand that for a long time until I realized that the word doesn’t mean *the absence of*, but **separate from the Law**, which clears up everything because it is a separate operation from the Law to make you right before God. That’s what it’s talking about.

Verse 21 (FV): “But now **the righteousness of God that is separate from law** has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.”

If you just read that in the *King James Version* alone, you’re almost hopeless to try an understand it, because it’s sort of gobbly-gook and contradictory.

- How can you have righteousness without law?
- How can that righteousness be attested by

the Law and the Prophets? This means *the justification!*

Let’s read it with that meaning; v 21: “ But now *the* [justification] righteousness of God...” [that puts you in right standing with Him] ...*that is* separate from law... [law-keeping; you’re required to keep the Law because ‘the doers of the Law shall be justified] ...has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophet.”

What did they witness? *They testified of the coming of the Messiah!* As a matter of fact, you can go back to Gen. 3:15 and that one verse foretells the whole plan of God in a capsule.

Remember that in the book of Revelation, Jesus says that He is ‘the First and the Last, the Beginning and the Ending.’ Let’s go to the beginning and see where God actually, in a summary capsule, revealed His whole plan in one verse.

Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He... [her Seed] ...will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” This is a prophecy of the coming Messiah and the coming Messiah is part of the Law, the witness that we’re talking about here. This also tells the ending of it here, that God is going to be victorious and Christ is going to overcome all. Here is the whole plan of God in a capsule summary. Amazing, isn’t it? All the rest of the Bible flows from that one verse, clear back to the book of Revelation.

Romans 3:21: “But now *the* righteousness of God... [meaning justification; being justified to being made right before God] ...*that is* separate from law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.” Now, that makes more sense—doesn’t it? Let’s go on to the next verse to verify that:

Verse 22: “Even *the* righteousness... [justification] ...of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ...” He explains how that happens. You have to have faith in Jesus Christ:

- in Who He was as the Son of God
- in Who He was as God before He became flesh
- in His sacrifice as Creator
- that His sacrifice covers all sin

No work of any kind that you can do separate from that can make you right before God. I’ll clarify it this way: no work of any law, but a work of repentance, a broken heart and contrite spirit is the first step for that justification.

“...toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference” (v 22). What Christ did, *He did. You must believe in that!* And

belief in what He did is not a keeping of a law, but it is faith and belief in the operation of God that what He said and did is true, and *you believe God!*

Verse 23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; *but* are **being justified**... [that is the ultimate result of this righteousness. You are put in right standing with God] ...**freely by His grace**... [you can’t buy it; you can’t earn it] ...through the **redemption that is in Christ Jesus**” (vs 23-24).

There you have the completion of the operation. That’s why He said, ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. I am the Bread of Life.’ All of that altogether. Let’s carry this further because it’s not just a one-time event that occurs.

Verse 25: “Whom God has openly manifested... [sending Christ, openly crucified, opening dying, publicly known] ...*to be* a propitiation...”—which means that it is **a continuous source of mercy and forgiveness**. Not just a one-time act for a one-time occurrence. Or, in the case of our lives, a one-time occurrence of repentance and all is solved with one repentance. **NO!**

We repent many times in our lives. As a matter of fact, how often are we to repent? Well, the model prayer says, ‘Forgive us our sins as we sin against others.’ So, that’s daily! That’s why it is a propitiation, which means a continual source of mercy and forgiveness for sin.

1-John 1:9: “If we confess our own sins...” On an ongoing basis; John is writing those who have been Christians for years and years. We confess our sins **to God!**

- He knows the heart!
- He knows the intent!
- He knows everything about us!

“...He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... [this shows the process of being saved] ...If we say that we have not sinned...” vs 9-10)—which is New Age religion, and it ends up with no sin, no repentance and we are sufficient unto ourselves, which is pure satanic humanism.

Verse 10: “If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.”

1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.... [God doesn’t want us to sin] ...And *yet*, if anyone does sin...”

What’s going to happen when you do sin? You may leave here and something happens and you

lose your temper then you’ve blown it! You’ve sinned, even though you don’t want to sin. I know that’s happened to me. I’ve gone along and have a had a good day and all of sudden BAM! there it is, a blooper. It may be big; it may be small.

“...we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous... [He’s advocating for us; He leads us to repentance] ...and **He is the propitiation for our sins**...” (vs 1-2). He is talking to Christians. We continually go to God, under His grace, for the forgiveness of sin. He is merciful and kind to forgive us our sins.

“...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world” (v 2). So, don’t get exclusive in thinking that we’re the only ones. God has a bigger plan of which we’re a part of, but God’s great plan that He’s going to carry out and finish, as we understand as much as we do, is really going to be something!

Can you imagine the forgiving of the forgiveness of all of those in the second resurrection? You talk about forgiving a heap of a lot of sin. That’s the history of the whole world. We need to understand that God has given this to us, the firstfruits.

Romans 3:25: “Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past.”

Let’s understand another principle that is true: **There is no such thing as future sin!** Though you may sin in the future. That sounds like a little gobbly-gook, but it isn’t when you understand it. **All sin is past!** Because in the moment that you sin, it’s past! You can’t go to God and say, ‘God forgive me, because tomorrow at two o’clock I’m going to steal \$100,000. I want forgiveness in advance. By the way, I’m sending \$50,000 of this to the priest as an indulgence.’ **NO! All sin is past!** What if tomorrow you don’t have any big bloopers? That will be a nice day.

Verse 26: “Through the forbearance of God; *yes*, to publicly declare His righteousness... [justification, or right standing with God] ...in the present time, that He might be just, and the One Who justifies the one who *is of the* faith of Jesus.”

- you believe in what Christ did
- you believe Who Christ is
- you believe in His sacrifice
- you believe that His sacrifice was once for all time, for all sin, to cover all humanity forever **for those who repent**

It gets right back to where we started:

- What do we do?
- What does God do?

Verse 27: “Therefore, where *is* boasting? It is excluded. Through what law? *The law* of works?...” No, because there is nothing you can do in a work of law to justify you before God. Justification is a *work of God based upon your faith!*

“...By no means! Rather, *it is* through **a law of faith**” (v 27). Is that not a contradictory statement? What is the “...law of faith”?

- seek God
- God is seeking you
- repentance
- baptism
- receiving of the Holy Spirit
- walking in the way of God

Verse 28: “Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified... [made right with God] ...by faith, **separate from works of law.**” Keeping any law, that’s fine; God says you need to keep them. You need to do that, otherwise you’re a sinner. But it’s separate from.

In other words, God did not give a formula, for example, for the sin offering of a bullock. If someone gave a sin offering of a bullock he would bring it to the priest and the sinner would lay his hands on the offering and confess his sins over it, then he was to cut its throat and the priest would take it and would cut it up and offering as a sin offering. The whole sin offering would be taken outside the camp and be burned. Then the sinner was justified to the temple. That was a law of justification under the Old Covenant.

Now it is belief in Christ, which is justification by faith that is separate from *works of law*.

Verse 29: “*Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also *the God* of the Gentiles? YES! *He* is also God of *the* Gentiles since *it is* indeed one God...” (vs 29-30).

These next verses give us the whole reason for being made in right standing with God through the operation of Christ: “...Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. Are we, then, abolishing *the* Law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing *the* Law” (vs 30-31). How do you establish *the* Law?

- through repentance
- through receiving the Holy Spirit
- keeping the commandments of God in the spirit
- developing all of the Godly character traits that God wants us to have.

The way that you establish law is very important. All true law-keeping must come from

within. Look at all the Ten Commandments. Let’s just take the last six for an example. What if the world lived by the last six commandments—honoring father and mother, not murdering, not committing adultery—and everyone had this training as a little child? and they loved and respected each other?

Just think how low the crime rate would go because you establish obedience from within; you can’t enforce it from without except with a police force to make people do it. The more lawless the society becomes, the more the police become like military soldiers to enforce it.

Just take *you shall not commit adultery*. Think how much this would save the society of all the problems that that creates. Then watch when they have the entrapping of pedophiles. What happens when the pedophile comes to the house and he’s finally encountered by the host and says, ‘I’m so and so from MSNBC.’ Then he gives every excuse under the sun as to why he’s not there to have sex with the adolescent. ‘I just came to hang out.’

He’s asked: ‘What did you write out? Did you write this?’ they have all the communication that was back and forth. ‘What did you mean by this?’ (the overt talk about sex). *Well, this is the first time I’ve every done it.* ‘I have a police record here that says...’ You’re looking at a lawless individual who the only way he’s going to quit committing pedophile sins is to be forced to stop.

That’s the complete opposite of establishing the Law the way God wants it. He wants it in your mind and heart so that you live by it. Therefore, the thought of going online to elicit sex from a child or adolescent would never come into your mind, and you would never have a situation such as at this show on MSNBC or what I just described with it.

But there are thousands and thousands of pedophiles out there. Sooner or later, to make it not a crime, is to say it’s legal. Isn’t that the way human nature does? Isn’t that what they do over in Southeast Asia? *Yes!*

This is what is so great about God’s way in the New Testament and His Holy Spirit: *we establish law!*

- we desire to keep the Law
- we love the Law
- we love God
- we love each other
- we do the things that are pleasing in God’s sight

This is what puts us in right standing with God through Jesus Christ. When you get through all the difficult Scriptures and get down to the

simplicity of it, it is really quite a wonderful thing indeed.

That's how a man or woman can be in right standing with God!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Micah 6:6-8
- 2) John 4:19-21, 23-24
- 3) Matthew 6:33
- 4) Matthew 7:7-8
- 5) John 6:28-29, 35
- 6) Matthew 11:28-30
- 7) John 6:35-36, 44-45, 63-64
- 8) Ephesians 2:1-9
- 9) 1 Corinthians 15:1-2
- 10) Romans 5:8-10
- 11) Galatians 5:22-23
- 12) Ephesians 2:10
- 13) Romans 2:4-13, 4, 13-15
- 14) Romans 3:9-16, 19-20
- 15) Romans 2:13
- 16) Romans 3:20-21
- 17) Genesis 3:15
- 18) Romans 3:21-25
- 19) 1 John 1:9-10
- 20) 1 John 2:1-2
- 21) Romans 3:25-31

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 4; 5
- Hebrews 11

Also referenced:

- Sermons: *Spirit of God/Spirit of Man—7 Spirits of God #s 1-2*
- Appendix R: What is meant by “the Works of Law”? (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*) also found at afaithfulversion.org

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Transcribed: 10-29-17

How Can a Man or Woman Be Right with God? II

Fred R. Coulter

Let's just review a little bit what we covered in part one. The reason that this becomes important is because we now see Protestantism 'cherry-picking' the Scriptures. What do I mean by that? *Going through and saying that all the teachings of Jesus was only for the Jews! And repentance was for the Jews!* Now all the positive things of *believe, God will be with you, all we have to do is be nice* and we're saved. We saw last time that there's more to it.

Romans 2:4: "Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?"

- What happens when people are brought to repentance? *They see the things that they have done and what they've gone through, and how that has been against God!*

God is there merciful and gracious leading them to repentance!

- What do they do when they have been led to repentance?
- What do you repent of? *Sin, which the transgression of the Law, which means that when you repent you quit law-breaking!*

You're still not in right standing with God, yet! But here's a promise:

Verse 13: "Because the hearers of the Law are not just before God... [in a condition of justification] ...but the doers of the Law shall be justified."

These two verses tell us that you must repent and start obeying God; then He will justify you through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His shed blood. We're going to expand that a little bit more from Rom. 3.

But remember this—and this is absolutely true—no law anywhere of any kind can justify you, because only the sacrifice of Christ and His shed blood can. The reason being is that the Law is not the sacrifice of God; it defines right from wrong.

- it tells you what sin is
- it tells you what righteousness is

As we saw in part one, in order to right with God, it requires the action of God. He leads us to repentance, and then it requires our action, which is that we repent and we start obeying God. There are four kinds of righteousness:

1. the letter of the Law

There are a lot of people in the world who are not

what you would call 'religious' but they are 'good' folks and hey keep the 'letter of the Law.' Are they justified before God? *No, they just keep the letter of the Law!* Not all of it, because they:

- want to have their own god
- want to have their own idols
- and surely don't want to go to church on the Sabbath

But the rest of it, they keep!

2. the spirit of the Law

This comes from the inside, which is God's Spirit! This is what happens after you receive the Spirit of God: you start to see the purpose of the Law, meaning the spiritual meaning of the Law.

3. the justification of God for the forgiveness of sin

In Rom. 3 this is called *righteousness!* That is, we have been put in right standing with God because we've repented and then baptized, and we are now walking in God's way.

4. the imputed righteousness that God gives to the believer

Why would He impute righteousness? *We'll see that in just a minute!*

The whole operation of what we're talking about: Romans 3:31: "Are we, then, abolishing *the* Law through faith? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** Rather, **we are establishing** *the* Law."

How does this operation establish the Law? *It gives the individual the desire to keep the Law from within!* Not just to have a set of rules over here that you go by, but now it becomes part of your thinking and part of your heart.

The Proverbs says, 'As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.' So, the whole process of being justified with God is to put you in right standing with Him so that you can, with God's Spirit, become converted, which is a process.

Let's look at something in Rom. 4, because this and James 2 looks like they conflict with one another. But we will see that they really don't.

Romans 4:1: "What then shall we say *that* our father Abraham has found with respect to *the* flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a basis for boasting, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness'" (vs 1-3). This is the imputation of righteousness.

Verse 4: “Now, to the one who works, the reward is not reckoned according to grace; rather, *it is reckoned* as a debt.”

If you work for someone for \$20/hr., at the end of 40 hours he owes you \$800. It doesn't work that way with the forgiveness of sin. There is no measurement of the forgiveness of sin or belief in God. Whereas, by law and by works there is a measurement.

Verse 5: “But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.”

We're going to learn a very important lesson here. I've had several questions concerning the translation in James 2, and I will cover those. What we will do is look at the difference between what Paul is writing about and what Abraham did in his belief. What James is writing about, is what Abraham did by works.

James 2:14: “My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith, and does not have works? Is faith able to save him?” That is faith being alone.

Verse 15: “Now then, if there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; be warmed and be filled,’ and does not give to them the things necessary for the body, what good is it? In the same way also, **faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself**” (vs 15-17). Faith means *belief!* Whatever you believe you can say is *belief*.

Verse 18: “But someone is going to say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ *My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works.” That is not double-talk.

The *King James* says: “...shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” That's not what the Greek means.

FV: “...You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works.”

The answer is that everyone has action upon what they believe. Whatever you believe, you act upon, whether for good or for evil. Think about some of the things that you act upon, or don't act upon because you don't believe it. *Not believing is still a belief!* Your belief is to choose not to believe, and you act upon that non-belief. Isn't that what atheists do? *Yes!*

It is more dramatic this way. Whatever faith you have, you prove it to me by your works. Whatever faith I have, I'll prove it to you by my works.

Verse 19: “Do you believe that God is one? You do well *to believe this*. Even the demons believe and tremble *in fear*.” They believe that there is a God, and they know what's going to happen to them and they tremble. But they will not repent and act upon the belief that they need to; rather they choose their own belief. Do demons act upon what they believe in Satan the devil? *Of course they do!*

Verse 20: “But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?... [here's what appears to be a contradiction]: ...Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar?” (vs 20-21).

The other one said that Abraham didn't work. This one says that he's justified by works. What's the difference? *We'll see in just a minute!*

Verse 22: “Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and by works *his* faith was perfected? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Now, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness’; **and he was called a friend of God**. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (vs 22-24).

We're going to see what is the difference. Why did Paul say that Abraham was justified without works? *That was imputed to him for righteousness*. Why did James say that Abraham was justified by works?

This is a contradiction that very few people in Protestant land out there understand. Let's look at it. Let's see the difference. We're going to see that there are two things that this is referring to as to what Abraham did.

In the first account we're going to see that God spoke to Abraham and promised him something that only God could do.

Genesis 15:4: “And behold, the Word of the LORD *came* to him saying, ‘This man... [Eliezer, the Syrian] ...shall not be your heir...’” Abraham had no children and he was 85-years-old; not much hope of having children at 85. Yet, he had to wait another 14 years.

“...but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir’... [that's quite something] ...And He brought him outside and said...” (vs 4-5). God is going to make it even greater than when He told Abraham that he was going to have a son.

“...‘Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your seed be’” (v 5).

Can you count the stars? *You might start, but the human eye surely doesn't see all the stars!*

So, here was something greater and beyond Abraham's capacity to do. Just like God forgiving our sins. It is greater and beyond our capacity to have our sins forgiven apart from Christ. *We believe!*

Verse 6: "And he believed in the LORD.... [believed what he was told] ...And He accounted it to him for righteousness." That's quite something! He said, 'Okay, God, I believe You.' Then we know the rest of the story in Gen. 15. This is the first account that Paul is talking about. We'll see how he explains that in Rom. 4 in just a bit.

Let's look at the other incident that happened after Isaac had been born and was a young lad. In the first instance, Abraham believed and there was *no work* to do. The work to do was an impossibility and only God could number the stars and count them. But Abraham believed God when God said, 'I will give you your own heir and increase them like the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore,' as He said later.

Isaac was born and he must have been somewhere around 15-years-old. {transcriber's note: Fred has since proven the age of 15} We know that he had to be less than 20, because 20 was counted as a man; up to that point a lad. He's called a lad here.

This is what James is talking about. We have two accounts of Abraham: one required belief and there was no action that he could do, no work that was required but believe what God said.

It's just like when we repent and have our sins forgiven and we believe that they are forgiven. God does not drop down a stamp saying 'Paid in Full.' You know that they are forgiven because God said so and God cannot lie! If God tells us this, we believe it. There are some things that we believe that requires no action. There are some things that we are told to do and to believe God then requires action. This is what Gen. 22 is about, and this is what James was writing about.

Genesis 22:1: "And it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham..." Sometimes there will things to test us. In Gen. 15 God didn't say that He was going to test Abraham. He just gave the promise, and Abraham believed Him.

"...and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell you'" (vs 1-2). If he believed God he would do that. There was something required to do, and there was a work associated with it.

Abraham believed God, and this is what James is writing about. God told him to go do something, and to believe God means you go do that

something, as God has said to do.

Verse 3: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two *of* his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, 'You stay here with the donkey, and I and the boy will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.' And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son...." (vs 3-6).

In this case we have a parallel between Abraham as a type of God the Father and Isaac as a type of Christ. So, the wood that Isaac was carrying was a type of cross that later Jesus carried.

"...And he took the fire *pot* in his hand, and a knife. And they both went together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father.' And he said, 'Here I *am*, my son.' And he said, 'Behold the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.'...." (vs 6-8). Isaac believed that!

"...So, they both went on together" (v 8). The question always comes up: Why would Abraham even think of doing that when it was his only son, his only heir? *We don't get the answer until the New Testament!* Sometimes there are things in the Old Testament that are not answered until you get to the New Testament. So, for the Jews who don't accept the New Testament, they can never answer the question as to why Abraham did it without saying a word. Why, also, Isaac believed him and: What if God had not provided the burnt offering animal? Would he had offered Isaac for a burnt offering? *We get the answer here:*

Hebrews 11:17: "By faith Abraham, when he was being tried, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises offered up *his* only begotten *son* of whom it was said, 'In Isaac shall your Seed be called'" (vs 17-18).

Remember, God promised Abraham that through his seed the whole world would be blessed. How could that happen if Isaac was offered as a sacrifice?

Verse 19: "**Because he reckoned that God was able to raise him even from among the dead...**" That is tremendous faith in God!

"...from which he also received him in a figurative way" (v 19)—because his body was dead—sexually speaking. The body of Sarah was dead—sexually speaking.

So, God performed a miracle for Isaac to be

born. He was born and Abraham—in his own mind and in his face—said that if God said to go do this, then He can raise him from the dead. That’s the kind of faith that Abraham had in God. He could say, ‘God is going to provide.’

Let’s continue the rest of the story. If Isaac was 15-years-old then it meant that Abraham was 115-years-old at this point. Let’s see the rest of the account:

Genesis 22:9: “And they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there...” You get stones and you put them together and make a little altar.

“...and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the wood, upon the altar. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son” (vs 9-10). That’s right up to the last second!

Why would Abraham be tested this way? *The promises that God gave to Abraham were so great that God had to know absolutely for sure that Abraham believed Him!* We have the two instances:

- 1) Gen. 15, no work required
- 2) Gen. 22, a work required

When Abraham did that, to reach down and get the knife, v 11: “And the angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I *am*.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, **for now I know that you fear God**, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (vs 11-12). This was quite a test.

Likewise, God tests all of us to know whether we love and fear Him. That’s all part of life. Most of the movies that have depicted this incident with Abraham, they have Abraham almost cursing at God, and Isaac rebelling against it. *That’s not what the Bible says!*

Verse 13: “And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram was entangled in a thicket by its horns...” How did that get there? *I imagine that Abraham was building the altar, which took a little while!* He and Isaac was putting up the stones and laying down the wood. I imagine that they were looking around all the time, because Abraham said that God would provide a burnt offering. How did this ram get there? *One of two ways:*

- 1) snuck up there and wasn’t seen
- 2) God instantly provided a special ram for that sacrifice

—which would also be a type of Christ’s sacrifice, as a substitutionary sacrifice for the forgiveness of

our sins. Christ died for our sins rather than we dying for our sins; one of the two. I’ll bet that they were both relieved that that took place.

“...And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son” (v 13). So important was this! We need to understand how important this was in the history of mankind and in the history of the Church and the plan of God. We could say that right at this point was a real testing point for all the plan of God.

Moses was not quite a believing as Abraham. Moses was told by God to go over to this particular rock and you *speak* to the rock and it’s going to produce water. Moses went up, because he was all upset with the people... Here’s another lesson: never let people so upset you that you sin against God. Moses went up and *struck* the rock. Water came out, but God asked Moses why he didn’t speak to the rock. God said, ‘You didn’t believe Me, therefore, you’re not going to see the promised land.’

You read that that is said at least a dozen times through the book of Numbers and Deuteronomy when it comes to that point.

- this is supreme belief
- this is supreme obedience

Taking the most precious thing in your life, taking the promise of God, to take Isaac out there and offer him for a sacrifice.

The whole history of God’s plan went forward from that time. Had Abraham failed this test, then there would have been some other account of something else. We don’t know what that would be; we’re not told. So, to speculate would not be correct.

Verse 14: “And Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide; so that it is said *until* this day, ‘In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.’ And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time” (vs 14-15).

Notice what this faith in God motivated God to do. This becomes important. A lot of people think that you can never please God, because God is so righteous. We’re going to see that, yes, you can please God with your faith, belief and love toward Him. It inspires God to do things above and beyond.

Verse 16: “And said, ‘**By Myself** have I sworn’...”

- Does God ever lie? *No!*
- What is swearing by men? *That’s affirming to tell the truth, because men are suspected of lying!*
- God does not need to swear

- He didn't swear by the heavens
- He didn't swear by the earth
- He swore by His existence

"...**By Myself...**" So, God was directly involved in this, which means that everything that God had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and Jacob was not yet born—was going to happen exactly in the way that God said. So this sealed the plan of God from that point until the end.

"...'**By Myself** have I sworn,' says the LORD, 'because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you...'" (vs 16-17).

Not all blessings are those that you are going to see, because the greatest blessing is going to happen to us is going to take place at the resurrection when we receive eternal life.

"...and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens..." (v 17). Abraham was only able to know that Jacob was born to Isaac, because Abraham died when Jacob was two years old. That's hardly the stars of heaven!

"...and as the sand, which is upon the seashore..." (v 17). That's hardly a truckload of sand. So, God was talking about a long way down into future history. That's why, if you have never read any books on modern Israel you better get some of those and read them, because God has fulfilled His promise.

"...And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed... [a prophecy of Christ] ...shall all the nations of the earth be blessed..." (vs 17-18). Think about that for a minute. That covers the whole plan of God down to:

- the first coming of Christ
- the second coming of Christ
- the Kingdom of God on earth
- all of those in the first resurrection
- all of those who come into the Kingdom of God through the Millennium
- all of those who come into the Kingdom of God through second resurrection

This is an all inclusive promise! Why?

"...**because you have obeyed My voice**..." (v 18). That's the most important thing!

In the first instance, Abraham believed what God said. He believed the impossible. In this case, he did the impossible in obeying the voice of God!

This tells us something very important concerning faith. We are to believe, and when there is something to do, we are to do it! What is the whole lesson of the Bible? It's in very simple terms:

- **you obey** the voice of God

or

- **you disobey** the voice of God

That's it! You can reduce it to those simple terms! Let's also see how God described obeying His voice and what that meant. This becomes very important for all of those neo-Protestants in the world today who are moving toward a New Age religion.

Genesis 26:2: "And the LORD appeared to him [Isaac] and said, 'Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land, which I shall tell you of. Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath, which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because Abraham obeyed My voice...**'" (vs 2-5).

The New Testament says that 'if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. What is it that we need to do? **Obey the voice of God!**

Someone will say, 'I can't hear the voice of God.' *That's why you have the Bible; it's written down so you can know what the voice of God is!*

- Are these the words of God? *Yes!*
- Are the Gospels the words of Christ, Who was God manifested in the flesh? *Yes!*
- Did God inspire the writers of the Old and New Testaments to write and preserve His Word? *Yes!*

That's why in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* there are commentaries on how God preserved His Word and had it canonized, made it the official Word of God. That's very important!

"...and kept My charge..." (v 5). A charge is a lot stronger than just talking. It's like in 1st and 2nd Timothy how Paul wrote to Timothy and said, 'I charge you before God, Who shall judge the living and the dead; **preach the Word!**' what's a minister supposed to do? **Preach the Word! Not his own ideas!**

"...My commandments, My statutes, and My laws" (v 5). Someone is going to say, 'What are those?' Since God is the same 'yesterday, today and forever' these are the same ones that God later gave to Israel. It would have to be.

Is God going to have Abraham obey different commandments, statutes and laws than what He gave to Israel? *Of course not!* There you have it. Now you see the difference between the two accounts. Both of them are correct because each one is talking about a different incident and account that Abraham did. But he did both because **he believed**

God! That's what is important. Remember:

- **belief** always has some kind of action following it
- **disbelief** has the opposite kind of action following it

One man announced to his son that he's now keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days, and the son said, 'I'll believe it when God comes down and tells me to keep the Sabbath.' He answered and said, 'God already did that! Are you sure you really want to meet God?' God said, 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy.'

- Was Abraham in right standing with God? *Yes!*
- Was he justified before God because of God's blessing? *Yes!*

Now then, he makes a comparison.

(go to the next track)

Who did the work for the forgiveness of our sins? *Jesus Christ, with His sacrifice!*

We are to believe in that sacrifice, and that's why no work or no law can substitute for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness we receive through that. But that does not mean that we are not to keep the laws and commandments of God as we saw with Abraham. There's the parallel here.

Just like Abraham believed God when God said, 'So shall your seed be,' that was counted to him for righteousness. Just like we believe in the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, that is counted to us for righteousness to justify us and put us in right standing with God. ***Nothing else can do that!***

However, we need to follow through as Abraham did, to obey the voice of God, keep His charge, His commandments, His statutes and His laws. We will see why God did all of this so that we could receive the forgiveness of sin.

Romans 4:17: "Exactly as it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations' before God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they are; *and* who against hope believed in hope, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, 'So shall your seed be.' And he, not being weak in the faith, considered not his own body, already having become dead, being about one hundred years old, nor *did he consider* the deadness of Sarah's womb; and **he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God**" (vs 17-20).

The more you believe God, the more you're

strengthened in faith. The more you understand that and realize that everything comes from God, that's how you give glory to God. *There isn't a single thing that we have that we haven't received!*

I've said to some who are kind of smart-alecky about things—especially young people—I say, 'Okay, let's do the belly button test. Feel right down here where your belly button is, what does that tell you? *You came from your mother and father and you don't have anything you didn't receive!*' Likewise, every human being is the same way.

Abraham didn't doubt through unbelief. When we understand that, that is what is so important here.

Verse 21: "For he was **fully persuaded**..." I gave a sermon years ago: *Almost Persuaded*. We're not to be *almost* persuaded; we're to be like Abraham, "...**fully** persuaded..."

"...that what He [God] has promised, He is also able to do" (v 21). God promised a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin, and that sacrifice was the One Who became Jesus Christ, God manifested in the flesh. He promised that and was able to do it.

The same way as it was with Abraham, v 22: As a result, it was also imputed to him for righteousness." If you believe God—what He says—then when He tells you something to do, you will do it. Believing God—in what He says—is the key to what is called here *imputed righteousness!* That puts you in right standing with God.

How many people in the world hear of God, but don't believe Him? It's like those who discuss the commandments; they say: 'Well, today it's impracticable to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Sunday is the day everybody keeps, so therefore, 'we should go with Sunday because everybody is doing it.' But that's not what God says! That's part of the world! So, the Sabbath becomes important.

Why is all this history written for us, which is over 3,000 years ago? Here's the reason:

Verse 23: "But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him." In other words, he's saying that there's no reason that we—at the time Paul wrote this, or we today—would have the account of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob if there wasn't something in it that we were to understand. ***But there is!***

Verse 24: "Rather, *it was* also written for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed—to those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses... [because of our sins] ...and was raised for our justification" (vs 24-25)—which means that Christ, as our High Priest and sitting at the right hand of God, through Whom we pray to the Father. Christ

intervenes and brings about our justification or right standing with the Father.

So, yes, *we can be in right standing with God **IF** we believe, and **IF** we act upon that belief!* It works both ways. Here Paul explains it again. This whole operation is called *grace*, which means *the freely-given blessing of God that we cannot earn! That we cannot work for!*

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith...”—because we believe God. Not only believe *in* Him, not only believe that He does exist, but *we believe Him* and what He has told us.

“...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (v 1). We’re no longer enemies of God, because before we repent and are baptized...

Rom. 8 tells us what the human nature is. This tells us how people in the world react to God.

Romans 8:7: “Because the carnal mind... [the natural, normal human mind that all human beings have, without the Spirit of God] ...*is* enmity... [an enemy] ...against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*.”

What happens when God begins to deal with us, there comes a point when we see that our lives—in disobedience to God—is leading to futility, emptiness, wretchedness, and so forth. God brings us to the understanding that we need to stop that. Then He brings us to the understanding that we need to repent and then to the understanding that we need to keep His laws and commandments. All of that is by faith and by belief so that we are no longer an enemy of God. We don’t fight God and say, ‘Yeah, I know that God says that we should do thus and such, but I don’t believe that, and I’m going to do otherwise.’

Once we have repented and are baptized and receive the Spirit of God—no longer carnal-minded—then we are in a different category before God.

Romans 5:2: “**Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand...**” Our standing before God now becomes one that God blesses rather than one that God curses. The ‘wages of sin is death’ and that brings curses. Repentance and yielding to God brings forgiveness and grace, and God will forgive those sins and blot them out. Grace is like an umbrella of God’s separation of us from the world, though we live in the world. The world can’t tell any difference in us from anybody else in the world. But we have access to God the Father.

Let’s notice how this works, and let’s see how our prayer lives and our access to God the Father and Jesus Christ is really a tremendous thing!

The Word of God is the only book in the world that can do this, because the words that are here are understood *spiritually*. It does something to our heart and mind, because these are the words of God! It convicts us of sin so that we repent.

Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living...” Even though it’s written and printed. *The wages of sin is death!* That’s what it says and that’s a fact. Repentance and forgiveness leads to life.

“...and powerful...” (v 12). So powerful that no one escapes the Word of God, whether they like it or not, or know it or not. Everyone is under God’s jurisdiction, whether unto life and salvation, or whether unto sin and to death. That’s just the way the whole world is.

“...and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart” (v 12). That’s why all repentance and confession of sin goes to God; *no man can forgive sin!*

Notice how powerful this is, v 13: “And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account. Having, therefore, a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession of *our faith*” (vs 13-14).

- God is for us
- God loves us
- God cares for us
- God has called us
- God has given us forgiveness of sin
- God has given us continuous access to Him
 - ✓ through His grace
 - ✓ through prayer
 - ✓ anytime
 - ✓ anywhere
 - ✓ anyplace

Verse 15: “For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot empathize with our weaknesses...” Not a god way off that doesn’t understand. *No!* He came in the flesh!

“...but *One Who was tempted in all things according to the likeness of our own temptations; yet, He was without sin*” (v 15). That is to inspire us to come to God.

Verse 16: “Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” That’s why it is the imputed righteousness, because this is an operation that Christ Himself

alone has done.

No work that we can do can substitute for that. We will see what this is to inspire us to do.

Romans 5:2: “Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance...” (vs 2-3).

He wants us to endure to the end and realize that living in this world may be difficult, but He is there to help us.

Verse 4: “And endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, **which has been given to us**” (vs 4-5).

That’s the thing that’s important. The whole point of our living this life in the flesh now is to receive the Holy Spirit of God to let God’s *spiritual work* be done in us, so that *at the resurrection* we may receive eternal life.

God’s plan was appointed way before the creation of the world, v 6: “For even when we were without strength, **at the appointed time** Christ died for *the* ungodly.” That’s quite a statement. It was “...at the appointed time...”

Abraham didn’t know anything about the appointed time. I want to show you a verse that is a summary of the whole plan of God for redemption beginning with the sin of Adam and Eve. That’s amazing! God is judging Satan and He reveals the outline of His whole plan.

Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman... [also a prophecy of the Church] ...and between your seed and her Seed... [prophecy of Christ] ...He will bruise your head... [fulfilled in Rev. 20] ...and you shall bruise His heel”—which is the crucifixion.

Right there is an outline of the whole plan of God in the third chapter of Genesis, right after the first sin of Adam and Eve. But Adam and Eve did not know when the appointed time would be. Abraham didn’t know when the appointed time would be. God knew the appointed time; He set the time. That’s why it was done on the Passover.

Romans 5:7: For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love to us because, **when we were still sinners, Christ died for us**” (vs 7-8). That means for us before we were ever born! This is quite a fantastic thing!

Verse 10: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son...” In other words, when Christ, being on the cross and dying, said:

- to those who crucified Him
- for those who were in the mob and shouting, ‘Crucify Him!’
- for the priests taunting Him saying, ‘If You’re the Christ, come down off the cross and then we’ll believe you’

‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!’ Isn’t that something? *That is against all human nature, because human nature is to take vengeance!* Because of the nature of man and the way that he is, man needs:

- forgiveness
- hope
- mercy
- God’s way

Before we were ever born, this happened: **Christ died for us!** That’s the start! Here’s what comes next:

Verse 9: “Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood... [and put in right standing with God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ] ...**we shall be saved from wrath through Him**. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, **we shall be saved by His life**” (vs 9-10)—because He was resurrected from the dead!

Verse 11: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

Hebrews 9:24: “For Christ has not entered into the Holy places made by *human* hands... [the temple on earth] ...*which are mere* copies of the true...”

God gave the plans of the **tabernacle** to Moses. He gave the plans of the **temple** to David on how to build it, so that it would be built after what takes place in heaven. So, Jesus did not go into the temple:

“...rather, **He has entered into heaven itself**, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (v 24). Christ is for us; God the Father is for us.

The Paul emphasizes something here in comparison with the sacrifices at the temple:

Verse 25: “Not that He should offer Himself many times, even as the high priest enters into the Holy of Holies year by year with *the* blood of others... [goats, bulls and so forth] ...for then it would have been necessary for Him to suffer many times since *the* foundation of *the* world. But now,

once and for all, in the consummation of the ages..." (vs 25-26).

When Christ died that was the beginning of the consummation of the ages in relationship to God's plan for mankind, but the end of that is a long way off.

"...He has been manifested for *the* purpose of removing sin through His sacrifice *of Himself*" (v 26). Therefore, ***nothing but repentance and belief in the sacrifice of Christ can forgive sin!*** The Catholic priest cannot forgive sin, saying, 'Your sins are forgiven, but you have to do 200 hail Marys and 200 our fathers.' ***NO! You go to God and confess from the heart, from the innermost part of your being, and then your sins are forgiven!***

Verse 28: "So Christ, having been offered **once** to bear *the* sins of many, will appear *the* second time without sin... [without being a sin-sacrifice] ...unto salvation to those who are eagerly awaiting Him."

Hebrews 10:9: "Then He [Christ] said, 'Lo, I come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first *covenant*... [with Israel] ...in order that He may establish the second *covenant*... [with the Church] ...by Whose will **we are sanctified**... [*made right before God*] ...through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**. Now, every high priest stands ministering day by day, offering the same sacrifices repeatedly, which are never able to remove sins; but He, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at *the* right hand of God" (vs 9-12).

See how much greater this is? This is why the grace of God is so fantastic. Now we have access to God the Father—the Sovereign of the universe—and we have access to Jesus Christ—God manifested in the flesh—and He is there as our advocate and to help us in a time of need.

Verse 13: "Since that time, He is waiting until His enemies are placed *as* a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified" (vs 13-14). ***Not those who are not sanctified!*** You are sanctified when you repent and receive God's Spirit.

Verse 15: "And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said, "This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days," says *the* Lord, "I will give My Laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds; and their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again."'" (vs 15-17).

This is what the whole operation is: *How you can be in right standing with God!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 2:4, 13
- 2) Romans 3:31
- 3) Romans 4:1-5
- 4) James 2:14-24
- 5) Genesis 15:4-6
- 6) Genesis 22:1-8
- 7) Hebrews 11:17-19
- 8) Genesis 22:9-18
- 9) Genesis 26:2-5
- 10) Romans 4:17-25
- 11) Romans 5:1
- 12) Romans 8:7
- 13) Romans 5:2
- 14) Hebrews 4:12-16
- 15) Romans 5:2-6
- 16) Genesis 3:15
- 17) Romans 5:7-8, 10, 9-11
- 18) Hebrews 9:24-26, 28
- 19) Hebrews 10:9-17

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Revelation 20

FRC: bo
Transcribed: 10-29-17

How Can a Man or Woman Be Right with God? III

Fred R. Coulter

Can a man or woman *please* God? Many of the ‘religions’ of the world have it that it almost impossible to please God, so they depict God as always there to watch over your ‘immortal’ soul and that you have to have the priest help you through the Eucharist, and that if you don’t do what the church says to do then you end up in purgatory or the lower burning reaches off hell. Then your surviving relatives have to pay for Masses to get you out.

The God of the Old Testament is depicted, especially in a lot of New Testament Sunday-keeping churches, as cruel, mean, harsh and therefore, ‘we reject everything in the Old Testament.’

- Is that true?
- Is it possible for a man or woman to please God?

God has given us free moral agency, and that means that *God has left the decision to us*. He’s presented His Word, created the world, created us and given us all the instructions on how we are to live. As we will see, yes, a man/woman can please God with a combination of faith, love and obedience.

Deuteronomy 30:11: “For this commandment, which I command you today, *is* not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It *is* not in heaven *that you should* say, ‘Who shall go up to heaven for us, and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?’” (vs 11-12).

You have a lot of people who like to go on treks to India or Nepal and try and find nirvana or what the truth is. Yet, the Truth is contained in the Bible, which is probably in their own home. So, God has made it easy access, especially in the western world, and more particularly in America, because there’s an average of four Bibles in every household.

Verse 13: “Neither *is* it beyond the sea *that you should* say, ‘Who shall go over the sea for us to bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?’ But the Word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may do it” (vs 13-14).

That’s very interesting when you get down to it and really think about it. There are two ways that this if fulfilled:

1. God has provided His Word in a language that you can understand, that you have learned and it’s in your heart and mind
2. He’s given conscience

Conscience is not necessarily God’s Law written in

the heart and mind, but when people lie they know they’re lying and they know it’s wrong even though they do it.

When people steal, they know it’s wrong. When people commit adultery or murder, they know it’s wrong. God gave us enough conscience that the very first time that we sin, our conscience is pricked. We can harden our conscience and we can go against our conscience. We can gloss over it and continue in sin. *God in His mercy allows the circumstances to bring a person to their senses!*

Even though ‘the wages of sin is death,’ He does not instantly bring upon them the death penalty. Otherwise there would be no human beings around, because there’s no man that doesn’t sin.

God is not interested in that, He’s interested in repentance and coming to Him. God made us in such a way that we need Him. God made us in such a way that we need His Spirit *within* us to unite with the spirit of our mind so that we can become *spiritually* complete.

Part of it is given here, but yet, He still gives us free choice. So, we have to choose. A lot of people believe in *predestination, that it is fatalism*. That is that you’re destined to be evil all your life, or that God calls you to salvation before you ever existed.

Verse 15: “Behold, **I have set before you this day...**”—in the Word of God. For the Israelites, before they were ready to go into the ‘promised land,’ the book of Deuteronomy was the *second giving* of the Law by Moses to recapitulate everything that God had given them.

“...**life and good, and death and evil...** [that can be every day, not just that one singular day] ...in that I command you this day to **love the LORD your God...**” (vs 15-16). That is the key: **love, faith, obedience!**

We get a sample of this with our own children. When our children love us, believe us and obey us, they make us happy, and they are happier simply because they’re not getting themselves in trouble. I know that I got myself in trouble when I didn’t do that. When I didn’t do that, I knew that what I was doing I shouldn’t do, but I did it anyway because of the weakness of human nature.

One man said that when he was growing up he did something very foolish, and he’s very thankful that God spared him. He was about 10 or 12-years-old and there was a can of gas that had the cap off of it. He thought to himself: *I wonder what would happen if I dropped a match in there?* Well,

he lit a match and dropped it and the flame went out. If it had gotten in there, it would have blown up and killed him! He says that he always remembers that, that God had mercy on him, or there must have been an angel there to blow it out.

Verse 15: “Behold, I... [Moses speaking for God] ...have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply....” (vs 15-16).

When a man or woman pleases God, which they can, then God’s blessings come to them.

“...And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it” (v 16)—wherever you are in the world today. Then Moses gives a warning. God always holds out the blessing and the relationship. That’s why we are made the way that we are:

- to have a relationship with God
- to have fellowship with God

spiritually

- through His Spirit
- through study

This is why when you pray to God, that’s only half of the equation; that’s you talking to God. When you read and study the Bible, this is God talking to you. God knows your desires in your prayers toward Him, and you know God’s desires in your reading and studying of His Word. In setting before you life and death, and good and evil, then there has to be both of these.

Then there’s a warning, v 17: “But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear...”—*listen* to the Word of God; *hearken* means *to hear and do*. So, here is *hearing, but not doing*.

“...but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them” (v 17). There are many gods out there, and there are many idols that people setup in their heart, which is the favorite thing that they do, favorite sport or whatever activity it is. Or in the case of these defunct movie stars that die early deaths, unfortunately they idolize themselves so much, and they’re not able to cope with their own weaknesses and balance that off with the propaganda concerning themselves.

Verse 18: “I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish...” That’s why the fifth commandment is to *honor your father and mother so that your days may be long on the earth*. Beyond that, as adults, you honor God.

No one can say that they have no witness or any written document. You have the Bible, and God

gives a greater witness: *His creation to show that He means what He says!*

Verse 19: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you...” It doesn’t take any faith at all to understand that there’s a heaven and the earth; you’re on the earth!

“...that **I have set before you life and death**, blessing and cursing. Therefore, **choose life**, so that both you and your seed may live, **that you may love the LORD your God, and may obey His voice**... [contained in the Bible, what He has spoken, and in the New Testament the teachings of Jesus] ...and may cleave to Him... [describing the kind of relationship that we need with God] ...for He is your life... [because He’s given life] ...and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land, which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them.” (vs 19-20).

Let’s see some things in the New Testament on how a man or woman can please God. This is what puts you in right standing with God more than anything else, and where we will see that God can be pleased with you and you can please God.

The religious leaders were always arguing back and forth about what was the greatest law, how one should do this, that or the other thing. Read the book: *Code of Jewish Law* by Gansfried and Goldman. That is an eye-opener!

Sidebar:

No one can understand the writings of the Apostle Paul concerning law and grace and works of law unless they have an acquaintance with *Code of Jewish Law*. You do not know what the traditional laws of Judaism really are unless you have read them. When you read them, you will find exactly why Paul said that you can’t be justified by *works of law*. Those are not in accord with the laws and commandments of God.

Matthew 22:34: “But after the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together *before* Him.... [they all surrounded Jesus] ...And one of them, a doctor of the law... [probably a pre-arranged thing] ...questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, ‘Master... [they didn’t believe Him to be the Master] ...which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?’” (vs 34-36)—the greatest or the most important commandment.

Verse 37: “And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God...’” Here is the relationship that pleases God.

“...with all your heart...” (v 37). Our heart is the thing that emotionally moves us to do things.

There is emotion, love, obedience, a full effort that God expects from us. Also, He gives us

the strength and power to do it with His Spirit once we repent and are baptized and receive the Spirit of God. "...love *the* Lord your God with all your heart..." This is not a part time affair.

"...and with all your soul..." (v 37)—your physical being, because the soul is merely the physical power of life contained in the blood to keep the physical chemical body going. That's why it says that 'the soul that sins shall die.' There's no such thing as an immortal soul. You could also say *with every fiber of your being*, physically speaking. But this also shows that we are responsible to take care of ourselves, as well.

"...and with all your mind" (v 37). This is very profound from this point of view: the Word of God is so great and so spiritually layered that God shows that within His Word there are layers of understanding that are called *the deep things of God!*

Psalms 119:18_[transcriber's correction]—David said: "Open my eyes so that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law." So, what we need to understand is that the Bible has been inspired by God, Who lives forever; Whose great wisdom is so far an above our that contained within the words that He has given and recorded in the Bible, we can learn more and more, because it is a lifetime education. That's why it's with all of our mind and not to be going out and doing our own thing.

Once that relationship is established between us and God, He says; Matthew 22:38: "This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **On these two commandments...** [what He's saying is that here is the foundation or the founding pillar from which]: **...hang all the Law and the Prophets**" (vs 38-40).

Everything that God does is based upon His love. Even the curses that He gives so that people may, in their misery, come to repentance. Rather than destroy them instantly, He lets the circumstances in their lives come up against them so that they realize that they have nothing in their lives and nowhere to go except to God.

So, even that is in love and mercy. We need to understand it in that way. Of course, in the Church we are going to learn that we need to love one another, too; so that's in addition to it.

Let's see how a man or woman can please God; we've seen here that we are to love God; now we are going to see that in order for that love to be reinforced it has to be an active love that becomes part of how you function as a human being. This has to do with *faith*.

Everyone has works based upon whatever faith they have; whether it is faith in God and you

love and obey God, or it's no faith in God but faith in an ideological thing such as atheism or another 'religion,' and they act upon what they have faith in. Faith then becomes one of the most important things in pleasing God, because it means that not only do we hear Him, ***we believe Him!*** We accept what God says because:

1. God says it
2. He expects us to prove all things
3. He expects us to know what is right and hold fast to what is good

Hebrews 11:1: "Now, faith is *the* substance of *things* hoped for..." Faith is a spiritual quality that comes from:

- 1) the spirit in man, which gives him a beginning faith and hope in God
- 2) the Spirit of God to reinforce and build up that faith

Then when the *spirit in man* and the *Spirit of God* come together—after baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit—then you have the substance from God, the spiritual substance, which is greater than anything that we can work up ourselves by having hope in what we do and belief apart from God.

Notice what this also does, "...and the conviction of things not seen" (v 1). Conviction becomes very important. We are to believe things with a conviction, not have a belief in something that when the going gets tough we give up.

"...of things not seen." The whole plan of God is to have us enter into His kingdom, which we don't see, to receive eternal life and live forever, which we can only partially understand with our physical being. But we have not seen it, yet. *These things give us the hope!*

Verse 2: "For by this *kind of faith* the elders obtained a good report.... [in other words, God was pleased] ...By faith we understand that the worlds were created by *the* Word of God..." (vs 2-3)—didn't evolve. Like we've said so many times, every evolutionist and atheist trying to explain where we came from: *go get your own universe and big bang*, and tell us where that came from.

Sidebar: when you read Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It doesn't give us any timeframe. When people read that, they assume that He did it all instantly at the same time. But it doesn't say that! It just tells you that He created it. When you look out at the vastness of the universe you see any of the things that God has given man the technology to do, as His own witness to men on earth about how great the universe it. They've put up a satellite telescope that is a hundred times greater than the Hubble.

One man said that he can now prove everything came from scratch and he started out with DNA. That's convenient to start out with. It's like saying that I can bake a cake from nothing, and you've got on the counter flour, butter, sugar, honey and chocolate. If you are able to create your flour, butter and sugar and say, 'Okay, I made this cake from scratch.'

We believe and know, *by faith*, that the worlds—the ages of time and everything out there in the universe...

To finish this about the new telescope, they are going to discover more fantastic things about the universe that have never ever been seen. It is my personal conviction, since hearing that there's not one astronomer who does not really believe in a Creator, that God has given this technology so that He can show His glory and His creation to mankind before He has to come and nearly destroy the world because of their sins.

What makes you think that God—Who is the Creator—ceased creating? Is He also now creating? *They can see that out in the universe!* Is He not creating human beings through pro-creation? *Yes!* Same way with all the animals; He says, 'All the beasts of the field are Mine.' So, God never ceases creating.

The key in understanding what evolutionists think are evolution through species, a lot of it is God created and added to what He created to make a different species or to make a variation of it.

Men, through breeding—and now they have all kinds of gene-splicing and everything—can create different sizes of dogs, horses, cows and everything like that. You have these huge horses that are 10-feet tall, and then you have a little miniature horse that's barely 2-feet tall. But it's still a horse!

Same way with a dog; you can have a Great Dane or big St. Bernard dog. How about this: you're lost in the snow and you have your little Chihuahua in your pocket and a Great Dane comes and rescues you? It's still a dog.

So, we understand the world, Hebrews 11:3: "...so that **the things that are seen...** [which is a scientifically proven thing] **...were made from things that are invisible.**"

When they get down to the atoms, they know that there are protons and neutrons. What's behind those? And what's behind that? *God!*

In the light of that, here's what we are to do; here's how we are to respond to God; v 4: "By faith... [in the Word of God and what He says] ...Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain..." What did Cain do? *Cain didn't believe*

God and wanted to do it his way and force upon God that He must accept what Cain did as good! God said, 'What you did is not right, and sin lies at the door. If you do well, will you not be accepted?' In other words, God would be pleased with it.

So, here's a lesson from Gen. 4: ***You can't take the way of God and modify it with your own ideas and expect God to accept it!***

- if God *is* God, which He is
- if God is greater than we are, which He is
- if God's Word is true, which it is
- if we have a sinful nature, which we do

Can we, as sinful human beings, do anything to add to what God—Who is perfect—has done, commanded or said? *No!*

"...by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he died, *he* is yet speaking" (v 4)—because the Word of God is the living word of God, though it is printed on paper. When we read it, we have a spiritual inner action with our mind and words that God's Spirit inspired.

Verse 5: "By faith Enoch was transported so that he would not look upon death..." That merely means that He was *moved from one area on the earth to another area.* He did not go to heaven!

Maybe God did pick him up and carry him away and put him in another place, and his journey was partly in heaven—called the atmosphere around the earth—just like when we fly by planes we go into heaven. So, every time I fly and go somewhere, I go to heaven and come back; I'm transported from one place to another. They were after Enoch to kill him, because he was witnessing of God's way.

"...and was not found... [by the enemies] ...because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God" (v 5).

Let's also understand that if we please God—which we can please God... You don't have to go around with dread or a guilty conscience. If you do, the way that you get rid of dread and a guilty conscience is through repentance and *the washing of the water by the Word and the Spirit of God.*

If Enoch can please God, we can! Then Paul explains *how* to please God; v 6: "Now, without faith... [or belief] ...*it is impossible to please God...*" Someone may have the Bible and they say—like a lot of ministers do—that God didn't mean this. Or, 'Paul wrote this over here, which does away with this part of God's Word, which we don't like anyway, especially the Sabbath and Holy Days.'

- What are they demonstrating? *A lack of belief in God!*

- Where did we start? *Obey My voice!*

Today in Protestantism, they are moving away from any commandment-keeping and are moving toward the New Age religion. But if someone opens the Bible and says that ‘Paul wrote this and it does away with the Old Testament,’ what are they doing? *They are taking away from the Word of God!* What is the warning in the Old Testament and the New Testament? *You shall not add unto or take away from!*

So, just a clever little thing that most people don’t understand: when you eliminate part of the Word of God and say, ‘We don’t need this.’ Or whenever they come to what Jesus did...

Let’s just ask a simple question here: Since God gave His Word—and there are changes from the Old Testament to the New Testament—who is the only One Who can change it? *God!* Whenever He changes it, He takes the standard and makes it higher and spiritual. One example:

Circumcision in the flesh on the eighth day made one a physical member of the community of Israel, being the 12 tribes. It did nothing spiritually. All you have to do is see how much in history that they sinned against God.

Circumcision of the heart is spiritual, of the heart and mind, which now applies to both men and women. So, it’s a higher standard! Rather than something in the flesh, now it has to do with the very process of your being and thinking.

Verse 6: “Now, without faith *it is* impossible to please *God...*”—which contrary-wise it means that it is possible to please God. We’re going to see that.

“...For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists... [to be everything that He says that He is] ...and *that* He is a rewarder... [in order to be rewarded you have to please God] ...of those who diligently seek Him” (v 6).

Jesus gave the promise that if we seek, we shall find. If we ask, we shall receive. It also means that if we seek, we keep on seeking because it’s a lifetime process. Then Paul gives some more examples:

Faith always has works that follow! Verse 7: “By faith Noah, after being divinely instructed by God about the things *he could* not yet see, was moved with fear *and* prepared an ark for *the* salvation of his house; through which he condemned the world and became heir of **the righteousness which is by faith**”—you believe God and act upon

what He has said.

It’s interesting that all these verses start out “By faith...”

Verse 8: “By faith Abraham, being called *of God* to go out into the place, which he would later receive for an inheritance, **obeyed...** [faith without obedience is empty] ...and went, not knowing where he was going.” God doesn’t tell us everything that lies in store. We ***walk by faith, believe in hope and live in love!***

All of it was *by faith!* This is important in our understanding of our relationship with God, and how we can have faith and how we can please God.

Let’s see some things concerning Jesus Christ and what He did. Here is a principle of what Jesus did and how we are to follow that same example:

Romans 15:1: “Now, we who *are* strong *in the faith* are obligated to support the ones who are weak, and not to please ourselves. Accordingly, let each one of us please *his* neighbor for good, unto edification” (vs 1-2). That is by good behavior.

Some people you can never please under any circumstances, because they don’t want to be pleased. That’s because their minds and hearts are not based upon love, but upon self and probably hate and contempt. So, there are certain ones you can’t please.

We have a neighbor right in back of us that there’s no way on earth you could ever please him concerning anything under the sun—*period!* So, we just ignore him and let him go his way.

Verse 3: “For even Christ **did not please Himself...**” That doesn’t mean that we can’t do things and experience things that are pleasurable. The key is that we’re not to set our lives in a pattern to serve the self, but rather to serve God and to please Him. We will see that, yes, we can please God!

“...rather, as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who are reproaching You have fallen upon Me.’ For all the things that were written before were written for our instruction, so that through patient endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (vs 3-4). That we have hope in Christ, because He did this for us!

Had not the Creator God—Who created all mankind—given up His power, glory and Divinity to become a human being, to then live a perfect life and be the perfect sacrifice:

- Where would be as human beings, sinners that we are by nature?
- How could we overcome it in any way if it

weren't for Christ?

Verse 5: "Now, may the God of patience and encouragement grant you to be likeminded toward one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord and one mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 5-6).

So, there we have a perfect example that is given. Let's see how Jesus did that.

(go to the next track)

Jesus said, 'I always do the things that please the Father.' Here's how He did it:

John 12:42: "But even so, many among the rulers believed in Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue." What we have here is belief, but as political consideration was first.

Sometimes that happens in our lives. We believe, but we get caught up in what we are doing and we push it out of our mind and say that we'll do it later. We hope that many of those who were in this position later believed in God.

Verse 43: "For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God." That's why we can't have our lives based upon what people think of us.

I mean, all you have to do is just look at the political scene and see how if you believed every one of the things that were said by your opponent, if you were running for office, you wouldn't be able to stand. You just ignore that. That happens when people love the glory of men because they have those who are against them, yet, they have those who are for them, and they're all cheering and saying that they are going to win, and some of them when they know they are not going to win.

Here's Jesus' witness to them. These were the ones who had the Word of God. These were the ones who should have understood, and most of them did, that He was the Christ. You can read the Gospel account how they were waiting for the Christ, and they even knew which town He was going to be born in. The reason that they didn't accept Him as the Christ and the Messiah is because He did not *politically* join them to then help develop an army and root out the Romans. He had to please God, *not men!*

Here's what Jesus said; His witness to them; v 44: Then Jesus called out and said, 'The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me. And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me'" (vs 44-45)—because the one who sees Jesus was made in the image of God.

So, if you believe what Jesus says then we believe that that came from God. If we believe in

Him—and what He represents—we believe in the Father and what He represents. This also goes against modern evangelical Protestantism today, in which they say, 'Jesus' message was only for the Jews.' *No!* Jesus came from the father, so you're believing in the Father. Those that say that Jesus' message was only for the Jews and 'we believe in the Father.' If you don't believe in Jesus Christ you don't believe in the Father.

Verse 46: "I have come *as* a light into the world so that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness." The power of darkness is of Satan the devil.

Let's really concentrate on the rest of the verses in this chapter, because this becomes important:

Verse 47: "But **if anyone hears My words and does not believe**, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world... [at that time; at His second coming He's coming to judge the world] ...but to save the world The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him; **the Word, which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day**" (vs 47-48).

Here's the reason for what He said, v 49: "**For I have not spoken from Myself...** [that is originating within My own heart and mind separate from God the Father] ...**but the Father, Who sent Me, gave Me commandment Himself**, what I should say and what I should speak."

{note sermon: *The Covenant Between God the Father and the Son* (Hebrews series #27)} That covenant was made before Christ came to the earth. It's really interesting how that is buried in the Bible, but it is quite a thing when we understand that.

Verse 50: "And I know that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore, **whatever I speak, I speak exactly as the Father has told Me.**"

That does a pretty powerful bulldozer job to those who say that Paul revealed the Father and 'we don't have to do what Jesus says. We don't repentance or baptism. All we do today, because of new writings that we find in the writings of the Apostle Paul, is that we believe.' Like the silly prayer that Joel Osteen has at the end of his program:

'repeat these words after me and you'll be saved':

Jesus, I repent of my sins and welcome you into my heart.

Those words sound good and Biblical, but that's the action that God requires. He requires deep repentance and baptism, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

Now let's see how Jesus did the things that He did; John 5:19: "Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power... [Greek: 'dunamis'] ...to do anything of Himself...'" He didn't initiate anything other than what the Father told Him to do.

"...but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner" (v 19).

Here is the relationship that Jesus and the Father had. They had communication with each other all the time. That actually started out when Jesus was an infant. The spiritual connection between God the Father and Jesus Christ would be like He could see into the throne of God at any time He desired to.

Verse 20: "For the Father loves the Son... [we are to love the Son and the Father, and They in turn love us] ...and shows Him everything that He Himself is doing. And He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may be filled with wonder." That's referring to the resurrection, which was going to happen after Christ's crucifixion.

The reason that we are going through these things is so that we can understand how Jesus pleased the Father.

John 14:28: "You have heard Me say to you that I am going away..." They really didn't understand it. Even after He was resurrected, before they saw Him, they still couldn't put it all together, because Jesus hadn't come to open their minds to the full understanding they needed until after He was resurrected.

"...and *that* I will come to you *again*. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced that I said, 'I am going to the Father'..." (v 28). That happened when He ascended into heaven as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world.

"...because My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it comes to pass, you may believe. I will not speak with you much longer because the ruler of this world is coming; but he does not have a single thing in Me... [because Jesus never sinned]...Yet, *he comes* so that the world may know that I love the Father..." (vs 28-31). The very purpose of the sacrifice of Christ was to show:

1. His love to the Father
2. His love for mankind
3. to rescue mankind from their sins

"...and that **I do exactly as the Father has commanded Me**. Arise, let us go out" (v 31). This was done on the Passover night.

Let's see what else Jesus said concerning

that. Talking about being the good Shepherd; He didn't come to please Himself, but to please the Father. He sets us an example of how we can do that.

John 10:14: "I am the good Shepherd, and I know those who *are* Mine, and am known of those who *are* Mine. Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring those also, and they shall hear My voice..." (vs 14-16). How are they going to hear His voice? *Through the writings of the apostles!*

"...and there shall be one flock *and* one Shepherd. On account of this, the Father loves Me..." (vs 16-17). Here, again, is that relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ.

"...because I lay down My life, **that I may receive it back again**" (v 17). That's part of the covenant that was between God the Father and Jesus Christ. When Jesus died, He died! Part of the covenant was that the Father would raise Him back to life.

Verse 18: "No one takes it from Me, but **I lay it down of Myself**... [that's what makes His sacrifice so great, because He loves us] ...I have authority to lay it down and authority to receive it back again. **This commandment I received from My Father**" (v 18).

That's quite a thing! Notice all the things involved in how Jesus pleased the Father. Here's an interesting confrontation that took place:

John 8:23: "And He said to them... [after He told them He was going away and they were not able to understand that] ...'You are from beneath; I am from above....'"

Where did Jesus come from? *Heaven!* That means that He was God and existed as God before He became a human being.

"...You are of this world; **I am not of this world**" (v 23). Neither are we part and parcel with this world. We have to live in it, and many times we wish we could be taken out of it—because of the circumstances that are here—but that's not going to happen until the resurrection.

So, they are of this world and they listen to the deceptions of Satan. 1-John 4 talks about the *spirit of antichrist vs those who are the true believers in God the Father and Jesus Christ!*

1-John 4:4: "**You are of God**, little children..." that means:

- if you have the Spirit of God
- if you love God
- if you keep His commandments

“...and have overcome them because greater is He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world” (v 4). With the power of the Holy Spirit of God, we are able to overcome:

- sin
- temptation
- self-serving
- Satan the devil
- society

That’s how we get the strength to do it.

Verse 5: “They are of the world... [just like Jesus told them in John 8] ...because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them.” That’s why there are so many false Christians in the world. Jesus said, ‘Many are called and few are chosen,’ and that’s because few really repent to really do what God says.

Verse 6_[transcriber’s correction]: “**We** are of God...”—talking about the apostles; the ‘you’ in v 4 is talking about the brethren. John is establishing the authority of his message.

“...**the one who knows God listens to us...** [they understand it] ...the one who is **not of God does not listen** to us....” (v 6).

Let me give you an example of what happened to me when I was ‘up in heaven’ on one of my plane trips: I was coming back from Tulsa, OK, and I had *The New Testament in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* in my briefcase, and I saw sitting just one seat up across the aisle, a man reading a Bible. He was reading almost all the time that we were flying, so I thought to myself I will give him my New Testament, because I can get another one. I asked him if he would like to have a New Testament. He said, yes, so I gave it to him. I felt real good about it. I did something nice for someone.

So, about three weeks later I get the front cover of the hardcover of the New Testament mailed back to me with a nasty message. That message was that I’m dangerous, I’m a false prophet, because I preach repentance and baptism and baptism is no longer required, just believe and you will receive the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1).

Jesus said, ‘Man shall not live by food alone, but by every word of God.’ So, you have to take the whole thing. This was my very first encounter with modern evangelical fundamentalism, which has gotten rid of obedience; you just believe.

Well, *you can’t believe without obedience!* That was a shock to me! It was a nasty message: you’re a false prophet, you’re the kind that needs to be gotten rid of. I thought: Whoa! Does that not tell you how they’re going to turn against those who

really believe in God. Yet, they claim to believe in God.

Verse 5: “**They are of the world;** because of this, they speak of the world, **and the world listens to them.**”

Now, I picked on Joel Osteen because he has a mammoth service three times every Sunday. He has three groups of 16,000 come into his refurbished basketball stadium. He does three services. He preaches a message of:

- do good
- expect the good
- think good
- not going to preach against sin

He never really preaches about things that are hard and evil that are coming; just think good thoughts and everything will be fine.

We do need to think good thoughts, that’s true; but that doesn’t mean that everything will be fine. You also have to be warned for the things that will come against you to try and plow into those good thoughts and take the thoughts of God away from you. *He uses the Bible, but he doesn’t preach the Word of God!*

This kind of ‘no works’ salvation is moving toward the New Age ‘religion’ of no sin and no works, just do good.

Verse 5: “They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them. We... [the apostles] ...are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means...* [by the very fact of understanding the Word of God and having the Spirit of God] ...**we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception**” (vs 5-6).

The **Spirit of the Truth** is this:

- God is true
 - God’s Word is true
 - we are to live by the words of God
 - we are to keep the commandments of God
- which are*
- true
 - righteous
 - Holy

And God gives us the strength to do it.

The **spirit of deception** is this:

- be good
- come to church on Sunday
- the Sabbath and Holy Days have been done away
- the Old Testament has been fulfilled

That's speaking of the world, because that goes right back to the first thing that Cain did, which was **modify the instructions or words of God and expect God to accept it, which He does not!**

That's why it says that 'many false prophets have gone out into the world.' We have to test their message, because they come in the name of Jesus. If they come in the name of Jesus, do they tell the truth, or do they tell part of the truth? What happens when you tell part of the truth? *You don't give the whole story, and if you don't give the whole story the truth presented partially can become a lie!* You add to and subtract from; that's what they do.

- you hear good words
- you hear wonderful things
- you hear great encouragement

Let me tell you: sit in on the pre-meeting for any football or basketball game and how they hype-up all the players and tell them how good they are, go do it, you can accomplish it, think good thoughts, everything is fine, and we are going to win. If they win, they say, 'Great! You psyched us up!' ***That's all of the world!***

God wants us to be a Spirit of Truth to avoid the spirit of deception! This is why Jesus said, 'You are of this world and I am not of this world.'

John 8:24: "That is why I said to you that **you shall die in your sins**... [Num. 16:26] ...for **if you do not believe that I AM**..." That's quite a very profound statement in the Greek this is a double: I AM, I AM. Where have you heard that? *Exodus 3!* That's the eternal name of God: *I AM that I AM!*

When He said that to them, they understood that. They knew what He was saying. {Note sermon: *I AM that I AM*}

Verse 25: Then they said to Him, 'Who are You?' And Jesus said to them, 'The One that I said to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you; but He Who sent Me is true, and what I have heard from Him, these things I speak to the world.' *But* they did not know that He was speaking to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of man... [a prophecy of His crucifixion] ...then you yourselves shall know that I AM...' (vs 25-28).

Many people did believe after He died, and many of the Jews were converted on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given. They did believe that He was.

"...and *that* I do nothing of Myself. But as the Father taught Me, these things I speak. And He Who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me

alone, **because I always do the things that please Him**" (vs 28-29).

Can we please God? *Yes, we can!* Let's look at some things on how we can please God. When we do things that please God, here is how God views us:

Psalm 35:27: "Let those who delight in my vindication be jubilant and rejoice; and let them say without ceasing, 'The LORD be magnified, Who delights in the peace of His servant.'.... [this is not just physical alone, but spiritual] ...And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness and of Your praise all the day long" (vs 27-28).

Psa. 147 tells us something very important about God, and how God is just waiting to be pleased with His people.

Psalm 147:7: "Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praises upon the lyres unto our God, Who covers the heavens with clouds, who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow upon the mountains. He gives the beasts their food and to the young ravens which cry. He delights not in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, who hope in His steadfast love" (vs 7-11).

So, if you love God, you fear Him, and you hope in His plan, He takes pleasure in you. In other words, *you please God!*

Verse 12: "Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion."

Psalm 149:1: "O praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints.... [of course, it is His Church that God has pleasure in, and His eyes are on] ...Let Israel rejoice in his Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name in the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the drum and lyre, for **the LORD takes pleasure in His people**; He crowns the meek with salvation" (vs 1-4). That's going to be something! That's why we have hope in God!

What are we going to be like as spirit beings? *All of things of the flesh are going to go by the wayside!* However God is going to take ***our spirit of man and Spirit of God that is in us***—and I'm sure along with whatever our DNA is, because maybe DNA is more than just a physical thing—and gives us a new mind and body of glory!

If you want to know what that's going to be like then be faithful to the end! Let's see what it's going to be like *after* the resurrection, and the showers of blessings and things that God will give to us forever! Here's a good Psalm—Psa. 16—that shows the relationship between the believer and God

the Father and Jesus Christ.

Psalm 16:1: “Preserve me, O God, for **in You do I take refuge**. I have said to the LORD, ‘You are my LORD; **I have no goodness apart from You.**’ As for the saints in the earth, ‘They are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight’” (vs 1-3). God delights in His people that:

- love Him
- fear Him
- serve Him
- believe Him
- hope in Him
- understands His way and plan
- keeps His Sabbath, commandments and Holy Days

Verse 4: “Their sorrows shall be multiplied... [especially those living in the world] ...who run after another god. I will not pour out their drink offerings of blood; and I will not take their names upon my lips.” Not going to go off and follow a combined paganism and Christianity.

Verse 5: “The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup... [having to do with the Passover and the bread and wine, etc.] ...You shall uphold my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a beautiful inheritance” (vs 5-6). We’re going to inherit what God has prepared for us.

Verse 7: “I will bless the LORD Who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the nights.” God deals with sometimes at night when we’re lying in bed and can’t sleep. We get up and think about God or we read the Bible or pray. God is dealing with us. When we think about the great love that God has for us:

- to call us
- to deal with us
- to help us

It makes those times, when they occur, very profound.

Verse 8—this is of Christ: “I have set the LORD always before me. Because **He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved**. Therefore, My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices; My flesh also shall rest in safety” (vs 8-9).

This is also a prophecy of Jesus and of how Jesus pleased the Father, v 10: “For You will not abandon My soul to the grave...” Peter quoted this referring to Jesus in Acts 2 when Peter was preaching about the resurrection of Jesus.

“...neither will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption... [Jesus never sinned] ...You will make known to Me the path of life... [talking about

eternal life after the resurrection]: ...**in Your presence** is fullness of joy At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” 10-11).

Though He has pleasures down to the very smallest portion, so He could become flesh, now He receives back the glory that He had with the Father before the world existed. **Yes, we can please God!**

Psalm 17:15: “**As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake...[out of the grave and resurrection] ...with Your likeness.**”

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Deuteronomy 30:11-20
- 2) Matthew 22:34-37
- 3) Psalm 119:18
- 4) Matthew 22:38-40
- 5) Hebrews 11:1-3
- 6) Genesis 1:1
- 7) Hebrews 11:3-8
- 8) Romans 15:1-6
- 9) John 12:42-50
- 10) John 5:19-20
- 11) John 14:28-31
- 12) John 10:14-18
- 13) John 8:23
- 14) 1 John 4:4-6, 5-6
- 15) John 8:24-29
- 16) Psalm 35:27-28
- 17) Psalm 147:7-12
- 18) Psalm 149:1-4
- 19) Psalm 16:1-11
- 20) Psalm 17:15

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 4
- Ephesians 1
- Numbers 16:26
- Exodus 3
- Acts 2

Also referenced:

Book: *Code of Jewish Law* by Gansfried and Goldman

Sermons:

- *The Covenant Between God the Father and the Son* (Hebrews series #27)
- *I AM that I AM*

FRC: bo
Transcribed: 10-29-17

How Can a Man or Woman Be Right with God? IV

Fred R. Coulter

Can you please God? This is the whole purpose of why we're here. Sometimes we get a guilty conscience because we think:

- God doesn't hear us
- I'm a sinner
- How can God love me?
- If God loves me why am I going through trials?

Let's take a broader picture of it and see that, yes, you can please God. We'll see how that can be done.

First of all, let's see how the world does. We're going to see some very interesting things as to why people are cutoff from God. I think it's reflected more and more in our society because of the way that this modern culture is, with all of its technology and everything.

Let's see what cuts us off from God, then we can understand how we can please God.

2-Timothy 3:1: "Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come." Notice that it doesn't tell us how long they will be.

Let's see what else takes place in the end-time, coupled with the perilous times.

1-Timothy 4:1: "Now, the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith, *and* shall follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." This is talking about what's happening within the Church. So, there are two things going on:

1. what is happening in the Church
2. what is happening in the world

Of course, those of us in the Church live in the world, so both of these things affect us.

Verse 2: "Speaking lies in hypocrisy, their consciences having been cauterized *with a hot iron*... [then it says what they do]: ...forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, even *by* those who know the Truth" (vs 2-3).

That means that if it's listed in the Bible and it's what God say that we can eat, that's what we can eat. However, in the modern age you need to be careful. They do so much to the food—the meat and the vegetables—and it's hard to get organic food, but it's available; you have to look for it. This is one of the things that confronts us in the world.

In 2-Tim. 3 we find the source of all problems; this is the beginning source of all

problems, troubles and difficulties. This can be with:

- your life
- your marriage
- your job
- relationships with other people

2-Timothy 3:2: "For **men will be lovers of self...**" They teach children *self-esteem!* The more self-esteem they teach them, the more selfish they become. That's the first thing that they love: *self!* It's also called, in psychological terms, *narcissistic!* If you're a narcissist, you only think of self.

I think we can think of a couple of past presidents that they have done nothing wrong, that it's a great 'rightwing conspiracy,' the press, and everybody but themselves. That's a perfect example of someone who is narcissistic! They won't receive any correction, won't listen to anybody else and all their problems someone else caused.

"...**lovers of money...**" (v 2). That's why we're in the financial trouble we're in, people going out and trying to get things that they ought not get.

- they lie
- they cheat
- they steal

I think the government is the greatest lover of money, because it takes most of it.

"...**braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy...** [sounds like the TV guide] ...without natural affection..." (vs 2-3). Therefore, there are murders, killing, throwing away children/babies, abortions.

"...implacable..." (v 3). Won't take any correction. A man who was a contractor kept parking his equipment in the front of his house, and it was against the city ordinance, so he's had a battle with the city for seven years. They kept giving him tickets for putting his equipment where it shouldn't be. So, he wouldn't take any correction, he would not change anything. He got out his gun, wrote a suicide note, walked down to the City Council and killed a police officer on the way in, and then shot those on the City Council who he thought was responsible for harassing him. All he had to do is move his equipment someplace. That would not have been hard.

But this also tells you that when you have people who are implacable, you also have a lawlessness that reigns.

There have been shootings and killings one

right after the other. What happens when people are implacable and love themselves and are narcissistic, then they take the law into their own hands and they become ‘judge, jury and executioner’ against those whom *they think* are causing the problems that they are suffering. Tie that in with demonic spirits!

“...**slanderers**...” (v 3). First thing they do is get a writ out of context and you’re dead. You can’t recover.

“...**without self-control**...” (v 3). That implies everything:

- sexually
- with money
- what you do
- lack of restraint

“...**savage, despisers of those who are good**” (v 3). Of course, you know that it is in some ways foolish to be a Christian today in the way that some people think. But just hold on, because there are going to be events that make people wake up to some of the problems that they’re confronting. We will know what the problems and difficulties are when they come, because God’s Word has forewarned us!

Verse 4: “**Betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.**” So, we have three things that they love:

- self
- money
- pleasure

Let’s talk about *pleasure*, because pleasure is interesting. Today, if it looks good, sounds good, feels good—whether it is illegal or legal—people get involved in it because they want pleasure. Look at any sports event, especially college, if you tried to talk to those young people concerning God and Christ, they would laugh right smack in your face.

They want to have a good time, fun, and it’s been promulgated and they have been taught that if you have a good time, or it pleasurable, then it’s good thing to do. When you are a lover of pleasure then you don’t ask what is right and wrong. That creates the problem. “...**rather than lovers of God.**”

Joel Osteen is preparing all those who go to his services—16,000 every service. Watch him sometime. He talks about good and appeals to the goodness of human nature. If you love yourself, you want to be told how good you are.

If you’re a lover of money, you want to be told that your best days are ahead of you, even though the stock market is going to collapse. If you’re a lover of pleasure, you want to do things that are nice and good. If it says that you’re to keep the commandments of God in order to love Him, that’s

requiring just a bit too much.

Verse 5: “Having an outward appearance of Godliness, but denying the power of *true* Godliness....”

I watched Osteen one Sunday and I’ve noticed the logo on the bottom of his podium, which actually looks like Aladdin’s lamp. It’s a New Age symbol by the elite that he has approved.

What did Jesus say? *Broad is the way and many people will go therein, but **narrow is the way and straight is the way that leads to life!*** At the end of his telling everyone how good they are, expect nothing but good, then he says, ‘I want you to say this prayer; repeat after me so you can be saved’:

Jesus, I repent of my sins and enter into my heart.

You’re saved! *Doesn’t quite work that way!* What is happening? Why is Osteen being promoted? You need to connect the dots. An outward appearance of Godliness you could also call ‘religion’; they’re religious. You have modern evangelicalism now reducing the requirements of what it is to be a Christian in their definition.

- you believe
- you accept Jesus
- you don’t have to be baptized
- you don’t have to keep the commandments

Whatever is good and it feels good to you, because you’re a lover of pleasure and self, then that’s fine. That’s almost what Joel Osteen is preaching.

I haven’t kept up on some of the others, because we don’t have a ‘religious’ channel in Hollister, so I can only catch a few on Sunday morning once in a while. Ophra Winfrey is going to get in on the act, because she’s going to have *A Course in Miracles* based on the book. The author, a woman, said that Jesus talked to her and told her to write. The ultimate is that you are good, there is no such thing as sin, and that you, as you are, are ‘God.’ That is the most narcissistic form of ‘Godliness’ that you could possibly have. You worship yourself as ‘God.’ It’s like Deepak Chopra in his *Seven Steps to Spirituality* is almost identical to *A Course in Miracles* that Ophra Winfrey is having this woman give on her program on radio. It’s almost the same!

You begin over here and you begin to understand as you move toward: What is God? What happens is that you connect with your soul. In an instant of time you connect with your soul and you understand that you are ‘God.’ When you pray, you’re praying to yourself.

So, when you pray it’s, v 5: “having an outward appearance of Godliness, but denying the

power of *true* Godliness.... [that is exemplified today as never before] ...But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these.”

Now let’s see what kind of society that this develops. We need to look at the society around us as well. What happens when you have a society like this, you have people who do not control themselves, do not discipline themselves, and they’re going exactly the opposite way of God.

God wants everybody, even in this society, to keep His commandments in the letter of the Law. If they would keep the Ten Commandments in the letter of the Law, there would be a great deal of blessing for all who did. That’s not call to conversion. But when America used to use the Bible as it’s textbook in school, we had a society with a low crime rate. When they kicked God out of school and started developing the society the way that it is ending up now, we gradually moved from a law-abiding society to a lawless society where you have all kinds of sin:

- adultery
- fornication
- murder
- rape
- gambling

Gambling is rampant! Not only do you have home foreclosures that is a problem, but you have so many gambling online—hoping that they’ll hit the jackpot—so they can pay their bills and get out of debt. They say that Gamblers Anonymous is really becoming overwhelmed with people trying to get unhooked from the addiction of gambling. You can do it online; just go on your computer and use a charge card. You start using a charge card and what happens? *Another company says, ‘Here, we’ll give you a charge card!’* So, you get that one, and I heard one addict say on the radio. Then you get another one and borrow against your house, and soon he lost everything.

What he did is run from credit card to credit card to try and get from this one to make the minimum payment on another one. Know for sure, that if the only thing you pay on a credit card is the minimum payment, *you’re in trouble!* This is all reflective of something in the way that this society is becoming, and it multiplies itself.

Here’s the cause; not the only cause, but the main cause; Matthew 24:11: “And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many; and because **lawlessness shall be multiplied...**” (vs 11-12). Lawlessness is described in the Bible this way: ***and every man did that which was right in his own sight!***

When you have lawlessness, then you have

to have more police to enforce the law, because people do not have self-control. They are not taught to obey. They have no respect for anyone else. You take all of those things that we have covered so far and that’s how it is.

“..the love of many shall grow cold” (v 12). This is also amplified in the technological society that we are in, people can be within a crowd but disconnected from anybody. You can see that they’re connected to themselves with their earplugs. Some of them may be listening to someone read the Bible. In that case, that’s good. But the majority of them have blasting mainline satanism through music straight into their brains. A lot of young people now are going permanently deaf because they injure their ears by having these iPods, etc. Their brains are all scrambled.

What you need, since they can’t control themselves and think for themselves the way they ought to, and they’re really controlled by Satan the devil and in no mood to repent of anything, what do you need? *More police!* And the police then have to have more arms. The police today look like Nazi soldiers with they helmets and everything, and they act like it.

Because there’s lawlessness, you also have corrupt police who are criminals themselves. You have corrupt prosecutors who want a number of convictions rather than the truth. So, you have a strange mixture of a society that is really terrible, awful and miserable to try and live in.

So, in this society you can look at the world and everything is against us. Remember this: *God is for us!* So, **how can you be right with God?**

Example of Moses:

God has to intervene with His Spirit. This is why God has to intervene and call each one whom He calls. That’s why it’s so important that you understand that, know that, and through repentance and baptism then you receive the Holy Spirit. God has to call you for that. That’s what you need to really understand.

Only God can rescue this society! Human beings aren’t going to do it. No elected President is going to do it.

Hebrews 11:24: “**By faith Moses**, after becoming a great *leader*, refused to be called *the* son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy *the* temporary pleasure of sin; for he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking intently to the reward” (vs 24-26). *It has to be a complete turning!*

Verse 27: “**By faith** he left Egypt... [he

didn't know where he was going; he ended up in Midia] ...not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered... [for 40 years; think about how God prepared him for 40 years] ...as *if he were* seeing the *One Who is* invisible. **By faith** he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not slay them" (vs 27-28). Then it talks about what he did there. It is *by faith* that we leave:

- the pleasures of the world
- the pleasures of sin
- the loving of self
- the loving of money

We turn ourselves to God!

Example of Enoch:

Verse 5: "**By faith Enoch** was transported so that he would not look upon death, and was not found because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God." Here we find that it is possible to *please* God.

Let's see some other things on how we can please God, because it is possible. First of all, God says that He loves you. If He loves you and has called you, you can please Him.

- you don't have to have a guilty conscience
- you don't have to ask what you have to do to please God

The Bible tells you what to do to please God! So, let's look at some of these things.

I. Have a Contrite and Humble Spirit

This is what God looks to; this is the first thing that pleases God because He's:

- gracious
- merciful
- kind
- loving

Isaiah 57:15: "For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy; 'I dwell in the high and Holy place, even **with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit...** [that comes by repentance and loving God] ...to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

II. Seek the LORD

Another way you can please God, and how God will be with you, watch over you, protect you, place His angels around you, and bless you in the way that He says. Some of your blessings will be trials. And you will have trials so that God will know that what you have said you will do. Isaiah

55:6: "**Seek the LORD** while He may be found..." That's pleasing to God. Jesus said that all those who 'seek will find.' All those who 'knock it will be opened.' All those who 'ask will receive.'

"...call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way..." (vs 6-7). All the things I read about what the wicked are doing, they need to forsake their ways.

"...and the unrighteous man his thoughts..." (v 7). The relationship that we have with God begins with what we're thinking. What we've described already has been the thoughts of:

- loving self
- loving pleasure
- loving money

"...and let him return to the LORD... [repentance] ...and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (v 7) Then He says that they way you begin understanding God is to realize that the way we have thought is not the way that God is.

Verse 8: "'For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (vs 8-9). ***That's why we have the Bible!***

We would never know a thing about what God thinks and what God says without the Bible. It's here! This becomes most important book in the world!

III. Delight in the Sabbath Day and in the Lord

Isaiah 58:13: "If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires on My Holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, **not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD...**" (vs 13-14). It works both ways:

- you repent
- you change the way you live
- you are baptized
- you receive the Holy Spirit

Now God is dwelling within you! If you delight in the Lord, He's going to delight in you.

Let's see how this works:

Psalm 103:17: "But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him..."

- you fear God
- you love God
- you delight in Him

“...and His righteousness is unto children’s children, to those who keep His covenant, and to those who remember His precepts to do them” (vs 17-18). All of these things then add up on how you can please God.

Verse 19: “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, O you His angels, mighty in strength, who do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word. Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, ministers of His who do His pleasure” (vs 19-21)—do the pleasure of God.

This is what ministers ought to really think about. No minister, teacher or elder—anyone who serves God—is there to please himself.

- He is there to teach the Word of God.
- He is there to equip the people of God with:
 - ✓ knowledge
 - ✓ truth
 - ✓ understanding
 - ✓ faith
 - ✓ confidence

Everything that comes from God!

“...Bless the LORD, all His works in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!” (v 22). That’s another way that it works.

IV. Prayer

Proverbs 15:8: “The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD... [remember Cain; that’s why his wasn’t accepted] ...**but the prayer of the upright *is* His delight.**” That’s why prayer is so important. That’s why we need to pray everyday.

- we talk with God
- we study everyday
- He talks with us
- the Bible is His words

When you pour your heart out to God in prayer, He delights in that, and if He delights in it, He takes pleasure in it. If He has pleasure in it, then you’re pleasing God.

V. Turn from Evil

Proverbs 16:6: “By mercy and Truth iniquity is purged...” That’s how you overcome sin:

- mercy from God
- truth and recognition of it through repentance
- leaving and forsaking it, as God instructs

purges sin! And we can add: *through the sacrifice of Christ!*

The sins have to be blotted out before God in heaven above. That’s what Christ does. Then the iniquity in the mind has to be purged away with God’s Spirit, and that is done with mercy and Truth. Replace the sinful thoughts with the Truth of the Word of God. That’s how you cleanse your mind. It’s a process called *conversion!* It is a lifelong process.

“...and **by the fear of the LORD men turn away from evil.**... [that pleases God when anyone turns from evil] ...**When a man’s ways please the LORD...**” (vs 6-7). Yes, you can please God, because as He looks down on the earth:

- How many are really desiring to keep God’s way?
- How many are really seeking God?
- How many are really loving God?
- How many are really putting the words of God, the Spirit of God—through prayer and study—into their minds?
- *Very few indeed!*

Verse 7: “When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

That’s quite a promise! I imagine that every one of you could tell me about an occurrence in your life where things were against you, and maybe you even lost your job and thought this was terrible. But then God provided you with another job, maybe even a better job, and He made you “...to be at peace...” with your enemies.

Proverbs 11:20: “Those who are of a perverse heart *are* an abomination to the LORD... [2-Tim. 3] ...but the upright in the way *are* His delight.”

You can put in there that if God delights in you then He’s pleased with you, He’s happy with you, because you’re doing things the way that God says. That’s really quite a thing.

Proverbs 12:22: “Lying lips *are* an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truly *are* His delight.” I know that many people have thought:

- Does God love me? *Yes, He does!*
- Does God delight in me? *Yes, He does!*
- Can you please the Lord? *Yes, you can!*

But you have to do it *His way!* You can make Him angry if you go the other way.

Let’s see how you can do this even more within your heart and mind. How you can delight in God and then God can delight in you and take

pleasure in you and be pleased with what you do. These are all things that if you delight yourself in, in understanding the Word of God, then God will take pleasure in you, as well.

If you want a very interesting and deep study, go through Psa. 119 verse-by-verse and break it down according to commandments, laws, precepts and testimonies. Think of it this way: I believe that this is not only what David wrote, but very likely a prophecy of how Jesus thought on God's ways.

What did God the Father say of Jesus? *This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased!* Also *in Whom I delight!* Let's see how we can delight in the Lord.

Psalm 119:47: "And **I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I have loved.**"

All of those who say that they love God and cast away His commandments and His laws, how can they love and please God when they speak with their mouth but do not perform with their actions?

Verse 70: "Their heart is gross like fat, but I delight in Your Law." If we delight in God's Law, which He gave for our good and benefit, then He will delight in us.

(go to the next track)

We will tie this in with the New Testament and see how it all comes. Remember that the most important thing is a repentant heart and a loving attitude of loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. That's the most important thing. From that you love your neighbor as yourself and from that you love the brethren, and then even your enemy. You understand that enemies do these things because they're minds are blinded and they don't know God, and *they think* that they are doing right.

We build on that, and we can see that, yes, we can please God. That's not forcing our way upon God; that is yielding our ways and our thoughts to God's way.

Verse 77: "Let Your tender mercies come to me so that I may live, for **Your Law is my delight.**" Very similar to the one we read earlier.

You will notice the way that Psa. 119 is laid out. There are 22 sections of 8 verses each, and each section is based upon the Hebrew alphabet beginning with aleph, beyt, gimal and so forth all the way through. Each verse begins with that letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This whole Psalm was to be memorized and sung at the temple by the Levites. It's called *a song of degrees*. So, there are 22 degrees here.

Verse 174: "I have longed for Your salvation... [that's part of the attitude that we have toward God] ...O LORD, and Your law is my

delight."

Let's carry this a little further and see how Psa. 37 is talking about delighting in God. Now it shifts from the laws, commandments and statutes of God to God Himself. It gives us some very good instructions here along the way:

Psalm 37:1: "Do not fret yourself because of evildoers..." In other words, don't be frustrated because of what they're doing.

"...and do not be envious against the workers of iniquity" (v 1)—who appear to be prospering in their evil. Just think of movie/rock stars; they have money and power, but we don't need to be envious of them. Every time you see a filthy rich plutocrat driving by in a Rolls Royce—maybe they lift up their nose as they pass by you—think about what kind of travel vehicle God is going to give you. "...do not be envious..." of them.

Verse 2: "For they shall soon be cut down like the grass; and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land... [and you shall be fed; God will take care of you] ...and cherish faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (vs 2-4). Not the lust, but the desires.

- **if** your desire is to be in the Kingdom of God, which it is
- **if** your desire is to please God, which it is
- **then** God is going to take care of you

Very little of that, however, is going to be in this life!

Remember the parables of the pounds and the talents, at the resurrection what did God say to the one who received five talents? *After he was faithful, God said, 'Well done good and faithful servant, be you over ten cities!'* So, the finality of it is going to come in the resurrection. But we will see blessings as we go along.

Verse 5: "**Commit your way unto the LORD**; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass.... [in *His* way and in *His* time] ...And He shall bring forth your righteousness like the light... [at the resurrection] ...and your judgment like the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of him who carries out wicked schemes" (vs 5-7).

Verse 11: "But the meek shall inherit the earth... [that's being in the Kingdom of God; nothing can replace that] ...and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." That means how happy and delighted we're going to be when we are spirit being ruling and reigning with Christ.

All the weakness of the flesh and all the pulls of sin are going to be gone. That's really

something to keep in mind.

Verse 22: “For those blessed of Him shall inherit the earth...” When we read in the New Testament about our inheritance, it starts with the earth and it ends up with the universe. That’s something!

I’ve talked about our calling and that God has called the weak of the world, and that’s exactly what it is. But here you are in a seminar to learn how to develop Godly character so you can rule under Christ in the Kingdom of God.

- This is a full-time work!
- This is the Lord’s business!

The world is out here trying to figure out how to bring their one-world order, God already has His plan working, and He’s already training those whom He’s going to use.

The world wouldn’t pick us, that’s for sure! We don’t look the part, we don’t act the part, we’re not the part, so they reject us. But we’re going to inherit the earth!

“...and those cursed of Him shall be cut off.... [God will take care of the wicked] ...The steps of a good man are made firm... [established] ...by the LORD, and He delights in his way” (vs 22-23).

Let’s always understand that where we began was with a *humble heart and a contrite spirit*. Whenever we are approaching God, this is how we are to live our lives.

1-John 3:11: “For this is the message that you heard from *the* beginning... [from Christ] ...that we should love one another.” God is most delighted in when we love Him and love each other. That’s when God takes the most pleasure in His saints.

Verse 12: “Not as Cain, *who* was of the wicked *one*, and murdered his own brother. And what was the reason that he murdered him? Because his own works were wicked, but his brother’s works were righteous.” There’s always the comparison.

Verse 13: “My brethren, do not be amazed if the world hates you.”

{note sermon: *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You* (#1 Love series)} Doesn’t matter who you are, where you are, what the circumstances are, how much you have suffered, how much you have lost. Regardless of whatever it is, ***God loves you and He has called you!*** That’s is the most important thing in life!

Let’s see what really pleases God more than anything else. You take all of these aspects that we’ve talked about:

- a broken heart
- a contrite spirit
- *delighting yourself*
 - in the Law of God
 - in the commandments of God
 - in the way of God

Trusting in Him faithfully for everything! You put it all together with:

- prayer and study
- loving God
- loving the brethren
- loving your neighbor

And put it together with the fellowship we have with God! This is what God wants, that personal fellowship with Him on a daily basis.

1-John 1:3: “That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for ***the fellowship***... [a very emphatic form of fellowship] ...—indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ.”

Remember, if Christ is in you, what did God the Father say of Jesus? ***This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased!*** God gets a little frustrated with people who have His Holy Spirit who become lukewarm and dabble in false doctrines and who loose their first love, or who become so lackadaisical that they become nearly dead. But God delights in those who apply themselves and repent. Let’s see how this works.

1-John 3:14: “We know that we have passed from death into life... [because we have the Spirit of God, and] ...because we love the brethren. The one who does not love *his* brother is dwelling in death.”

- Let’s think about that with the Catholic Church and the Inquisition; *it’s not of God!*
- Let’s think about that in relationship to Islamic fundamentalism and conversion by beheading; *it’s not of God!*

They think they’re doing the will of God. The god that they’re doing will of is not the Father or Jesus Christ; *it’s ‘the god of this world’ Satan the devil!*

Verse 15: “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him.”

There are many things that can come along that cause offenses. There are many difficulties that come along that are misunderstandings. But here is a key that is always important for you to remember: ***If you have trouble with someone, or you have something against someone, you go that person individually and work it out!*** That is a very important exercise of the love and mercy of God, and the loving of the brethren.

Matthew 5:22: “But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother without cause...” Maybe there are times when you can be angry, but go settle it.

It says, ‘Don’t let the sun go down on your wrath’ (Eph. 4), because all you’re going to do is sweat and stew about it all night and never sleep. You work it up in your mind and make it worse.

“...shall be subject to judgment. Now, *you have heard it said*, ‘Whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be subject to *the judgment of the council.*’ But *I say to you*, whoever shall say, ‘*You fool,*’ shall be subject to the fire of Gehenna. For this reason...” (vs 22-23).

Lot’s of times we think things about people, we say things about people to other people, and what we’re really doing is judging their heart and mind and thoughts, **and we don’t know them!** Remember that even wives cannot read someone else’s mind, nor your husband’s. Though, through many years of being married, you can make some pretty good guesses. But you really never know.

Verse 23: “For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your way*; first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (vs 23-24). We’ll talk later about what kind of spiritual gifts we’re to offer later.

We are coming before the altar in heaven above, not just on the earth. This becomes an important thing. Always be ready to forgive and to listen. What did Peter ask Jesus? ‘Lord, how often should I forgive my brother? Seven times?’ Peter thought he was being real generous. Jesus said, ‘I say to you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.’ That’s 490!

If you condense that into one day, that would occupy the whole day. But if you spread it out over a lifetime, that’s still a lot! Go settle it first. If you have issue with someone, go settle it. ‘I need to talk with you and please don’t get upset. I have something that I need to get settled out here’ if someone says that to you, be all ears and listen to what they have to say. Don’t be a narcissist and justify everything you have done, when you know you were wrong.

You want God to forgive you your sins, then forgive someone else’s sins. What if you won’t forgive that person’s sins, but that person has repented to God and He’s forgiven them? Where does that put you? Pleasing God is a lot more than saying:

- God, I love Your Law
- God, I delight in it

Which you need to do, and have a humble and contrite spirit and love Him and the brethren, and apply that in the way that you live in your relationship with God and each other.

1-John 3:15: “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him. **By this very act we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us...**” (vs 15-16). That is the key right there.

I did a sermon *Jesus, Our Hero and Champion*. One of the ways that we keep a humble and contrite heart and spirit is to understand what God has done for us, and to understand what He has called us to. We receive all of that by His love, mercy and grace. Yes, there are things we are to do. Notice how we are to respond:

“...and we ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren” (v 16). You do that through:

- fellowship
- prayer
- encouragement
- helping them if they have need

John explains it, v 17: “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him?”

That’s self-explanatory. Then John makes it even clearer, because God doesn’t want us to have just platitudes of love, or thoughts of love, and no actions of love:

Verse 18: “My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love* in deed and in Truth.” *Put your money where your mouth is!*

You receive a benefit from it: they receive a benefit because you love them. You receive a benefit because you love them. God receives a benefit because His Spirit flows and His love flows, and here’s what happens.

Verse 19: “And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him...” You come before God:

- with confidence
- with love
- with faith
- with a repentant heart and attitude

Then your whole relationship or fellowship with God becomes that much greater. It is spiritually motivated by the love of God.

Because we’re human and have the

weakness of the flesh, and we sin—which we do—then we need to repent. What happens when you sin? *God convicts you in your mind!* You condemn yourself! That happens to every one of us. Why does that happen? *Because the Spirit of God is causing us to recognize that!* People in the world don't have that happen to them. Those who have the Spirit of God have that happen to them, because God's Spirit is working with you to open your mind to see that this was wrong and for you to change. But nevertheless, when you sin, you condemn yourself.

Verse 20: "That if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things." That means that when you repent, God will lift you out of it. Sometimes it lingers for a while, but you need to ask God to help you to

- purge it out of your mind
- purge it out of your heart
- purge it out of your thoughts

That's all a part of growing and overcoming, developing the heart, mind and character of God.

Verse 21: "Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us..." we have not sinned, because we can live a good deal of our lives without sinning as we're led by the Holy Spirit of God. What does this do for us?

"...then we have confidence toward God" (v 21)—because your relationship with God is strong, and you're continuing to use that and develop it.

Verse 22: "And whatever we may ask we receive from Him **because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight.**"

Yes, you can please God! But it takes all of these things combined together, which gives us a wonderful combination

Verse 23: "And this is His commandment: that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us."

Verse 24 ties all of this together: "And **the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him...**" *If* you're keeping the commandments of God and you're dwelling in Christ.

"...and He [Christ] in him... [Christ is dwelling in you] ...and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us" (v 34). Here's the strengthening of the spiritual relationship with God.

Think on this for a minute: How repugnant is it in the eyes of God for a minister to stand up and constantly put fear in the hearts of the people of God because of the commands of a minister? *Not very*

good! All that does is breed contention, decent, fear and condemnation. God wants us to get rid of all of these things through the love of God.

1-John 4:9: "In this way the love of God was manifested toward us... [God did it first, then He called us] ...that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this act is **the love**—not that we loved God..." (vs 9-10). In other words, it didn't come from us to God first; *it came from God to us!* God leads us to repentance by His graciousness.

"...rather, that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**" (v 10). We have continual mercy and forgiveness daily upon repentance. That's why the daily prayer says, 'forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.' Constant repentance.

Let me tell you what will happen with that. I know a man who had some very treacherous thoughts against his wife, the wife of his youth. We see that happen many times. Older men divorce their wives. It seems to be something that a lot of men do when they get older, they get rid of their wives and they hook up with some young thing and deal treacherously with their wives.

Malachi 2:14: "Yet, you say, 'Why?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously—yet, she *is* your companion and your covenant wife"—which was *until death do you part!*

There was a presidential candidate who was dealing treacherously with his wife, and began to realize it. He repented of that and lo and behold many of his problems began to clear up, because God led him to see that that inner sin, which only he knew, was cutting him off from God. That's why it's important that Christ came first and did what He did. ***He's a propitiation of our sins, so that we can be cleansed from all sin! Cleansed from all unrighteousness!***

1-John 4:11: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another." You can't say out of one side of your mouth, 'Lord, I love You.' Then on the other side of your mouth say, 'I hate that person over there,' who is a brother or sister in Christ. It doesn't work that way. I've already covered how you can handle that problem.

Verse 12: "No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us." That's what God wants to do, *perfect the love.*

Verse 13: "By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us." His own Spirit God has given to us. That's

amazing! And we *know* that!

Verse 14: “And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God” (vs 14-15). *That is if it is in Truth!*

Verse 16: “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him.” See how all of this works together.

- we can love God
- He can be pleased with us

It’s not that we of ourselves, by ourselves, can please God, but we have His Spirit within us so that:

- we are able to please Him
- we are able to keep His commandments
- we are able to love Him
- we are able to love the brethren

Verse 17: “By this *spiritual indwelling*, **the love of God is perfected within us**, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because even as He is, so also are we in this world.”

Here’s where we come to in our relationship with God, v 18: “There is no fear in the love *of God*; rather, **perfect love casts out fear** because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love *of God*. We love Him because He loved us first. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?” (vs 18-20).

So, we have come full circle. ***Yes, you can be in right standing with God, and you can please God, by doing the things that He delights in; by being motivated by the Spirit of God to do His will and to do His pleasure.***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Timothy 3:1
- 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-3
- 3) 2 Timothy 3:2-5
- 4) Matthew 24:11-12
- 5) Hebrews 11:24-28, 5
- 6) Isaiah 57:15
- 7) Isaiah 55:6-9
- 8) Isaiah 58:13-14
- 9) Psalm 103:17-22
- 10) Proverbs 15:8
- 11) Proverbs 16:6-7

- 12) Proverbs 11:20
- 13) Proverbs 12:22
- 14) Psalm 119:47, 70,77, 174
- 15) Psalm 37:1-7, 11, 22-23
- 16) 1 John 3:11-13
- 17) 1 John 1:3
- 18) 1 John 3:14-15
- 19) Matthew 5:22-24
- 20) 1 John 3:15-24
- 21) 1 John 4:9-10
- 22) Malachi 2:14-15
- 23) 1 John 4:11-20

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Also referenced:

Books:

- *A Course in Miracles* by Helen Schucman
- *Seven Steps to Spirituality* by Deepak Chopra

Sermons:

- *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You* (#1 Love series)
- *Jesus, Our Hero and Champion*

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