

# “ESTABLISHING RIGHT PRIORITIES IN A WRONG WORLD”



## INTRODUCTION

# ESTABLISHING RIGHT PRIORITIES IN A WRONG WORLD



These two declarations by the apostle Paul need to be endorsed by every born-again believer in Christ:



**"BUT WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THESE I HAVE COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST... AND COUNT THEM AS RUBBISH THAT I MAY GAIN CHRIST..."**

Phil. 3:7-8

**"THEREFORE, IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION; OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW."**

2 Cor. 5:17

Experiencing the new birth does not change the world in which we live. The new birth must change how we live in this present world that still lies under the sway, control and influence, of the wicked one; the god of this present evil world (age) (1 Jn. 5:19, Eph. 2:2, 2 Cor. 4:4) Old priorities must fade away for they do not come from God but rather from the god of this present world.

The new birth is to produce a new life. This transcends the act of being forgiven for our sinful past. It requires the endorsement of new priorities from a new source.

# OLD PRIORITIES

**FORMED BY**



**THE GOD OF  
THIS WORLD**

# NEW PRIORITIES

**FORMED BY**



**THE WORD  
OF GOD**

God is looking for a people willing to change their priorities in life from being those which were formed by the principles of the world into those formulated by the principles of the Word.

God has clearly defined priorities in His Word that stand in direct opposition to the priorities held dear by the world.

I want to share with you twelve priorities God sets before every believer. These twelve priorities will, in essence, "spell" Christianity for us.  
Are you ready?

How to spell Christianity:

**C  
H  
R  
I  
S  
T  
I  
A  
N  
I  
T  
Y**

1. **I AM A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST**
2. **I AM A PRIEST TO GOD THRU CHRIST**
3. **I AM A SERVANT OF CHRIST**
4. **I AM A SOLDIER OF CHRIST**
5. **I AM A WITNESS FOR CHRIST**
6. **I AM AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST**
7. **I AM THE SALT/LIGHT OF THE WORLD**
8. **I AM A STRANGER/PILGRIM ON EARTH**
9. **I AM THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE OF CHRIST**
10. **I AM PART OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**
11. **I AM A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST**
12. **I AM THE ESPOUSED BRIDE OF CHRIST**

These are God's revealed priorities for His people. These twelve themes permeate God's Word. Each category describes a particular role in which God views His people.

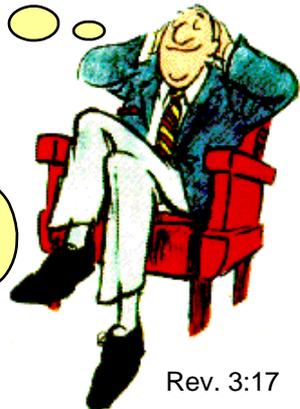
**HOW  
GOD  
SEES  
SOME OF  
HIS PEOPLE**



**"I AM  
RICH,  
HAVE  
BECOME WEALTHY  
AND NEED  
NOTHING"**

**HOW  
SOME OF  
HIS PEOPLE  
SEE  
THEMSELVES**

**"YOU  
DO NOT  
KNOW THAT  
YOU ARE  
WRETCHED,  
MISERABLE,  
POOR,  
BLIND  
AND  
NAKED."**



Rev. 3:17

It is important that we see ourselves as God sees us or we can be just like the deceived church of Laodicea who held a completely different evaluation of themselves compared to how God saw them.



How can such a vast disparity of views exist between Christ and professing Christians? It is created by holding a difference in priorities. Laodicea measures itself by accepted worldly standards rather than the criteria spelled out in God's Word.

Let me illustrate. Here is what the Word of God defines as "pure and undefiled religion":

**"PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION  
BEFORE GOD AND THE FATHER  
IS THIS:  
TO VISIT ORPHANS AND WIDOWS  
IN THEIR TROUBLE,  
AND TO KEEP ONESELF UNSPOTTED  
FROM THE WORLD."**

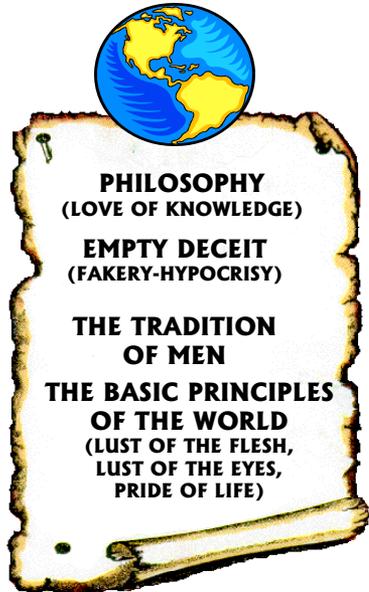
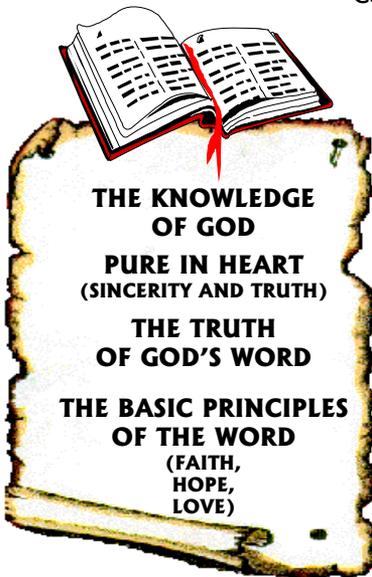
James 1:27



Is this what religion is known for in America? Hardly! Due to politically-based religion inherited from the zealous but errant Puritans, Christians are bent on seizing the earthly kingdom of America and making it into the kingdom of God on earth (as if we have such a God-given commission). Christianity in this country is pursuing an unbiblical, self-appointed mandate to "remove the spots from the world" (abortion, pornography, gay marriage) rather than "keeping oneself unspotted from the world." By which of these two mandates will Jesus judge the success of His people? Is Jesus pleased with self-commissioned priorities that stand in opposition to His Word? This is misguided zeal based on wrong priorities!

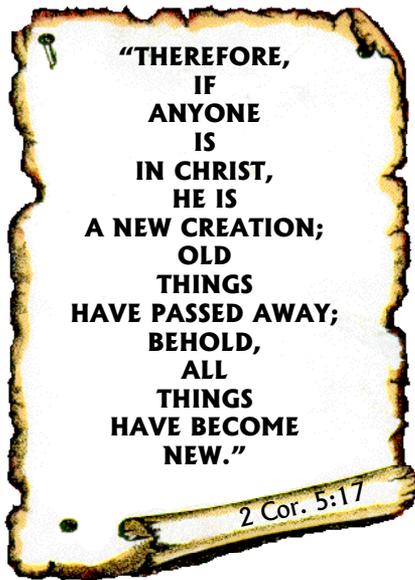
**“BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH  
PHILOSOPHY AND EMPTY DECEIT,  
ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF MEN,  
ACCORDING TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD,  
AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST.”**

Col. 2:8



Not only do these opposing things exist in the secular world, but also various subtle forms exist within religion itself. The best way Satan can deceive the saints is to cover his deception with a religious cloak. The church is filled with high-minded intellectual so-called knowledge. Paul warns of "...what is falsely called knowledge-by professing it, some have erred concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 6:20-21). Who is not aware of the empty deceit (fakery-hypocrisy) that circulates within the church under the guise of "Spirit-led anointing." Religious tradition is still at work, "...making the Word of God of no effect..." (Mark 7:13). It permeates not only Judaism and Catholicism, but also Protestantism. Christianity embraces the world's childish, pagan-based holidays and ignores God's prophetic Holy Feast days.

How much of what we see in American Christianity is promoting the same basic principles of the world (lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life) instead of being marked with the basic principles of the Word (faith, hope and love). Much of Christian "worship" music on TV today sounds no different from the secular world's music performances. Many a Christian singer looks like an audition for "American Idol" rather than leading God's people into the presence of God Almighty. Hard words-hard times!



To get us on track and to keep us from being derailed, we need to focus all of our energies and disciplines upon God's priorities for His people. The twelve priorities I listed for you previously can be further divided into three distinctly different relationships. Here they are:

<b>WHAT I AM TO BE TO GOD</b>	<b>I AM A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST I AM A PRIEST TO GOD THRU CHRIST I AM A SERVANT OF CHRIST I AM A SOLDIER OF CHRIST</b>
---------------------------------------	---

<b>WHAT I AM TO BE TO THE WORLD</b>	<b>I AM A WITNESS FOR CHRIST I AM AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST I AM THE SALT/LIGHT OF THE WORLD I AM A STRANGER/PILGRIM ON EARTH</b>
---	--

<b>WHAT I AM TO BE TO THE BRETHREN</b>	<b>I AM THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE OF CHRIST I AM PART OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST I AM A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST I AM THE ESPOUSED BRIDE OF CHRIST</b>
--	---

**"AS HE SPOKE THESE WORDS, MANY BELIEVED IN HIM. THEN JESUS SAID TO THOSE JEWS WHO BELIEVED HIM, 'IF YOU ABIDE (CONTINUE) IN MY WORD, YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES INDEED. AND YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE!'"**

John 8:30-32



1.  
**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT  
A DISCIPLE  
OF JESUS CHRIST**

Modern-day Christianity emphasizes the importance of becoming a convert of Christ via the new birth. Although Jesus preached the necessity of being born again (Jn.3:3,5), He emphasized the need to become His disciple (Jn. 13:35). Being a convert is a past tense, one-time experience. Becoming a disciple is an ongoing, present tense lifestyle. A convert "likes Christ", but a disciple seeks to "become like Christ." A convert embraces the finished work of the cross of Christ, but a disciple takes up his own cross in order to deny self and follow Christ (Luke 9:23).

**" LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS.WHO... MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, TAKING THE FORM OF A SERVANT. HE HUMBLIED HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS."**

Philippians 2:5-8



2.  
**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT  
A SERVANT  
OF JESUS CHRIST**

Although they were apostles, we find Jude, Peter, James and Paul open their epistles by identifying themselves primarily as "servants of Jesus Christ" (Jude 1, 2 Pet. 1:1, James 1:1, Phil. 1:1) Lofty titles produce authority and respect and thrive on maintaining a reputation. No so for the servant who serves behind the scenes rather than being in a position to be seen. Jesus taught, "The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matt. 20:28). In the kingdom of God, greatness is achieved through becoming a servant. (Matt. 20:25-27, Luke 12:43-44).

**"YOU THEREFORE MUST ENDURE HARSHIP  
AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST.  
NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE  
ENTANGLES HIMSELF WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE,  
THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO  
ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER."**

2 Timothy 2:3-4



**3.**  
**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT**  
**A SOLDIER**  
**OF JESUS CHRIST**



Notice that being a soldier who pleases God has nothing to do with involvement with "the affairs of this life." Our warfare as Christians is not against the ills of society such as abortion, pornography or even political injustices. Our warfare is against "the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:10-18). Our warfare is not against flesh and blood but rather against "principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" (2 Cor. 10:3-5, Eph. 6:10-18). Our battle is a spiritual one for the souls of men. We are here to rescue Americans from America rather than rescuing the earthly kingdom of America itself. Big difference!

**"GOD, WHO HAS RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF  
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, HAS  
GIVEN US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION...  
AND HAS COMMITTED TO US  
THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION.  
THEREFORE WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST,  
AS THOUGH GOD WERE PLEADING THROUGH US...  
BE RECONCILED TO GOD."** 2 Corinthians 5:18-20



**4.**  
**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT**  
**AN AMBASSADOR**  
**FOR JESUS CHRIST**



Many Christians clamor for some kind of ministry or ministry gift. Every Christian already has a ministry-the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors representing the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ, King of the kingdom. No greater honor or position can be bestowed that is greater than an ambassador commissioned to speak for the King of the universe. We are to take the message given to us by our King and deliver it on His behalf. We are to tell them what we have been told, no more, no less. We have a gift from God to give. It is the gift of eternal life.

**“ BUT YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER  
WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU;  
AND YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES TO ME  
IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDEA  
AND SAMARIA,  
AND TO THE END OF THE EARTH!”**

Acts 1:8



5.  
**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT  
A WITNESS  
UNTO JESUS CHRIST**



The biblical concept of being a witness transcends the words we speak. The Pharisees were good with words spoken, but bad with deeds performed. Jesus condemned such “witnessing” (Matt. 23:1-4, Mark 7:6-7). Paul said of his gospel, “...we did not come to you in word only, but also in much power...you know what kind of men we were among you...” (1 Thess. 1:5) Effective witnessing includes a changed life that is demonstrated before men. We must become, “...(an) epistle...known and read by all men... manifestly an epistle of Christ...written...by the Spirit of the living God...” (2 Cor. 3:2-3)

**“YOU ALSO...ARE A HOLY PRIESTHOOD TO OFFER UP  
SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH  
JESUS CHRIST...A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, HIS OWN SPECIAL  
PEOPLE, THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE PRAISES OF HIM  
WHO HAS CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS  
MARVELOUS LIGHT; WHO ONCE WERE NOT A PEOPLE  
BUT ARE NOW THE PEOPLE OF GOD...” 1 Peter 2:5,9-10**



6.  
**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT  
A HOLY, ROYAL  
PRIESTHOOD**



Catholicism teaches that only a few celibate men are called to function as priests. However, God calls every believer to function as a holy and royal priesthood that knows how to offer to God spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ. Seven acceptable sacrifices are plainly stated in God's Word. Do you know what they are? If not, how can you fulfill your calling as a priest to God? Do you realize that you will be judged as to what kind of priest you have been as a follower of Christ?

**"YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH; BUT IF THE SALT  
LOSES ITS FLAVOR...IT IS THEN GOOD FOR NOTHING  
BUT TO BE...TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT BY MEN.  
YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD...  
LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN,  
THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS  
AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN."**

Matthew 5:13-16

7.

**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT**

**THE SALT OF THE EARTH  
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**



Jesus is warning about believers being "worthless salt" who have lost their flavor, their ability to season others, not able to "season your speech with salt" as Paul exhorts in Col. 4:6. Likewise, the believer is commissioned to be "the light of the world." God identified Himself as, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). We are exhorted to, "...walk in the light as He is in the light..." (1 Jn. 1:7). We are also warned to make sure, "...the light in you is not darkness..." (Matt. 6:23)

**"BELOVED, I BEG YOU  
AS SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS,  
ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS  
WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL,  
HAVING YOUR CONDUCT HONORABLE AMONG THE  
GENTILES...THAT THEY MAY, BY YOUR GOOD WORKS  
WHICH THEY OBSERVE, GLORIFY GOD..."**

1 Peter 2:11-12

8.

**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT**

**A STRANGER  
AND  
A PILGRIM  
ON THE EARTH**



Here is a neglected calling among the people of God today! Foreign is, "...here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" (Heb. 11:14) and, "...our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait..." (Phil. 3:20). Christianity, especially here in America, has become an earthbound religion rooted in earthly citizenship in an earthly country. The contents of the U.S. Constitution are more revered as of Divine origin than the contents of the Bible such as the calling to be strangers and pilgrims on earth.

**"...THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING JOINED TOGETHER,  
GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD,  
FOR A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT."**

Ephesians 2:21-22



9.  
**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT  
A SPIRITUAL HOUSE,  
A HOLY TEMPLE**



All of the previous eight priorities are individual ones. Not so the remaining four. These are corporate objectives that require interaction with other believers. It is "living stones" being built together to form a corporate spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5). It is believers "being joined together" and believers "being built together" that becomes "a habitation for God" (Eph. 2:21-22). Isolating ourselves from corporate Christianity will not produce this priority in our lives. We are not to "forsake assembling ourselves together, as is the manner of some..." (Heb. 10:25)

**"...I WRITE SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW  
HOW YOU OUGHT TO CONDUCT YOURSELF  
IN THE HOUSE OF GOD,  
WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD,  
THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH."**

1 Timothy 3:15



10.  
**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT  
THE CHURCH**



Church means "the called-out ones." Hebrews singles out Abraham as being "...called to go out..." (Heb. 11:8). As examples of a people of faith, God said of them, "...had they called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better...a heavenly country"(Heb.11:15-16). What is the church in the eyes of God? It is, "...the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Is the church living up to its name? What is the purpose of the church? Paul says this of the church's highest calling, "...that now the manifest wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Eph. 3:10). Does today's church even know what this means?

**"...BY ONE SPIRIT WE WERE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY  
- WHETHER JEWS OR GREEKS , WHETHER SLAVES OR  
FREE...THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER BUT MANY...  
THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS, YET ONE BODY...  
NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST,  
AND MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY."**

1 Corinthians 12:13-27 excerpts



11.  
**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT  
THE BODY  
OF JESUS CHRIST**



"There are many members, yet one body." Take the time to read all that Paul has to say in this 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you.'" Paul warns, "...there should be no schism in the body, but the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it." Again Paul reiterates, "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually." The body is to function properly with all its members. The body is to be subject to its head which is Christ ( Col. 1:18)

**"...I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND,  
THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU  
AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST.  
BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED  
EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE  
CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY ("SIMPLE PURITY")  
THAT IS IN CHRIST!"** 2 Corinthians 11:1-3



12.  
**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT  
BRIDE  
OF JESUS CHRIST**

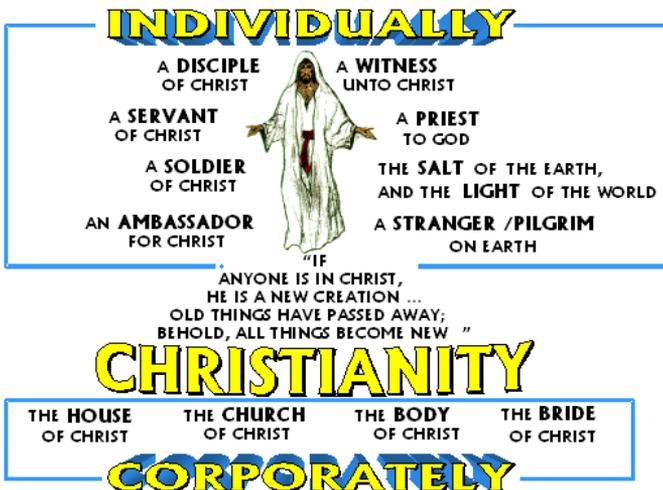


Adam had his bride formed out of a part of his body while he slept. Jesus is called by Paul, "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45). Will the bride of Christ be formed out of the body of the last Adam while it sleeps on earth? Strong possibility in light of Paul's words from 2 Cor. 11:1-3. A prophetic picture is given of the bride, "...the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready. And it was granted to her to be arrayed in fine linen clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev.19:7-8).

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE PRIORITY OF BECOMING A **DISCIPLE** OF JESUS CHRIST

We are studying what are God-ordained priorities for His people. In the previous chapter we identified twelve such criteria specified in God's Word. These specific areas identify the God-given roles in which our Master sees every one of His people. It is important for the Christian to see himself just as God sees him. Why is it so? Because these will be areas of accountability by which God will eventually judge the stewardship of His people (Rom. 14:10-12, 2 Cor. 5:9-10, Luke 12,42-44, 19:11-19, Matt. 25:14-23). These are areas of stewardship that will be measured by Christ in determining the degree of the believer's eternal rewards in Heaven. Eternal life is truly a gift, but eternal rewards are not. In the end, it will matter how we have lived our lives as Christians. Have we followed God's priorities in our lives or have we set our own goals and ambitions as we see best? The illustration below divides these twelve priorities into two categories. Eight of them can be achieved as individual accomplishments. The remaining four are far more difficult as they require corporate involvement with other Christians. There will be a great loss of reward for those believers who do not choose to assemble with their brethren in Christ. They indeed may find it easier not to do so, but it will be proven to be a costly mistake.



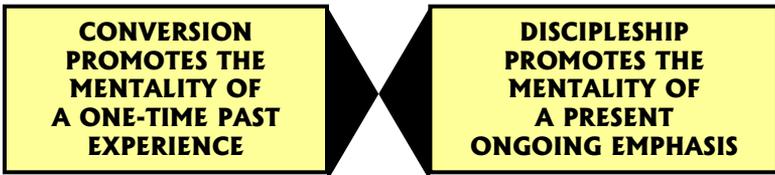
This chapter is dedicated to examining the first individual priority which is to embrace the call of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. It has been well said that, “disciples are made, not born.” Every born-again believer is called to embrace the difficult pathway of being made into a disciple. Many Christians like Christ, but the objective of a disciple is to become Christ-like. Big difference!

Christianity, for the most part, is presented as a one-time **CONVERSION** experience. Jesus did preach the need to be born-again (Jn.3:3-5), but His thrust of emphasis was always upon **DISCIPLESHIP** as the end result of the initial conversion experience. To divorce the conversion experience from the call to discipleship is to turn a difficult decision into an easy one. Jesus prophetically warned that this would happen:

Modern-day presentations of the gospel message divulge a gospel based only on the **CONVERSION** experience instead of one based upon **DISCIPLESHIP**. It is important to see that each of these concepts promotes its own mental outlook (philosophy-way of life) on what constitutes the Christian life:

**“ENTER BY THE NARROW GATE; FOR WIDE IS THE GATE, AND BROAD IS THE WAY THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND THERE ARE MANY WHO GO IN BY IT. BECAUSE NARROW IS THE GATE AND DIFFICULT IS THE WAY WHICH LEADS TO LIFE, AND THERE ARE FEW WHO FIND IT.”**

Matthew 7:13-14



There are two missing ingredients from the gospel as it is presented today. One is the call to “repent,” and the other is “the Kingdom of God.” Conversion is being presented divorced from the prerequisite of repentance, and the end result is failure to enter into the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God. When these two ingredients are removed, what Jesus called “a narrow gate” and “a difficult way” become “a wide gate” and “a broad way.” What is emphasized is the act of faith to receive Jesus, but little is stated about following Jesus.

Below are a few examples of how John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter and Paul preached the gospel. Ask yourself, "Is this what is preached today?"

**"...JOHN THE BAPTIST CAME PREACHING...AND SAYING, "REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND!"**  
Matt. 3:1-2

**REPENT AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL."**  
Mark 1:15

**"REPENT AND BE CONVERTED THAT YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT."** Acts 3:19

**"NOW JESUS WENT ABOUT ALL GALILEE, TEACHING IN THEIR SYNAGOGUES, PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM..."**  
Mat. 4:23

**"MOST ASSUREDLY, I SAY UNTO YOU, UNLESS ONE IS BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD... UNLESS ONE IS BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD... DO NOT MARVEL THAT I SAID TO YOU, 'YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN.' "** John 3:3-7

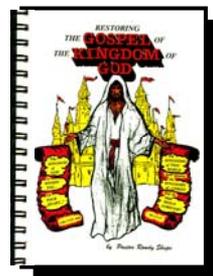
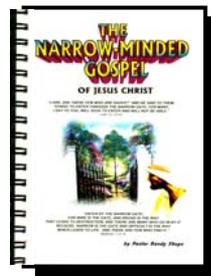
**"AND WHEN THEY HAD PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO THAT CITY AND MADE MANY DISCIPLES, THEY RETURNED... STRENGTHENING THE SOULS OF THE DISCIPLES, EXHORTING THEM TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, AND SAYING, "WE MUST THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS ENTER THE KINGDOM..."** Acts 14:21-22

**"...REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME TO ALL NATIONS."**  
Luke 24:47

**"...JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH AND TO SAY, "REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND."**  
Matt. 4:17

**"...WENT THROUGH EVERY CITY AND VILLAGE, PREACHING AND BRINGING THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD..."**  
Luke 8:1

If the above is not the gist of the message you have heard (or received), then I urge you to order these two books which I have written on these two vital ingredients that are missing in today's watered-down gospel. No one can rise above the level of his vision. We need God's vision of the importance of repentance to be restored, and we need an even greater vision for the significance of the real Kingdom of God. Otherwise, we may settle for Satan's subtle substitute of Christians seizing America and transforming it into the Kingdom of God. These two books will raise the level of your vision to where it belongs. God has great expectations for His people and His Kingdom.



**"I THEREFORE...APPEAL AND BEG YOU TO WALK (LEAD A LIFE) WORTHY OF THE DIVINE CALLING TO WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED – WITH A BEHAVIOR THAT IS A CREDIT TO THE SUMMONS TO GOD'S SERVICE."** Eph. 4:1 Amplified

The Christian is called to much more than "receiving Jesus" and His free gift of eternal life. The new birth is to produce a new life, a life of discipleship. It is not left to our own imagination as to what "discipleship" means. These three passages make it quite clear that we are called with a Divine calling, to be conformed, transformed into the full measure and stature of Jesus Christ. This is not accomplished by the new birth. Note it is this calling to which the Christian has been "predestined." It is not predestined unto salvation, but rather to be conformed into Christ's image. It is a life-long process of progressing from "glory to glory" as we yield our lives to the work of the Holy Spirit.

**"... THOSE WHO ARE THE CALLED  
ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.  
FOR WHOM HE FOREKNEW,  
HE ALSO PREDESTINED  
TO BE CONFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON?"**  
Rom. 8:28-29



**THE  
MAKING  
OF A  
DISCIPLE**

**" BUT WE ALL..  
BEHOLDING..  
THE GLORY OF THE LORD,  
ARE BEING TRANSFORMED  
INTO THE SAME IMAGE  
FROM GLORY TO GLORY.  
BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD.**  
2 Cor. 3:18

**"... TILL WE ALL COME..  
TO A PERFECT MAN,  
TO THE MEASURE  
AND STATURE  
OF THE FULLNESS  
OF CHRIST..."**  
Eph. 4:13

This is discipleship. This is the narrow gate and the difficult way Jesus describes as a path that few will choose to enter. Eliminate discipleship, and salvation becomes a wide gate and a broad way that allows many to easily enter. However, Jesus says this is the way that eventually leads to destruction. Why is it so? Because it creates a lack of purpose and motivation for the Christian life beyond the conversion experience. The word Christian means "a follower of Christ," not one who just receives Christ. If you are going to be a follower of Christ, then you must expect to be "double-crossed" in this life.

## THE CROSS OF THE CHRIST



**"...HAVING MADE  
PEACE THROUGH  
THE BLOOD OF HIS  
CROSS..."** Col.1:20

**"...THAT HE MIGHT  
RECONCILE THEM  
BOTH (Jew and Gentile)  
TO GOD...THROUGH  
THE CROSS..."** Eph. 2:16

**"FOR THE MESSAGE OF THE  
CROSS IS FOOLISHNESS TO  
THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING,  
BUT TO US WHO ARE BEING  
SAVED, IT IS THE POWER OF  
GOD."** 1 Cor. 1:18

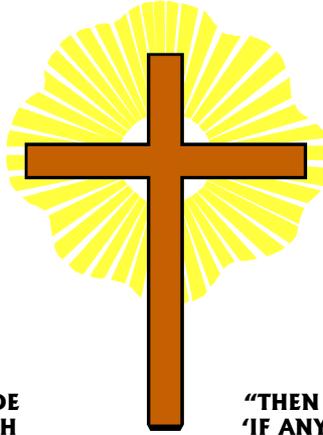
### THE CROSS OF CHRIST JUSTIFIES...

("make innocent,  
make righteous")

The cross of Christ makes  
people  
**TO LIKE CHRIST...**

The cross of Christ  
provides  
**ETERNAL LIFE...**

## THE CROSS OF THE CHRISTIAN



**"THEN HE SAID TO THEM ALL,  
'IF ANYONE DESIRES TO COME  
AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY  
HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP  
HIS CROSS DAILY,  
AND FOLLOW ME.'" Luke 9:23**

**"AND HE WHO DOES NOT  
TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND  
FOLLOW AFTER ME IS NOT  
WORTHY OF ME."** Mat. 10:38

**"AND WHOEVER DOES  
NOT BEAR HIS CROSS AND  
COME AFTER ME CANNOT  
BE MY DISCIPLE."** Luke 14:27

### THE CROSS OF THE CHRISTIAN SANCTIFIES...

("set apart,  
holy in conduct")

The cross of a Christian  
makes the believer  
**TO BE LIKE CHRIST...**

The cross of the Christian  
provides  
**ETERNAL REWARDS...**

Take the time to read this stark contrast of two churches described in the New Testament:

**REMAIN  
CONVERTS  
TO CHRIST**

**"I COULD NOT SPEAK  
TO YOU AS TO  
SPIRITUAL PEOPLE  
BUT AS TO CARNAL,  
AS TO  
BABES IN CHRIST.  
I FED YOU WITH MILK  
AND NOT WITH SOLID  
FOOD; FOR UNTIL NOW  
YOU ARE STILL NOT ABLE  
TO RECEIVE IT, AND EVEN  
NOW YOU ARE STILL NOT  
ABLE, YOU ARE STILL  
CARNAL.  
FOR WHERE THERE IS  
ENVY, STRIFE, AND  
DIVISIONS AMONG YOU,  
ARE YOU NOT CARNAL  
AND  
BEHAVING LIKE  
MERE MEN?  
1 Cor. 3:1-3**

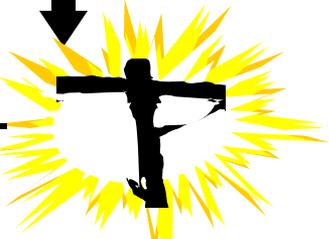
**BECOME  
DISCIPLES  
OF CHRIST**

**"YOU BECAME  
FOLLOWERS OF US  
AND OF THE LORD,  
HAVING RECEIVED THE WORD  
IN MUCH AFFLICTION, WITH  
JOY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, SO  
THAT YOU BECAME EXAMPLES  
TO ALL...WHO BELIEVE.  
FOR FROM YOU THE WORD  
OF THE LORD HAS SOUNDED  
FORTH...IN EVERY PLACE.  
YOUR FAITH TOWARD GOD HAS  
GONE OUT, SO THAT  
WE DO NOT NEED TO SAY  
ANYTHING...YOU TURNED TO  
GOD FROM IDOLS TO SERVE  
THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD,  
AND TO WAIT FOR HIS SON  
FROM HEAVEN...  
WHO DELIVERS US FROM  
THE WRATH TO COME."  
1 Thess. 1:6-10**

Both churches were founded by and were under the personal care of the apostle Paul. That implies that they did not lack for proper teaching, so why the difference between them? Why is one remaining so carnal and immature while the other is so obviously self-motivated and filled with dynamic results visible to the eye? The answer lies in the personal choice made between remaining a convert to Christ vs. embracing the call to discipleship. We know well the saying, "Birds of a feather, flock together." The carnal will flock to its own kind for it breeds contentment. The spiritual, however, will flock to the gathering of those who are spiritually-minded and inspire and motivate one another to even greater things.

What makes the difference between remaining carnal (like Corinth) or becoming spiritual (like Thessalonica)? It is whether, and to what degree, we embrace the cross and the Word in our lives. Paul can preach till he is blue in the face! The carnal-minded believer will not allow into his life the power of the cross or the power of the Word. They are satisfied to be carnal converts that have escaped hellfire via the new birth. Who needs more?

# THE TWIN FOUNDATION STONES OF DISCIPLESHIP



**THE CROSS**  
"THEN HE SAID TO THEM ALL,  
**'IF**  
ANYONE DESIRES TO COME  
AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY  
HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS  
CROSS DAILY, AND  
FOLLOW ME."  
Luke 9:23

**"AND WHOEVER DOES  
NOT BEAR HIS CROSS  
AND COME AFTER ME  
CANNOT BE  
MY DISCIPLE."**  
Luke 14:27



**THE WORD**  
"THEN HE SAID TO  
THOSE JEWS WHO  
BELIEVED HIM,  
**'IF**  
YOU ABIDE (CONTINUE)  
IN MY WORD,  
YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES  
INDEED.  
AND YOU SHALL  
KNOW THE TRUTH,  
AND  
THE TRUTH  
SHALL  
MAKE YOU FREE.' "  
John 8:31-32

## "IF"

is the biggest little word in the Bible. In these verses there are two uses of the word "IF."

Every Christian must be confronted by these conditional words of Jesus for there can be no meaningful discipleship apart from embracing them both.

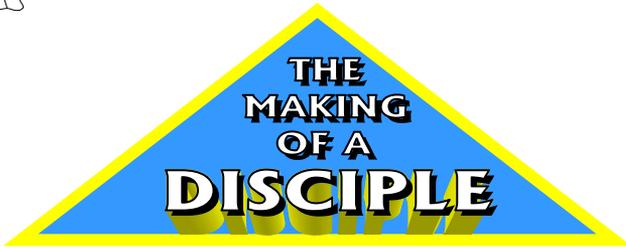
One "if" calls us to embrace the daily cross of denying the self life in order to live selflessly for Christ.

The other "if" calls us to continue in God's Word far beyond what is recorded as the conversion experience. There is much more freedom ahead for the Christian who chooses to continue in truth.

We have identified the twin foundations of discipleship: the cross and the Word. Let us now add the third element of discipleship which is the capstone to this spiritual pyramid: the Holy Spirit. Notice that all three are sources of Divine POWER:



**SPIRIT POWER**  
"BUT YOU SHALL RECEIVE  
**POWER**  
WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT  
HAS COME UPON YOU..."  
Acts 1:8



**(THE TWIN FOUNDATION STONES OF DISCIPLESHIP)**



**CROSS POWER**

"FOR THE MESSAGE OF  
THE CROSS..  
TO US WHO ARE BEING SAVED  
IT IS THE  
**POWER**  
OF GOD."  
1 Cor. 1:18



**WORD POWER**

"FOR THE WORD OF GOD...  
IS ALIVE AND  
FULL OF  
**POWER..."**  
Heb. 4:12 Amplified

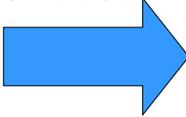
The Greek word translated in these verses as "power" is "dunamis." It means, "worker of miracles, strength, abundance and mighty wonderful work" (Strong's Concordance #1411). It is the source from which we get the word "dynamite." Discipleship is not a white-knuckle-club based on human energy and effort trying to be what God wants us to be. God knows we need supernatural ("dynamite") power, and it is available in abundance to the willing and submitted believer.

Discipleship mainly centers upon the soul of the believer. The soul consists of the mind, the will, and the emotions. Who is not aware that these three areas are the prime targets for Satan's temptations? God wants to restore our soul (Psm.23:3). How will this be accomplished? By means of His three sources of Divine dunamis power. He intends to start with the mind being renewed by the power of God's Word. The principle of "taking up our cross and denying self" brings power to our will. A renewed mind will help the will to make the right choices. The fruit of the Spirit is given to bring our emotions under the power and control of the Holy Spirit. Uncontrolled emotions get us in trouble. The emotions are not to control our mind or our will.

## "THE DISCIPLINED DISCIPLE"

1. A DISCIPLINED POWER OF

**MIND**



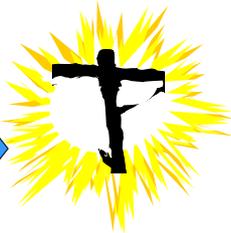
**THE WORD**



2. A DISCIPLINED

**WILL**

POWER OF



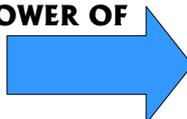
**THE CROSS**



3. DISCIPLINED

**EMOTIONS**

POWER OF



**THE SPIRIT**

These passages from Romans Chapter 12 gives us the proper order for the soul in God's sight:

# “THE DISCIPLINED DISCIPLE”

HAS A SOUL IN RIGHT ORDER:

1. A DISCIPLINED

**MIND**

“AND DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND,



2. A DISCIPLINED

**WILL**

THAT YOU MAY PROVE WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD”



3. DISCIPLINED

**EMOTIONS**

...BE KINDLY AFFECTIONATE TO ONE ANOTHER WITH BROTHERLY LOVE..FERVENT IN SPIRIT..REJOICING IN HOPE, PATIENT IN TRIBULATION BLESS THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU; BLESS AND DO NOT CURSE. REJOICE WITH THOSE WHO REJOICE, AND WEEP WITH THOSE WHO WEEP

The renewing of the mind transforms the believer's way of thinking from continued conformity to this world. Principles and philosophy of the Word take priority over those of the world.

We change how we think. If we change how we think it will impact our decisions. The will is where we make our decisions based upon what we value as right thinking in our minds.

The third passage from Romans is filled with emotional outpourings such as “affectionate,,fervent...rejoicing...weeping.” Here we find that the right use of our emotions are out-workings of a renewed mind and an influenced will.

Contrast the above to how the soul of the undisciplined (believer or unbeliever) becomes inverted. What one feels emotionally overrides the will and the mind. These undisciplined emotions rule the soul:

# “THE UNDISCIPLINED DISCIPLE”

HAS AN INVERTED SOUL:

1. UNDISCIPLINED

**EMOTIONS**



2. UNDISCIPLINED

**WILL**



3. UNDISCIPLINED

**MIND**



We need not be rocket scientists to grasp this simple truth. Either we follow the pathway of the Holy Spirit in establishing discipline in our souls or, although we are converted to Christ, we remain carnal Christians that continue to “behave like mere men.” I suggest the careful pondering of the Eighth Chapter of Romans, for such carnality is not a safe place to remain as a Christian. The contrast of the order and disorder of the soul explains why we have these two contrasting examples of churches recorded for us:

**“I COULD NOT SPEAK TO YOU AS TO SPIRITUAL PEOPLE BUT AS TO CARNAL, AS TO BABES IN CHRIST. I FED YOU WITH MILK AND NOT WITH SOLID FOOD; FOR UNTIL NOW YOU ARE STILL NOT ABLE TO RECEIVE IT, AND EVEN NOW YOU ARE STILL NOT ABLE, YOU ARE STILL CARNAL. FOR WHERE THERE IS ENVY, STRIFE, AND DIVISIONS AMONG YOU, ARE YOU NOT CARNAL AND BEHAVING LIKE MERE MEN?  
1 Cor. 3:1-3**

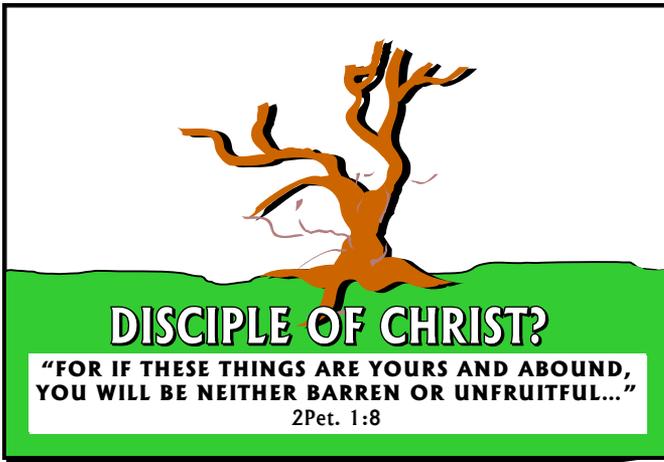
**“YOU BECAME FOLLOWERS OF US AND OF THE LORD, HAVING RECEIVED THE WORD IN MUCH AFFLICTION, WITH JOY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, SO THAT YOU BECAME EXAMPLES TO ALL...WHO BELIEVE. FOR FROM YOU THE WORD OF THE LORD HAS SOUNDED FORTH...IN EVERY PLACE. YOUR FAITH TOWARD GOD HAS GONE OUT, SO THAT WE DO NOT NEED TO SAY ANYTHING...YOU TURNED TO GOD FROM IDOLS TO SERVE THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD, AND TO WAIT FOR HIS SON FROM HEAVEN... WHO DELIVERS US FROM THE WRATH TO COME.”  
1 Thess. 1:6-10**

Which “church” shall you be part of in the eyes of God? Paul taught them both so we must conclude that it takes more than hearing the Word of God taught properly. I believe it is your choice to make, as it is also mine, to become a disciple.

Fruit must be grown, it is not a gift. How can one produce the fruit of the Spirit in their life? I believe the answer lies in this parable that Jesus told:

**"A CERTAIN MAN HAD A FIG TREE PLANTED IN HIS VINEYARD, AND HE CAME SEEKING FRUIT ON IT AND FOUND NONE. THEN HE SAID TO THE KEEPER OF HIS VINEYARD, 'LOOK, FOR THREE YEARS I HAVE COME SEEKING FRUIT ON THIS FIG TREE AND FIND NONE. CUT IT DOWN; WHY DOES IT USE UP THE GROUND?' BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, 'SIR, LET IT ALONE THIS YEAR ALSO, UNTIL I DIG AROUND IT AND FERTILIZE IT. AND IF IT BEARS FRUIT, WELL. BUT IF NOT, AFTER THAT YOU CAN CUT IT DOWN.'"**

We can't say we are a disciple and look like this barren tree. The proper picture the world needs to see is the bottom one which is filled with fruit prepared for the taking.

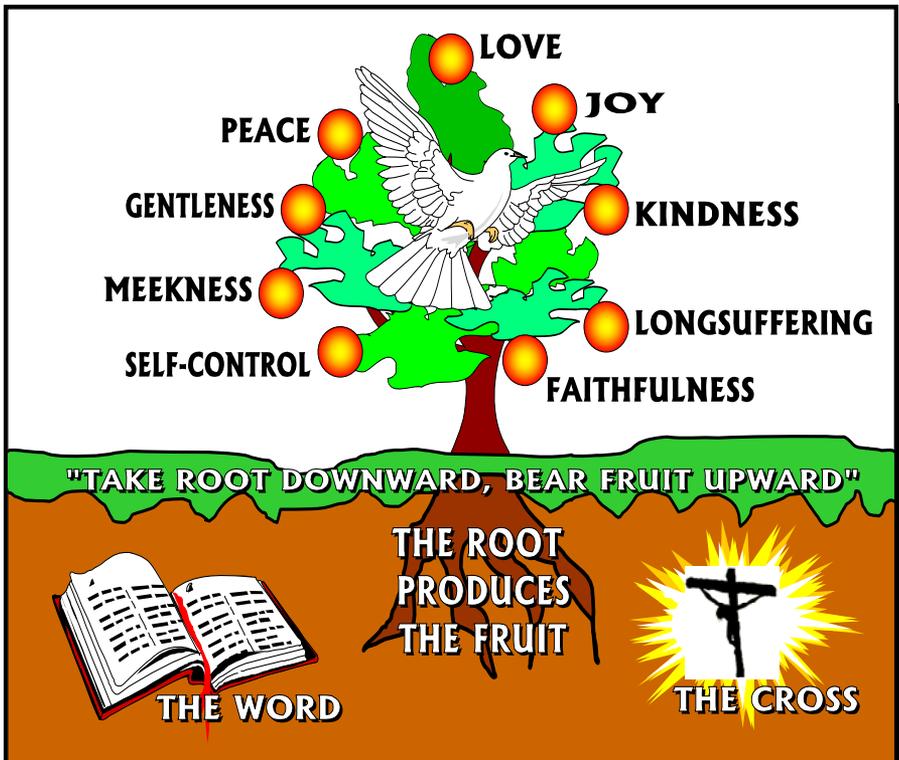


One who ignores the call to discipleship is like the barren tree that continues to fail to show any fruit as evidence of being alive. What is the cure? It is to dig around its roots and fertilize the ground.

When it comes to bearing the Fruit of the Spirit as outward evidence of being a disciple of Christ, we must realize that the initiative to "dig and fertilize" belongs to the disciple, not the Spirit. As the believer utilizes the Word of God to renew the mind and takes up his/her cross daily in order to deny self, the mandate to "dig and fertilize" is fulfilled. As illustrated in this diagram, "the root produces the fruit." This is a repeated principle of God's Word

# “...TAKE ROOT DOWNWARD, AND BEAR FRUIT UPWARD.”

2 Kings 19:30, Isa. 37:31



Often I hear people exclaim in frustration, “I called on the Holy Spirit for manifestation of His fruit, but nothing happened.” As I stated earlier, there is a distinction between “the gifts of the Spirit” and “the fruit of the Spirit.” When it comes to manifestation of the fruit of “self-control, meekness, gentleness, faithfulness, long-suffering, kindness, love, joy and peace,” they are the outworking of the Word and the cross being sown into our daily lives as disciples. The root produces the fruit. The Holy Spirit does not give fruit as a gift. If we are not consistently “digging around and fertilizing the ground,” then the root cannot produce the fruit when we desire it. We remain a tree that is “barren and unfruitful” in times of crisis.

Prepare the ground of your heart by choosing to be a disciple with a Word and cross mentality to guide your steps. Yes it is true, it is the “narrow gate” and the “difficult way,” but it leads to a life that is well-pleasing to the Master.

**"ESTABLISHING  
RIGHT  
PRIORITIES  
IN A WRONG WORLD"**



Priorities-we all have them. The question must be asked, "Where are we getting them from?" Are they in harmony with God's Word or with this present world?



WHAT ARE MY PRIORITIES  
IN LIFE?  
ARE THEY IN HARMONY WITH  
GOD'S EXPRESSED WILL  
FOR ME?  
COULD I BE DOING MY  
OWN THING?

**"EXAMINE AND TEST AND EVALLIATE  
YOUR OWN SELVES TO SEE WHETHER  
YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH AND  
SHOWING THE PROPER FRUITS OF IT."**

**2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified**

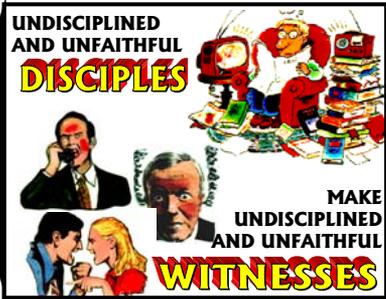
# CHAPTER TWO

## THE PRIORITY OF BECOMING A **WITNESS** UNTO JESUS CHRIST

We have examined what constitutes becoming a disciple of Christ, we will now ponder what it means to be a witness unto Jesus Christ. Notice that the one who calls us to be witnesses was Himself a “faithful and true witness.” God never asks of His people more than what He was Himself. As the Scripture states, “It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher...” (Matt. 10:25).



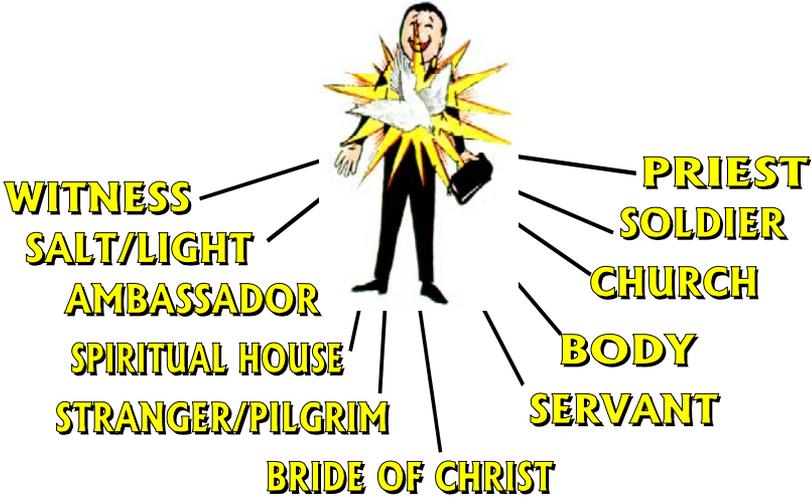
The priority of being a good witness cannot be divorced from our previous subject of being a good disciple. The call to be witnesses unto Christ comes from the one who was Himself, “the faithful and true witness.” Consider well the contrast below, for our ability to effectively witness can only flow out of what kind of disciple we have become:



Of the twelve priorities we are considering, discipleship is the key that unlocks the remaining eleven priorities:

# **DISCIPLESHIP**

**IS A LIFELONG PROCESS OF LEARNING HOW TO BECOME A**



Our present subject is the call to be a witness. It has been well said that, “action speaks louder than words.” What we do can either enhance or distract from the words we say. What we say may be totally correct and true, but if it flows from a life that is contradictory to what we say, our words have little or no impact. Place the proper emphasis upon being a good disciple and you will also be a good witness.

Mahatma Gandhi formed one of the world’s largest cults after first rejecting Christianity. Sadly, he stated as his reason, “Of all the world’s religions, Christianity is the most noble...I would have become a follower of Christ had it not been for Christians.” Our actions do speak louder than our words.

We don’t usually think of Jesus as a disciple, but the Scriptures prove otherwise. The words He spoke came directly from His Father. The life of Jesus was one of constant tutorship (discipleship) by His Father. His “faithful and true witness” flowed out of that intense, personal discipleship. The same must be true for the Christian. If we are to be a “faithful and true witness” unto Jesus Christ, then we must take our direction (tutorship, discipleship) directly from the Word of God which, in essence, is Christ (Jn.1:1,14, Rev.19:13). Only then we will know what to speak and even when to speak.

## JESUS AS A DISCIPLE:

**"THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF, BUT WHAT HE SEES THE FATHER DO;**

**FOR WHATEVER HE DOES, THE SON ALSO DOES IN LIKE MANNER.**

**FOR THE FATHER LOVES THE SON AND SHOWS HIM ALL THINGS THAT HE HIMSELF DOES..."**

Jn. 5:19-20



**"I SPEAK TO THE WORLD THOSE THINGS WHICH I HEARD FROM HIM..."**

**I DO NOTHING OF MYSELF, BUT AS THE FATHER TAUGHT ME, I SPEAK THESE THINGS...**

**I ALWAYS DO THOSE THINGS THAT PLEASE HIM."**

Jn. 8:28-29

**"IT IS ENOUGH FOR A DISCIPLE THAT HE BE LIKE HIS TEACHER**

**..."**

Matt. 10:25

## THE CHRISTIAN AS A DISCIPLE:

**"THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF, BUT WHAT HE SEES THE FATHER DO;**

**FOR WHATEVER HE DOES, THE SON ALSO DOES IN LIKE MANNER.**

**FOR THE FATHER LOVES THE SON AND SHOWS HIM ALL THINGS THAT HE HIMSELF DOES..."**

Jn. 5:19-20



**"I SPEAK TO THE WORLD THOSE THINGS WHICH I HEARD FROM HIM..."**

**I DO NOTHING OF MYSELF, BUT AS THE FATHER TAUGHT ME, I SPEAK THESE THINGS...**

**I ALWAYS DO THOSE THINGS THAT PLEASE HIM."**

Jn. 8:28-29

Such Divine discipleship is evidence of true humility and dependence upon someone greater than ourselves. Consider two expressions of such dependence and humility:

**"OH LORD, I KNOW THE WAY OF MAN IS NOT IN HIMSELF; IT IS NOT IN MAN WHO WALKS TO DIRECT HIS OWN STEPS.**

**O LORD, CORRECT ME, BUT WITH JUSTICE; NOT IN YOUR ANGER, LEST YOU BRING ME TO NOTHING."**

Jer. 10:23-24

**"THE LORD HAS GIVEN ME THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED, THAT I SHOULD KNOW HOW TO SPEAK A WORD IN SEASON TO HIM WHO IS WEARY. HE AWAKENS ME MORNING BY MORNING, HE AWAKENS MY EAR TO HEAR AS THE LEARNED. THE LORD HAS OPENED MY EAR; AND I WAS NOT REBELLIOUS, NOR DID I TURN AWAY...THE LORD WILL HELP ME; THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE DISGRACED."**

Isa. 50:4,7

I would like you to consider below what I refer to as "the creed of a witness." A creed is a declaration, a statement of principles or beliefs that are designed to govern conduct and behavior. This particular creed is taken from Paul's dissertation about Christianity found in 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 and the following Chapter, 2 Cor. 3:1-6.

As you read through it you will see that Paul uses two different illustrations to convey what Christianity should convey. The first illustration is that of the believer being the "fragrance and aroma" of Christ, and the second depicts the believer as "an epistle" that when read, it reflects Christ.

14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us <sup>manifests</sup> diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and <sup>among those who are perishing.</sup> [2 Cor. 4:3]

16 To the one we are the aroma of death to death, and to the other the aroma of life to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

17 For we are not, as <sup>\*so many,</sup> <sup>\*peddling</sup> the word of God; but as <sup>\*of sincerity,</sup> but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ. 2 Pet. 2:3 • *adulterating for gain* • 2 Cor. 1:12

**D**o <sup>\*we</sup> begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some *others*, <sup>\*epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?</sup>

2 \*You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

3 you are manifestly an epistle of Christ, <sup>\*ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not <sup>\*on</sup> tablets of stone but <sup>\*on</sup> tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.</sup>

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God.

5 <sup>\*Not</sup> that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

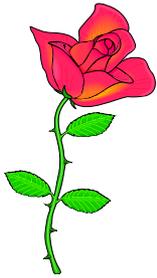
6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not <sup>\*of</sup> the letter but of the <sup>\*Spirit</sup>; for <sup>\*the</sup> letter kills, <sup>\*but</sup> the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor. 2:14-3:-6

## THE CREED OF A WITNESS

Paul chooses two practical illustrations to which we can easily relate to. One is likening Christianity to what we can smell with our noses and the other illustration likens it to what we can read with our own eyes. The reason Paul uses such plain illustrations is to drill home the point that our witness for the most part is to unbelievers that still abide in darkness. They need tangible, visible means to be impacted. It does not get any more simple than what we can smell with our noses and see with our eyes.

**FRAGRANCE...  
AROMA...**



14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. *manifests*

15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. [2 Cor. 4:3]

16 To the one we are the aroma of death to death, and to the other the aroma of life to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

17 For we are not, as *so many*, peddling the word of God; but as *of sincerity*, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ. 2 Pet. 2:3 · adulterating for gain · 2 Cor. 1:12

**AN EPISTLE...  
(LETTER)**

**KNOWN  
AND READ  
BY ALL MEN...**

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, *epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?*

2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men.

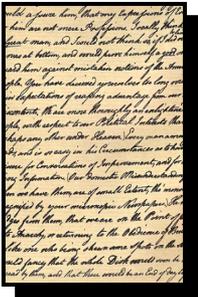
3 you are manifestly an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God.

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor. 2:14-3:-6



**THE CREED OF  
A WITNESS**

We all know that life in the natural realm consists of a mixture of things that smell good and things that smell bad, some very bad! Here is a contrast of examples:

FRAGRANCE...  
AROMA...

W  
I  
T  
N  
E  
S  
S



PERFUME...  
THANKSGIVING  
TURKEY...  
FRESH AIR...  
FRESH BREAD...  
FRESH FLOWERS...  
FRESHLY BREWED  
COFFEE...  
**SMELLS  
GOOD**

FRAGRANCE...  
AROMA...

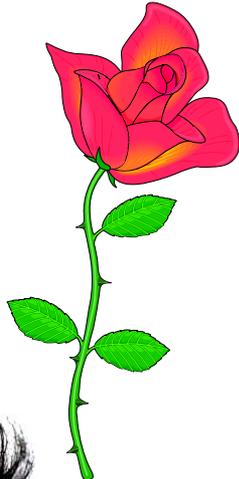
W  
I  
T  
N  
E  
S  
S



BAD BREATH...  
DIRTY DIAPERS...  
WET TENNIS  
SHOES...  
CIGARETTE ODOR  
ROTTEN GARBAGE  
SKUNK ODOR...  
WASTE  
TREATMENT  
PLANTS...  
**SMELLS  
BAD**

We know all too well that we are turned on by things that smell good, but we are turned off by things that smell bad. No one lingers in the presence of bad smells. How does our witnessing smell to others?

**“THROUGH US DIFFUSES THE FRAGRANCE OF HIS KNOWLEDGE IN EVERY PLACE...WE ARE TO GOD THE FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST AMONG THOSE WHO ARE BEING SAVED AND AMONG THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING. TO THE ONE WE ARE THE AROMA OF DEATH TO DEATH, AND THE OTHER THE AROMA OF LIFE TO LIFE...”**  
2 Cor. 2:14-15



**“DEAD FLIES PUTREFY THE PERFUMER’S OINTMENT, AND CAUSE IT TO GIVE OFF A FOUL ODOR; SO DOES A LITTLE FOLLY (GIVE OFF A FOUL ODOR) TO ONE RESPECTED FOR WISDOM AND HONOR.”**  
Ecc. 10:1-2



Let me stress the point that we may speak words as a witness that are perfect, but it may be our actions that make what we say ineffective. How we live is such an important part of witnessing. The point can be made by considering two of the ten commandments:



Taking the name of the Lord in vain has nothing to do with using the Lord's name in profanity. Rather it speaks of those who name the name of the Lord (such as Christian), but do not live in such a way that brings honor to that name. This individual has received the name of the Lord in vain, in a useless, non-productive manner.

This is why Paul exhorts, "...let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19). It is quite possible to say I am a Christian, but not live like one. I have taken His name in vain. In doing so, I can also break the spirit of the ninth commandment.

My witness as a lifestyle is a false one in spite of my correct words. The Pharisees responded to Jesus with the question, "Who is my neighbor?" The word means "those close to you." These are the people who know us best.



If you are going to be a good witness for Christ, you must also be a good disciple of Christ. We must not take the name of the Lord in vain nor bear a false witness by living differently than what we speak. This is hypocrisy which God hates.

We do not just witness to those who are perishing, but also to those who are being saved (2 Cor. 2:15).

According to Paul, we are the aroma of "death to death" to the brethren and we are the aroma of "life to life" to the lost. This is a paradox to say the least!

However, it is truth. We witness to believers in a different way than to unbelievers. We represent "death" to the believer and "life" to the unbeliever.

## "FOR WE ARE TO GOD THE FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST"



"AMONG  
THOSE WHO  
ARE  
BEING SAVED..."

"AMONG  
THOSE WHO  
ARE  
PERISHING."

**TO THE ONE WE ARE THE AROMA OF  
DEATH TO DEATH, AND THE OTHER  
THE AROMA OF LIFE TO LIFE..."**

2 Cor. 2:14-15

The thrust of Scriptures support this concept. Here are a few examples:

**THE AROMA OF  
"DEATH  
to  
DEATH"**



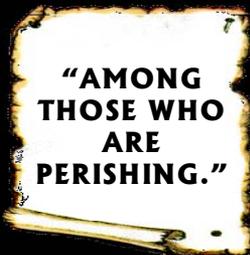
**"I DIE DAILY"**

1 Cor. 15:31

**"RECKON  
YOURSELVES TO  
BE  
DEAD INDEED  
TO SIN,  
BUT ALIVE  
TO GOD  
IN CHRIST JESUS  
OUR LORD."**

Rom. 6:11

**THE AROMA OF  
"LIFE  
to  
LIFE"**



**"I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED  
WITH CHRIST,  
IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE,  
BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME,  
AND THE LIFE WHICH  
I NOW LIVE IN THE FLESH  
I LIVE BY FAITH  
IN THE SON OF GOD,  
WHO LOVED ME  
AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME."**

Gal.2:20

**"THE THIEF DOES NOT COME  
EXCEPT TO STEAL, AND TO  
KILL, AND TO DESTROY.  
I HAVE COME  
THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE,  
AND THAT THEY MAY HAVE IT  
MORE ABUNDANTLY."**

John 10:10

Are you beginning to see that witnessing encompasses much more than giving out a simple tract containing the "Roman Road to Salvation" or "God's Four Spiritual Laws"? Such literature is helpful, but it is not all-inclusive. Mahatma Gandhi was looking for more, and so are all sincere seekers of truth. People watch what you do as well as listen to what you say.

**"FOR WE ARE TO GOD  
THE FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST"**



**"AMONG  
THOSE WHO  
ARE  
BEING SAVED..."**

**"AMONG  
THOSE WHO  
ARE  
PERISHING."**

**TO THE ONE WE ARE THE AROMA OF  
DEATH TO DEATH, AND THE OTHER THE  
AROMA OF LIFE TO LIFE..."**  
2 Cor. 2:14-15

There is another means by which we can grasp the depth of being a witness for Christ. Consider this:

**"...AND YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES TO ME..."** Acts 1:8  
(Greek-"Martus"  
3144 Strong's Concordance)

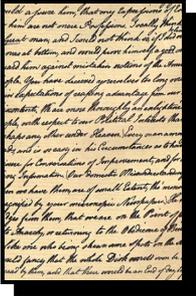
The word translated as "witness" is also rendered in other places as "martyr." To be a witness for Christ is to be a martyr for Christ. We saw that Christ Himself was a witness, and we also know that He suffered a martyr's death. God never asks of His people what He has not done Himself. Perhaps God may not ask of all of us to die for Him as a martyr (witness). However, He certainly is asking of all of us to be a "living martyr" for Him. That is ongoing discipleship, being a living martyr ( witness) for Jesus. It is significant to note that the martyr's crown is promised to those who live for Christ as well as those who die for Him:

**"...BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH  
AND I WILL GIVE YOU  
THE CROWN OF LIFE."**  
Rev. 2:10

**"...BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION;  
FOR WHEN HE HAS BEEN PROVED, HE WILL RECEIVE  
THE CROWN OF LIFE  
WHICH THE LORD HAS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."**  
James 1:12

Paul's second illustration in this "creed of a witness" from 2 Corinthians portrays what Christianity is to be like, which is of being an "epistle of Christ" that is capable of being "known and read by all men."

**AN EPISTLE...  
(LETTER)  
KNOWN  
AND READ  
BY ALL MEN...**



**D**O we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?

2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

3 you are manifestly an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God.

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor. 2:14-3:-6



Perhaps you have heard people under public scrutiny use the phrase, "we are an open book" in trying to convey sincerity and integrity. What they are saying is, "we have nothing to hide or conceal."

**"...YOU ARE OUR EPISTLE...KNOWN AND READ BY ALL MEN;  
YOU ARE MANIFESTLY AND EPISTLE OF CHRIST...  
WRITTEN NOT WITH INK  
BUT BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD,  
NOT ON TABLETS OF STONE BUT ON TABLETS OF FLESH,  
THAT IS, OF THE HEART."**

2 Cor. 3:2-3

We must not quickly gloss over what is written above, for the magnitude of what is being said about God's intention for the Spirit-led believer in Christ is mind-boggling truth!

**“...YOU ARE OUR EPISTLE...KNOWN  
AND READ BY ALL MEN;  
YOU ARE MANIFESTLY AND EPISTLE OF  
CHRIST... WRITTEN NOT WITH INK  
BUT BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING  
GOD, NOT ON TABLETS OF STONE BUT  
ON TABLETS OF FLESH, THAT IS, OF  
THE HEART.”**

2 Cor. 3:2-3

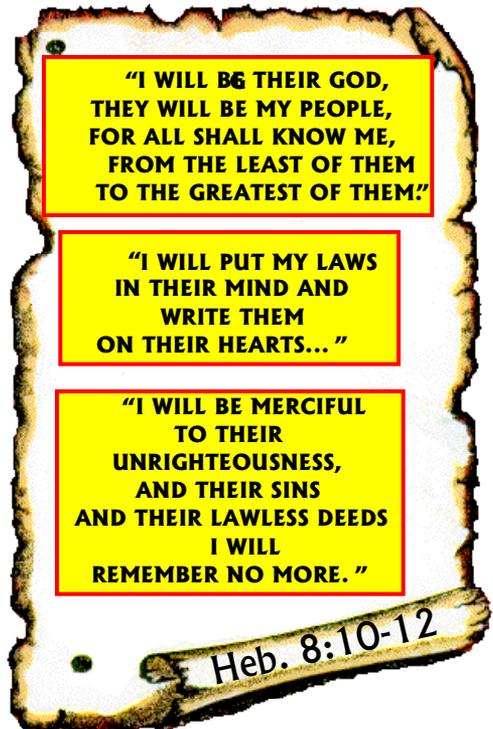


But now there is a promise of a great new thing that God intends to perform. He will make the Spirit-led believer to become an “epistle of Christ” that will be written by the same Spirit who authored the Word of God.

This will not be an epistle written with ink, such as given to the apostle Paul on many occasions, nor will it be etched on tablets of stone, but rather it will take place upon a living, walking, talking epistle that has God’s Word written on the fleshly tablets of the heart!

What Paul states in 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 is merely an elaboration of what is recorded in one of the three terms of the New Covenant found in Hebrews 8:10-12.

The epistle of Hebrews states simply that God’s intention is to “...put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts...” Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3:2-3, is filling in the details as to how this term of the covenant will be accomplished. It will take place by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of submitted believers who choose to become disciples in order to be effective witnesses.



Let me emphasize once more that witnessing does not begin with words, but rather with deeds. Effective witnessing flows out of who we are, not merely out of what we say. It is my firm conviction that effective witnessing flows out of discipleship.

These two passages will support that concept:

We walk it before we talk it. Both of these passages clearly state that witnessing takes place by ANSWERING the inquiry made by the unbeliever. They see something-they ask something. They don't see anything-they don't ask anything.

**“WALK IN WISDOM TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE, REDEEMING THE TIME. LET YOUR SPEECH ALWAYS BE WITH GRACE, SEASONED WITH SALT, THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW YOU OUGHT TO ANSWER EACH ONE.”**

Col. 4:5-6

**“SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR HEARTS, AND ALWAYS BE READY TO GIVE A DEFENSE TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU A REASON OF THE HOPE THAT IS WITHIN YOU, WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR.”**

1 Pet. 3:15

**TRUE AND FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLES**



We ought to know how we are to “answer each one,” and we are to be ready to give a defense to everyone “who asks you” for a reason of the hope that is within you.



**MAKE  
TRUE AND FAITHFUL  
WITNESSES**

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE PRIORITY OF BECOMING A

# SOLDIER

## OF JESUS CHRIST



**“BUT YOU  
O MAN OF GOD...  
FIGHT THE GOOD  
FIGHT OF FAITH...”**

1 Tim. 6:11-12

**“YOU THEREFORE  
MUST ENDURE  
HARDSHIP AS A GOOD  
SOLDIER OF JESUS  
CHRIST.**

**NO ONE ENGAGED IN  
WARFARE ENTANGLES  
HIMSELF  
WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS  
LIFE,  
THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM  
WHO  
ENLISTED HIM  
AS A SOLDIER.”**

2 Tim. 2:3-4

To use a popular phrase to summarize the above passages of Scripture, “Them’s fightin’ words!” Yes, they are. However, we must properly define what is really meant by them. In a country steeped in the patriotic philosophy of “God and country,” multitudes of American Christians think they know what “fighting the good fight of faith” is all about. After all, we have done it through two World Wars. In spiritual ignorance Christians have embraced the songwriter’s bad theological mix of, “Praise God, and pass the ammunition!” However, such religiously-inspired patriotic enthusiasm has not been limited to Christians in America.

Consider the so-called divine inspiration by which the majority of Christian Germans were duped twice, in two World Wars, into goose-stepping across Europe with their destructive war machines:

### **“GOD WITH US”**

banner



### **“GOD WITH US”**

Nazi belt buckle



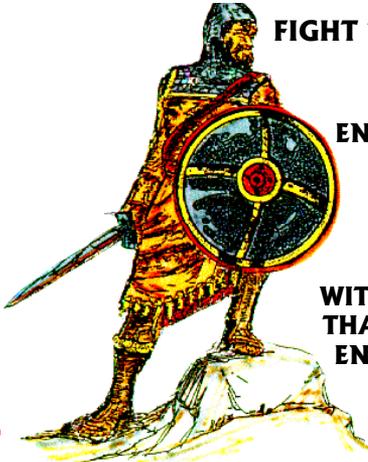
“God with us” was on their banners and engraved on their government-issued belt buckles. Convince the people of “God with us” and it makes a powerful ally to execute any earthly cause. It is well-documented that Adolf Hitler believed himself to be a good German Lutheran Christian who was merely carrying out the expressed wishes of Martin Luther concerning the Jews. Consider these unbelievable comments from a lengthy treatise written by the revered founder of the Protestant reformation, Martin Luther:

***On the Jews and Their Lies*** is a 65,000-word treatise written by Martin Luther in 1543. In the treatise, Luther wrote that the Jews are a ***“base, whoring people, that is, no people of God, and their boast of lineage, circumcision, and law must be accounted as filth.”*** ***They are full of the “devil’s feces ... which they wallow in like swine,”*** and the synagogue is an ***“incorrigible whore and an evil slut ...”*** He argues that ***“their synagogues and schools should be set on fire, their prayer books destroyed, rabbis forbidden to preach, homes razed, and property and money confiscated. They should be shown no mercy or kindness, afforded no legal protection, and these “poisonous envenomed worms” should be drafted into forced labor or expelled for all time.”*** He also advocates their murder, writing ***“we are at fault in not slaying them.”***

The treatise exercised a major and persistent influence on Germany’s attitude toward its Jewish citizens between the Reformation and the Holocaust.”

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On\\_the\\_Jews\\_and\\_Their\\_Lies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Jews_and_Their_Lies))

Pertaining to the subject of war, I am reminded of what Jesus said about the poor, "For you have the poor with you always" (Matt. 26:11). Not only do we have the poor with us always, but we have war with us always. Earthly kingdoms fight earthly wars one with another and will continue to do so until the Lord Jesus Christ establishes His Kingdom on earth during His Millennial reign. Only then shall it come to pass, "...they shall learn war no more" (Isa.2:4). However, this is a future dispensation that is not applicable to this present time. Right now, His Kingdom is "not of this world."



**"BUT YOU O MAN OF GOD...  
FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH..."**

1 Tim. 6:11-12

**"YOU THEREFORE MUST  
ENDURE HARDSHIP AS A GOOD  
SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST.**

**NO ONE  
ENGAGED IN WARFARE  
ENTANGLES HIMSELF  
WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE,  
THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO  
ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER."**

2 Tim. 2:3-4

**"MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.  
IF MY KINGDOM WERE OF THIS WORLD,  
MY SERVANTS WOULD FIGHT...  
BUT NOW MY KINGDOM IS NOT FROM HERE."**

Jn. 18:36



Here is the foundational truth that Jesus established 2,000 years ago at His first coming and remains in effect until His second coming. Inbetween His first and second coming, this foundational principle is to govern the actions of His people on earth pertaining to all earthly kingdoms

This foundational truth Jesus expresses must become the basis for understanding the true meaning for "fighting the good fight of faith," for "enduring hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," and for "pleasing Him who enlisted us as a soldier." The warfare of which Paul speaks that the Christian soldier is engaged in cannot be the kind of war found in earthly kingdoms warring with one another, for these must be classified as "the affairs of this life" which Paul forbids the believer from becoming entangled with.

Think about this: Paul said of his own life, "I have fought the good fight..." (2 Tim. 4:7). Paul was a Roman citizen, was he not? Did he fight in any earthly war as a good citizen of Rome? Ridiculous thought, isn't it? Yet, he "fought the good fight of faith," so it obviously refers to something other than participation in patriotic wars of an earthly kingdom with another earthly kingdom.

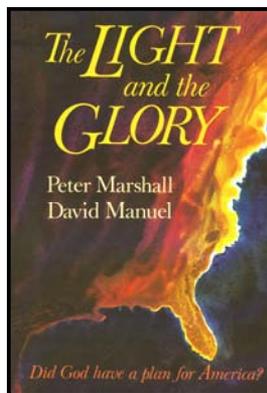
How does Satan seduce God's people to become "entangled in the affairs of this life?" He adds the "God with us" factor. He did so with Christians in Germany, and sadly, he is also doing the same with much of American Christianity. American Christians, like Paul, are also citizens of an earthly kingdom. Paul ignored his earthly citizenship in favor of his heavenly one (Phil. 3:20), but most American Christians give high priority to their earthly citizenship over their heavenly one due to the whole-hearted endorsement of the "God with us" factor. By embracing the "One Nation Under God" and "God and country" philosophies, we too, like the Germans, have become duped into becoming entangled in the affairs of this life. After all, God has chosen us as a nation destined to be different from all other nations, hasn't He? This is deception! America is not the New Israel of God as the Puritans taught. No nation on earth has replaced Israel's role in God's sight, including America:

**"HE DECLARES HIS WORD...HIS STATUTES... HIS JUDGMENTS TO ISRAEL. HE HAS NOT DEALT THUS WITH ANY NATION..."** Psm. 147:19-20  
**"FOR THE LORD HAS CHOSEN JACOB FOR HIMSELF, ISRAEL FOR HIS SPECIAL TREASURE."** Psm.135:4

Rather than accepting what is plainly stated in God's Word, Christians are filling their heads with high-minded, theological fantasy about America's God-given role such as is espoused in this popular, but very unbiblical book:

**"...THE PURITANS SAW THEMSELVES AS CALLED INTO THEIR NEW PROMISE LAND IN ORDER TO FOUND A NEW ISRAEL, WHICH WOULD BE A LIGHT TO THE WHOLE WORLD... A CITY SET UPON A HILL. THE PURITANS UNDERSTOOD NEW ENGLAND TO BE A TYPE AND EMBLEM OF NEW JERUSALEM... A MODEL OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST UPON EARTH... LIVING PROOF TO THE REST OF THE WORLD...THE STAGE FOR A NEW ACT IN THE DRAMA OF MANKIND'S REDEMPTION... WE AMERICANS, WERE MEANT TO BE A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES... A DEMONSTRATION TO THE WORLD..."**

(Excerpts from *The Light and the Glory*-  
Peter Marshall)



This erroneous Puritan philosophy is the foundation for the pie-in-the-sky ideology of America being "One Nation under God." This Puritan error is the underlying foundation for the present political obsession that American Christians have with the affairs of the earthly kingdom of America.

I suggest strongly that you look up these three revealing articles on my website under "Classic Newsletters" ( PastorRandyShupe.com)

"THE PURITAN WAY VS. THE PILGRIM WAY"

"THE OXYMORON OF MIXING POLITICS AND RELIGION"

AMERICA IN THE SIGHT OF GOD: NEW ISRAEL OR NEW ROME?"

As Christians, we have no problem with Satan having such delegated authority over all of history's secular, pagan, murderous, horrific nations that have been, and still exist on the face of the earth. However, most Christians will have problems believing America is included in "all the kingdoms of this world." After all, isn't America "God's New Israel" (as the Puritans called it) and the only "One Nation Under God," and the only nation bold enough to proclaim, "In God We Trust," all over its money and its buildings.

Examine this Scripture and ponder the question as to whether America was included in the kingdoms Satan showed Jesus:

**"THEN THE DEVIL, TAKING HIM UP ON A HIGH MOUNTAIN, SHOWED HIM ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD IN A MOMENT OF TIME. AND THE DEVIL SAID TO HIM, 'ALL THIS AUTHORITY I WILL GIVE YOU, AND THEIR GLORY; FOR THIS HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO ME, AND I GIVE IT TO WHOMEVER I WISH. THEREFORE, IF YOU WILL WORSHIP BEFORE ME, ALL WILL BE YOURS.'"**

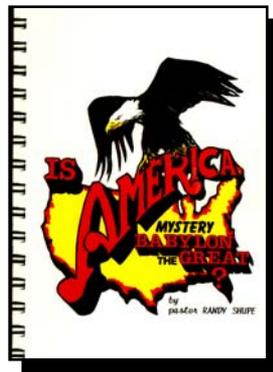
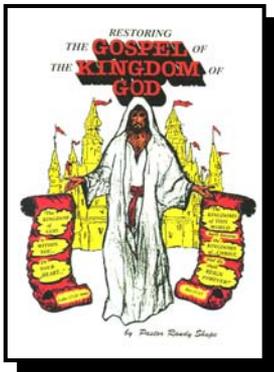
Luke 4:5-7



**DOES THE  
PHRASE  
"ALL THE  
KINGDOMS"  
INCLUDE  
THIS ONE,  
DEAR  
CHRISTIAN?**



That is a question worth researching. I do not believe Satan has a greater deceptive force on earth than that of using a sanctimonious, religious covering of God's approval for what Satan himself is orchestrating on earth. I am going to suggest that you consider the contents of these various works which I have written over the last 15 years to help you answer that vital question:



All three of these books deal with Satan's subtle substitutes for the real spiritual Kingdom of God that is functioning on the earth under the sovereign headship of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ! Not a physical, geographical nation is this spiritual kingdom, but rather one that exists in the hearts of God's kingdom citizens scattered over the whole face of the earth in every nation on earth.

There is no earthly kingdom that God has ordained to be His "New Israel." The Puritans fell for Satan's subtle substitute of America, an earthly kingdom, becoming a physical manifestation of God's Kingdom on earth, and so are many American Christians doing in their futile attempt to seize "back" America for God.

We are told by Jesus to, "seek first the Kingdom of God..." (Matt. 6:33). He also has plainly stated, "My Kingdom is not of this world...if My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight..." (Jn.18:36). Why then, dear Christian, is so much effort being placed on fighting for possession and control of this earthly kingdom? What are we doing for the real Kingdom of God?

**“ AND FROM THE DAYS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN HAS ENDURED VIOLENT ASSAULT, AND VIOLENT MEN SEIZE IT BY FORCE [AS A PRECIOUS PRIZE--A SHARE IN THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM IS SOUGHT WITH MOST ARDENT ZEAL AND INTENSE EXERTION].”**

Matt 11:12 Amp.

It is imperative that we seize the right kingdom. It is not the Puritan one that says America has been commissioned to be God's "New Israel" on earth which modern-day Christians should set their hearts upon. Think this thing through! If the Puritans were right, where does that place our brothers and sisters throughout the whole world who cannot be part of this literal, physical "new" kingdom of God? If America is God's "New Israel" then why does prophecy continue to predict that Jesus Christ is going to set His feet down on Mt. Olivet in "old Israel" and rule and reign out of Jerusalem for 1,000 years? Should He not rather set His feet down on Mt. Hood in America, His "New Israel" and reign out of Washington D.C.? This is as erroneous theology as the Roman Catholic view that "St. Peter's Square" has become the center of God's Kingdom on earth. Jesus is not going to rule and reign from the Pope's throne in Rome either. Jesus gave us clear warning about such nonsense:

**“NOW WHEN HE WAS ASKED BY THE PHARISEES WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD WOULD COME, HE ANSWERED THEM AND SAID, ‘THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT COME WITH OBSERVATION; NOR WILL THEY SAY, ‘SEE HERE!’ OR ‘SEE THERE!’ FOR INDEED, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU.”** Luke 17:20-21

It saddens the heart of this teacher of God's Word to see how obsessed American Christians have become with this visible, tangible earthly kingdom of America as if the Puritans were right in their analogy:

**“...THE PURITANS SAW THEMSELVES AS CALLED INTO THEIR NEW PROMISE LAND IN ORDER TO FOUND A NEW ISRAEL, WHICH WOULD BE A LIGHT TO THE WHOLE WORLD... A CITY SET UPON A HILL. THE PURITANS UNDERSTOOD NEW ENGLAND TO BE A TYPE AND EMBLEM OF NEW JERUSALEM... A MODEL OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST UPON EARTH... LIVING PROOF TO THE REST OF THE WORLD...THE STAGE FOR A NEW ACT IN THE DRAMA OF MANKIND'S REDEMPTION... WE AMERICANS, WERE MEANT TO BE A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES... A DEMONSTRATION TO THE WORLD...”**

(Excerpts from The Light and the Glory- Peter Marshall)

Christians are being fed a steady diet that America is slowly slipping away from its God-given calling and therefore it is the responsibility of every Christian to be politically involved in restoring the Puritan mission.

Birthing out of this false mission of restoration are a multitude of religious causes such as the anti-abortion, anti-pornography, anti-gay marriage, etc. Such activity is viewed as “fighting the good fight of faith.”

Then there is also the fierce battle by the Religious Right conservatives to be the main force in American politics so that the moral values God gave to Christians may be legislated upon the unregenerate populace apart from the new-birth experience. Who needs the gospel? What is needed are Christian judges on the Supreme Court to carry out the enforcement of God’s laws on the unwilling. Who needs the gospel? What is needed is a Christian President to rule the roost. By the way, who are you going to vote for this election year, dear Politically-minded Christian? Even James Dobson, in utter frustration, has stated that this might be the first year that he does not vote, although in the last election he broadcast the message that it would be sin against God if a Christian did not vote. This kind of sand theology sinks quickly when one must choose between the lesser of two evils (not-conservative-enough candidates.) Let go of such ideology! Christian morality does not come by means of the vote! This line of self-righteous reasoning is hypocrisy! Could you obey God apart from first becoming born-again? How then can the unregenerate? Can anyone obey God’s commandments apart from the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit? Paul answers that position of folly:

**“I DO NOT SET ASIDE THE GRACE OF GOD;  
FOR IF RIGHTEOUSNESS COMES THROUGH THE LAW,  
THEN CHRIST DIED IN VAIN.”**

Gal. 2:21

The “Great Commission” has become the great omission.  
Note how it begins:

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS,  
BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE  
SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE  
ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU...”**

Matt.28:19-20

The great omission that politically-based Christians are making in America is the leaving out of verse 19 of the Great Commission, “Go...make disciples...baptizing them...” That is the prerequisite mandate of the new birth! We rather find a hypocritical preference in the political brand of Christianity by beginning their gospel message with verse 20, “teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you.”

Genuine conversion must take place prior to teaching the observation of God's commandments. "Thou shall not murder" is God's commandment to His people. So are His laws dealing with homosexuality! The laws of God are for the people of God! We would have more people of God if we preached the first half of the Great Commission before we preached the second half to obey God's commandments. Prayer in the schools and the placement of the Ten Commandments outside of governmental buildings is more of the Puritan error. Teach your children to pray as Jesus taught (Matt. 6:5-13). Place the Ten Commandments where the Word of God says they are supposed to be-in your heart! (Heb. 8:10, 2 Cor.3:3).

January of 2008 began with all the buzz words that typically surround the upcoming elections. This year's buzz word is "change." Want to know how to spell "change"? Each of the six January candidates shown below has a different idea of what kind of "change" America needs. Their ideas change as often as the Presidency, every eight years or less. That is the way this earthly kingdom functions and is a tip-off that it is not by any means the Kingdom of God as the Puritans so taught. Consider the stark comparisons:

JESUS CHRIST IS  
**THE SAME**  
YESTERDAY, TODAY,  
AND FOREVER  
Heb. 13:8



Mal. 3:6  
I AM THE LORD,  
I DO NOT  
**CHANGE**

**IN GOD'S KINGDOM  
THE LEADER NEVER  
CHANGES.  
NEITHER DO THE LAWS  
CHANGE THAT GOVERN  
THE KINGDOM.  
IN GOD'S KINGDOM IT IS  
THE PEOPLE THAT ARE TO  
BE CHANGED BY THE  
CONSISTENCY OF ITS  
(PERFECT) LEADERSHIP  
AND ITS UNCHANGING  
(PERFECT) LAWS.**

NOT **THE SAME**  
EVERY 8 YEARS OR LESS

 <b>C</b>	 <b>H</b>	 <b>A</b>
 <b>N</b>	 <b>G</b>	 <b>E</b>

LATEST ADVOCATES OF  
**CHANGE**

**IN AMERICA'S KINGDOM  
THE LEADER IS ALWAYS  
CHANGING. THE LAWS THAT  
GOVERN THE KINGDOM ARE  
CONSTANTLY BEING CHANGED  
BY THE PEOPLE THAT ARE  
GOVERNED BY THEM.  
IN THIS EARTHLY KINGDOM  
THE PEOPLE ARE NOT  
REQUIRED TO CHANGE,  
BUT RATHER THEY CHANGE  
THEIR LEADERS AND LAWS  
TO SUIT THEMSELVES.**

THE KINGDOM OF GOD  
IS A  
**THEOCRACY**

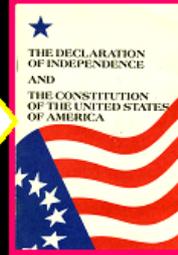
("DIVINE RULE")



GOVERNMENT IN WHICH  
THE WILL OF GOD  
PREVAILS

AMERICA  
IS A  
**DEMOCRACY**

("SELF-RULE")



GOVERNMENT IN WHICH  
THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE  
PREVAILS



THE KINGDOM  
OF GOD IS A  
**THEOCRACY**

(GOVERNED BY  
GOD HIMSELF)

THE "KINGDOM"  
OF AMERICA IS A  
**DEMOCRACY**

(PEOPLE GOVERN  
THEMSELVES)

**"...HE IS THE HEAD..."**

Col. 1:18

**"WE THE PEOPLE"**

Dec. of Independence

THE KINGDOM OF GOD  
IS BASED UPON  
SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES:  
**"RIGHTEOUSNESS,  
PEACE  
AND  
JOY  
IN THE  
HOLY SPIRIT"**

Rom. 14:17

THE KINGDOM OF AMERICA  
IS BASED UPON  
PHYSICAL OBJECTIVES:  
**"LIFE,  
LIBERTY  
AND  
THE PURSUIT  
OF  
HAPPINESS"**

U.S. Constitution

From these few brief comparisons can we continue to espouse that these two vastly different kingdom concepts came from the same author, God Himself?

The Lord impressed upon my heart this expression of the core nature of being a true soldier of Jesus Christ:

**“THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH  
IS FOR THE SOULS OF MEN,  
IT IS NOT FOR THE SOIL OF MEN”**



**“NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE  
ENTANGLES HIMSELF WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE,  
THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO  
ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER.”**

2 Tim. 2:-4

The affairs of this life focus upon the things pertaining to “the soil of men” rather than the “souls of men.” Consider the content of the Great Commission:

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS,  
BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE  
SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE  
ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU;  
AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE  
END OF THE AGE. AMEN”**

Matt.28:19-20

How interesting that the last line of the Great Commission tells us in essence, “GOD WITH US,” does it not? Whenever we align ourselves with what is in God’s Word, He will be with us always. However, He is not with His people when they shift from the proper emphasis of focusing upon saving the souls of men to the improper thrust toward saving the soil of men. The foundation of Christianity is not the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness!

It is tragic to see the exchange of the true heavenly Kingdom of God for an earthly substitute. When we became born again, the Word reminds us:

**“HE HAS DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS AND TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE...”**

Col. 1:13

The Christian is taken out of all kingdoms of this world, all the ones Satan showed Jesus in a moment of time, including America, and has presently been translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. For the believer to have “God with us” it will require embracing the spiritual Kingdom of God as it is revealed and defined in God’s Word. God will not be with us, if we substitute an earthly kingdom to expel all of our energy, time and money seeking to capture it for God. That is why Roe vs.Wade still remains in effect thirty-five years and counting, for it has nothing to do with God’s Kingdom. Yes, it is murder, but that commandment is to govern the people of God. They killed the children at the anticipation of the first coming of Christ and they will be doing so prior to His second coming. The mandate for believers in America is to rescue Americans, not America! We are to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God into which every born-again believer is thus translated. Its King forever is Jesus. In this Kingdom there are no elections, no voting, the laws are perfect, and so is the Lawgiver, Lord and King, Jesus Christ (Isa. 33:22).

Eventually, this Kingdom will be manifest on earth, first in the Millennium, and then in eternity-for all eternity. You can read about that “New Jerusalem” in Revelation Chapters 21-22. The Puritan’s “New Jerusalem,” (America) is a poor substitute for the real deal. Let us go for the gold:



**“ AND FROM THE DAYS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN HAS ENDURED VIOLENT ASSAULT, AND VIOLENT MEN SEIZE IT BY FORCE [AS A PRECIOUS PRIZE-- A SHARE IN THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM IS SOUGHT WITH MOST ARDENT ZEAL AND INTENSE EXERTION].”**

Matt 11:12 Amp.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PRIORITY OF BECOMING

# STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH

**“BY FAITH HE SOJOURNED IN THE LAND... AS IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY... FOR HE WAITED FOR THE CITY WHICH HAS FOUNDATIONS, WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD.”**

Heb.11:9-10

**“NEVERTHELESS, WE, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE, LOOK FOR A NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS.”**

2 Pet. 3:13

**“THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES, BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AFAR OFF, WERE ASSURED OF THEM, EMBRACED THEM, AND CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH.**

**FOR THOSE WHO SAY SUCH THINGS DECLARE PLAINLY THAT THEY SEEK A HOMELAND. AND TRULY IF THEY HAD CALLED TO MIND THAT COUNTRY FROM WHICH THEY HAD COME OUT, THEY WOULD HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN. BUT NOW THEY DESIRE A BETTER, THAT IS A HEAVENLY COUNTRY. THEREFORE GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM.”**

Heb.11:13-14

**“FOR HERE WE HAVE NO CONTINUING CITY, BUT WE SEEK THE ONE TO COME.”**

Heb.13:14

**“FOR OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN, FROM WHICH WE ALSO EAGERLY WAIT FOR THE SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.”**

Phil. 3:20

**“FOR WE ARE ALIENS (STRANGERS) AND PILGRIMS BEFORE YOU, AS WERE ALL OUR FATHERS...”**

1 Chron. 29:15

**“BELOVED, I BEG OF YOU AS SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS, ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL...”**

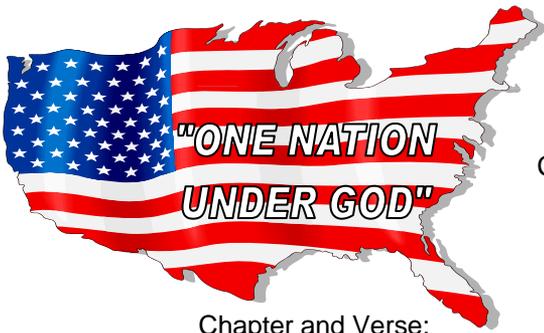
1 Pet. 2:11-17



The previous Scriptures (except one) were written to New Testament believers to establish a visionary, governing philosophy as to how, as born-again believers, we must view our life on this temporal earth. Take the time to ponder them carefully and ask yourself, "Does this biblical, philosophical theme permeate my Christian attitude toward the earthly kingdom in which I presently live, even if it is here in America?"

As the 2008 Presidential election draws near, I believe most Christians in this country are oblivious to the above biblical concepts as to what constitutes a life of faith that is pleasing and acceptable to God. Far too many of God's people are obsessed with the pursuit of a politically-based, earth-bound form of religion that is focused on capturing the soil of men for God rather than the souls of men. This is a subtle substitute of Satan.

If you are presently among the segment of American Christians who believe they have been given by God a different philosophy of life than the Scriptural one on the previous page of "Strangers and Pilgrims," then try filling in some Scriptures (not the Constitution) in the empty spaces below that condone the authorization of that God-given calling to be actively involved in the politics of the earthly kingdom (government) of America:



Chapter and Verse:



If you were able to write in a few Scriptures, note that you took them from the Old Testament's commission upon Israel and not from the New Testament's specific commission to the church as the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God. Why so? Because the example of Israel is where the Puritans got their justification of America being birthed as God's new "One Nation Under God," the so-called "New Israel of God":

**“...THE PURITANS SAW THEMSELVES AS CALLED INTO THEIR NEW PROMISE LAND IN ORDER TO FOUND A NEW ISRAEL, WHICH WOULD BE A LIGHT TO THE WHOLE WORLD... A CITY SET UPON A HILL. THE PURITANS UNDERSTOOD NEW ENGLAND TO BE A TYPE AND EMBLEM OF NEW JERUSALEM... A MODEL OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST UPON EARTH... LIVING PROOF TO THE REST OF THE WORLD...**

**THE STAGE FOR A NEW ACT IN THE DRAMA OF MANKIND’S REDEMPTION... WE AMERICANS, WERE MEANT TO BE A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES... A DEMONSTRATION TO THE WORLD...”**

(Excerpts from The Light and the Glory- Peter Marshall)

Such false claims make the Puritans guilty of what is labeled today as “identity theft.” Rather, it is the church (born-again believers) universally located in every nation of the world that is to be “a light to the Gentiles... a demonstration to the world.. for mankind’s redemption. It is the message of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, not democracy, that is given to achieve those ambitious goals. The church of Jesus Christ on earth does not have such a commission from God to establish a literal, geographical kingdom on earth, or to turn America into His Kingdom. Dear saints, that is why the New Testament epistles are devoid of any theological,doctrinal support or example for the brand of earthly-minded Christianity that is readily being endorsed in this country.

Paul the apostle, although a devout Jew, was also a Roman citizen by natural birth (Acts 22:28). However, upon becoming a citizen of heaven’s Kingdom via the new birth, he proclaimed to all believers (like you and me), “For our citizenship is in heaven...” (Phil. 3:20). Why is this not the confession of the saints today? Do you think Paul would jump on the Christian political bandwagon here in America if he were a naturalized citizen of this modern-day Roman empire? Did he give even the slightest hint in his writings that such behavior would be approved by God as a believer’s God-given responsibility as a naturalized citizen in an earthly kingdom? No, he did not! Rather, we find him forsaking his earthly Roman citizenship in favor of his heavenly one! Just compare the foundational principles of the Kingdom of God vs. the kingdom (“government”) of America, and note that even God’s image of the Spirit as a dove is in stark contrast to America’s chosen predator image of the eagle. Shouldn’t it bother you that the eagle was also the emblem of the original pagan Roman Empire that persecuted the Jewish people as well as the early Christians?

These are not birds of a feather, and neither is this American kingdom the inspiration of God as claimed by the Puritans.

“FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT FOOD AND DRINK, BUT

**RIGHTEOUSNESS**

**PEACE**

**AND JOY**

IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

FOR HE WHO SERVES CHRIST IN THESE THINGS IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD...”

Rom. 14:17-18



“THE INALIENABLE RIGHT TO PURSUE

**LIFE**

**LIBERTY**

**HAPPINESS”**



Declaration of Independence

If you need an Old Testament character as an example for modern-day Christianity, then use the one given great emphasis in the chapter of faith (Heb. 11), Abraham. After all, Abraham is called, “The father of us all” (Rom. 4:16). Abraham was “The friend of God” (Jam. 2:23). We are “Abraham’s seed” (Gal. 3:29). We are to imitate “the faith of Abraham” (Rom. 4:16-22, Heb. 6:12-15). Look at our opening Scriptures once more, for many of them focus upon the testimony of Abraham as being our prime example of how we are to live in an earthly kingdom as followers of Christ:

**“BY FAITH HE (ABRAHAM) SOJOURNED IN THE LAND... AS IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY... FOR HE WAITED FOR THE CITY WHICH HAS FOUNDATIONS, WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD.”** Heb.11:9-10

**“BELOVED, I BEG OF YOU AS SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS, ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL...”**

1 Pet. 2:11-17



**“FOR WE ARE ALIENS (STRANGERS) AND PILGRIMS BEFORE YOU, AS WERE ALL OUR FATHERS...”**

1 Chron. 29:15

**“FOR OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN, FROM WHICH WE ALSO EAGERLY WAIT FOR THE SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.”**

Phil. 3:20

**“FOR HERE WE HAVE NO CONTINUING CITY, BUT WE SEEK THE ONE TO COME.”** Heb.13:14

**“THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES, BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AFAR OFF, WERE ASSURED OF THEM, EMBRACED THEM, AND CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH.**

**FOR THOSE WHO SAY SUCH THINGS DECLARE PLAINLY THAT THEY SEEK A HOMELAND. AND TRULY IF THEY HAD CALLED TO MIND THAT COUNTRY FROM WHICH THEY HAD COME OUT, THEY WOULD HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN. BUT NOW THEY DESIRE A BETTER, THAT IS A HEAVENLY COUNTRY. THEREFORE GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM.”** Heb.11:13-14

**“NEVERTHELESS, WE, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE, LOOK FOR A NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS.”**

2 Pet. 3:13

# **STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH**

Let me pose some questions that are already answered clearly and plainly in the previous verses:

(1) Who is God not ashamed to be called “their God”? Is it those who are waiting for God’s city or those who are choosing to be mindful of the country from which God called them out? (2) Which country are we to be mindful of, desirous of; the one from which we were called out, or the “better heavenly country?” (3) Which “city” (country) has foundations whose builder and maker is God? Is it America, that the Puritans claimed is God’s “New Israel,” His new “One Nation Under God,” or is it the city which is to come afterward-in the life which is to come? (4) Where will righteousness dwell, in the halls of Congress by means of the Christian’s efforts to legislate morality upon immorality, control the appointment of judges on the Supreme Court, or will such righteousness have to wait for the coming of the “new heavens and new earth?” (5) Where is the citizenship of the believer? Is it here on earth, or is it in heaven?

The answers are quite obvious and yet much of American Christendom manifests a life that is totally opposite of those answers. American Christianity is very mindful of the country from which they were called out and continues to labor hard and fast, mired in the political process of finding an acceptable presidential candidate, as if such activity held all the solutions for the believer in Christ. This misguided fervency stems out of Christian leaders who do look for political solutions to spiritual problems. Consider these two quotes from a well-known politically motivated Christian leader: One statement was made prior to the 2004 elections and the other early on in the 2008 campaign-then you will understand why the average Christian is also very confused:

**“ANY CHRISTIAN WHO DOES NOT PARTAKE IN THE ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD PERSONALLY ACCOUNTABLE BY GOD FOR THE EVIL THAT TAKES PLACE IN THIS COUNTRY.”**

(James Dobson in 2004)

**“I CERTAINLY CAN’T VOTE FOR HILLARY CLINTON OR BARACK OBAMA BASED ON THEIR VIRULENTLY ANTI-FAMILY POLICY POSITIONS. IF THESE ARE THE NOMINEES IN NOVEMBER, I SIMPLY WILL NOT CAST A BALLOT FOR PRESIDENT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE.**

(James Dobson in 2008)

**“ANY CHRISTIAN WHO DOES NOT PARTAKE IN THE ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD PERSONALLY ACCOUNTABLE BY GOD FOR THE EVIL THAT TAKES PLACE IN THIS COUNTRY.”**

(James Dobson  
in 2004)

Shakespeare made famous the saying,  
“To be, or not to be, that is the question.” For the Christian we should ponder,  
“To vote, or not to vote, that is the question.”

**“I CERTAINLY CAN’T VOTE FOR HILLARY CLINTON OR BARACK OBAMA BASED ON THEIR VIRULENTLY ANTI-FAMILY POLICY POSITIONS. IF THESE ARE THE NOMINEES IN NOVEMBER, I SIMPLY WILL NOT CAST A BALLOT FOR PRESIDENT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE.**

(James Dobson in 2008)

There is not one shred of evidence to support the claim that God holds the Christian responsible for the evil that is in the land due to failure to vote in earthly elections. The Scriptures state that God holds His own people accountable for their own sins, not the sins of the unconverted heathen in the land:

**“IF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES, AND PRAY AND SEEK MY FACE, AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, THEN I WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN, AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN AND HEAL THEIR LAND.”**

2 Chron. 7:14

Those words were written for the Jewish people at the time of the dedication of their Jewish temple in Jerusalem. It is not a mandate for pagan America. However, if you, as followers of Christ in America, want to see God heal this land, then the burden lies upon the Christians in America to live like Christians. The moral laws of God were written for the people of God, not for the heathen. Rather than being obsessed with the self-righteous cause of placing stone-carved images of the Ten Commandments in front of secular, Roman-based pagan government buildings, we the Christians, should focus upon fulfilling the mandate to have them written of the tablets of our hearts:

**“...I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. I WILL BE THEIR GOD AND THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE.”**

Heb. 8:10



**“YOU ARE MANIFESTLY AN EPISTLE OF CHRIST... WRITTEN...BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD, NOT ON TABLETS OF STONE BUT ON THE TABLETS OF... THE HEART .”**

2 Cor. 3:2-3

Perhaps the heathen are loathing Christianity because of the hypocrisy they see. Perhaps they rightly cry out, "Physician, heal yourself!" (Luke 4:23). If the divorce rate is as high (or even higher) among Christians as it is among the heathen, why should they care about our "family value issues" being part of the political consideration for picking the best president? Can you blame them for saying, "Why don't you mind your own business?" that's good advice, for our Master taught:

**"DID YOU KNOW THAT I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS? BUT THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE STATEMENT WHICH HE SPOKE TO THEM." Luke 2:49**

I have come to see that much of American Christianity does not understand Jesus' statement about being about His Father's business either. The Father's business is bringing souls into the Kingdom of God. It is not about seizing the soil of men for God. God does not want His people to rescue America. He wants us to rescue Americans from America! As long as believers continue to hold on to the Puritan-based error of America being divinely appointed as the only "One Nation Under God" (God's New Israel"), they will continue to pursue the concept of "restoring" this wayward manifestation of "the Kingdom of God on earth," back to what they believe are God-centered foundations. This unbiblical ideology will never be achieved simply because you cannot bring to restoration something that never existed in the first place. America's foundations are Roman to the core. Its government is a carbon copy of the Roman Empire (see the recommended list of books at the end of this newsletter). God would NEVER pattern a government of His own making after the very secular, pagan-based government that slaughtered Jews and Christians during the time of Christ's first coming. I believe this modern-day Roman empire (America) will be in charge of the world at Christ's Second coming. Continue to pursue political solutions to spiritual problems and you will be in danger of propelling into power the soon-coming Roman Antichrist himself!

Search the Word of God and you will find the government God chooses for His people has always been a THEOCRACY. God is not the author of DEMOCRACY. The Bible begins with, "In the beginning, God...", not with "We the people..." It was such "we the people" thinking that turned an eleven day journey in the wilderness into a forty-year nightmare. It was in the wilderness that democracy was birthed in the rebellious hearts of God's high-minded people:

**"ALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL MURMURED AGAINST MOSES AND AARON, AND THE WHOLE CONGREGATION SAID TO THEM... WOULD IT NOT BE BETTER FOR US TO RETURN TO EGYPT? SO THEY SAID TO ONE ANOTHER, 'LET US SELECT A LEADER AND RETURN TO EGYPT!'"**

Num. 14:2-4

Are we any different in this land today in saying, "Let us elect a leader who will hold our Christian values and lead this country in the ways of God?" How did Christian President George W. Bush do? I don't need to elaborate on that, do I? You cannot be a dedicated Christian leader and be the President of a modern-day Roman Empire! Like the ancient Roman Empire, America is a multi-cultural, multi-religion based society. Much of the population is materialistic, hedonistic and heathenistic and are not about to be governed by strict Christian family values. God gave those values to His people to govern the Kingdom of God that abides in the heart. America is not that Kingdom. Let it go!

When it comes to appointing the world's leaders, the Bible is very specific that it is God Himself who does so. He does not commission it to His people to determine through the voting process. Consider:

**"...THE MOST HIGH GOD RULES IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN,  
AND APPOINTS OVER IT WHOMEVER HE CHOOSES."**

Dan. 5: 21

**"BLESSED BE THE NAME OF GOD FOREVER AND EVER. FOR  
WISDOM AND MIGHT ARE HIS.  
AND HE CHANGES THE TIMES AND THE SEASONS; HE  
REMOVES KINGS AND RAISES UP KINGS..."**

Dan. 2:20-21

**"FOR HIS DOMINION IS AN EVERLASTING DOMINION, AND  
HIS KINGDOM IS FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. ALL  
THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH ARE REPUTED AS  
NOTHING; HE DOES ACCORDING TO HIS WILL IN THE ARMY  
OF HEAVEN AND AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH.  
NO ONE CAN RESTRAIN HIS HAND..."**

Dan. 4:34-35

**"THE KING'S HEART IS IN THE HAND OF THE LORD,  
LIKE THE RIVERS OF WATER,  
HE TURNS IT WHEREVER HE WISHES."**

Prov. 21:1

**"THERE IS NO AUTHORITY EXCEPT FROM GOD,  
AND THE AUTHORITIES THAT EXIST  
ARE APPOINTED BY GOD..."**

Rom. 13:1

**"FOR GOD HAS PUT IT INTO THEIR HEARTS TO FULFILL HIS  
PURPOSE, TO BE OF ONE MIND,  
AND TO GIVE THEIR KINGDOM TO THE BEAST, UNTIL THE  
WORDS OF GOD ARE FULFILLED."**

Rev. 17:17

Perhaps dear Christian, you are ready to cast your vote for the man you think is best fitted to support Christian rule in this earthly kingdom of men, or like James Dobson, perhaps you will sit this one out instead of being forced to choose between the lesser of two evils. However, the man who is going to end up in that office will be placed there by God Himself to fulfill His prophetic purposes for this nation in the last days. You may not share my views, but I am strongly convinced that America is part of Daniel's prophesied last-day Roman Empire that will dominate the world. Is this not the direction that this only-superpower-in-the-world, is headed? Is not America, as the world's only superpower, not already committed to be the policeman of the whole world?

Dear saints, the Tribulation is rapidly approaching and God is preparing the world for it by removing kings and raising up kings! We are not going to vote in a Christian utopia of family values in America while God prepares the rest of the world for the coming Tribulation! Quality leadership is diminishing over the whole earth! It will happen in America also. This is God's hand in preparing for the rise of the world leader, Antichrist. It is God who continues to allow Osama Bin Laden to remain at large. It is God who does not permit the Christian political movement to overturn Roe vs. Wade. Things are not going to get better if we believe prophecy. Remember, the last days will be like those of Noah and Lot! Those were days of great evil, days in which homosexuality prevailed over morality. The infinite God has not commissioned his church to determine who is best fitted to rule in ungodly kingdoms. We are not here to make sure that we maintain our so-called God-given rights to the pursuit of "life, liberty and happiness" while the rest of the world plunges into Hell in a hand-basket! Such man-centered, selfish objectives are not founded in the Word of God for any Christian. Let the church focus on the God-given priorities as they are plainly stated in the Word of God. Leave the election of the rulers of the kingdoms of this world to God. He alone knows what is needed to fulfill His purposes. It should bother Christians in this country greatly that our custom-made brand of self-centered religion is out of sync with what the majority of the Body of Christ is still experiencing throughout the world! Where are the inalienable rights of believers in Russia, China and the Sudan? Isn't God short-changing the majority of the Body of Christ by giving only American Christians such selfish guarantees to pursue life, liberty and happiness?

Voting in an earthly election in a kingdom that clearly is not the Kingdom of God that Jesus preached constitutes "entanglement in the affairs of this life" (2 Tim. 2:4).

To insist that it is one's Christian duty to vote is a clear mark that there is little or no understanding of the true Kingdom of God in the heart.

I stated this challenge earlier: Upon what biblical foundations does such Christian duty rest? You will be hard pressed to come up with any solid evidence from the Scriptures. These concepts are historically based on false principles such as portrayed in "*The Light and The Glory.*" Such Christian duty is the by-product of endorsing constitutionally-based principles that have no support in the Scriptures. The Declaration of Independence stands in direct opposition to many of the principles of God's Word. God could not have inspired both of them. One is a counterfeit. Let me approach this American politically-based theology from a broader perspective. Polls state that three-fourths of Americans claim to be Christian because they were born in a Christian nation. However, physical birth does not make one a Christian. Realistically, perhaps only one-fourth of those professing to be Christians may be truly born-again. I suspect that even this figure is high. However, if that is a realistic number, this would mean that American Christians comprise about 20 percent of the Body of Christ throughout the world. Regardless of the exact percentages, we (true) Christians in this country must face the reality that we do not comprise the majority of the Body of Christ in the world. Christianity did not originate in this country. Here is the point:

**COULD THIS CUSTOM-MADE POLITICALLY-BASED BRAND OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY FUNCTION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST IN THE REST OF THE WORLD?**

Should not Christianity function anywhere in the world? What we espouse as Christianity should also be able to be embraced universally by Christians throughout the world. It will, if it is based upon the stranger and pilgrim mentality derived from the existence of an alternate Kingdom that abides in the heart of the believer rather than placing our trust in what our political involvement in an earthly kingdom can provide. Most of Christendom in the world still lives in the midst of evil, oppressive dictatorships such as the early church experienced at the hands of Nero of Rome. How did the early church live in such an environment? They confessed that they had another King other than Rome's Caesar. They confessed allegiance only to the Kingdom of God. Such confession often cost them their jobs, their possessions and even their lives.

There were no exclusive inalienable rights provided by God to protect them. Ponder how Paul describes the persecuted Christians in his day:



**“...YOU ENDURED  
A GREAT STRUGGLE  
WITH SUFFERINGS:  
PARTLY WHILE YOU  
WERE MADE A  
SPECTACLE BOTH BY  
REPROACHES AND  
TRIBULATIONS, AND  
PARTLY WHILE  
YOU BECAME  
COMPANIONS OF  
THOSE WHO WERE  
SO TREATED;**

**FOR YOU HAD COMPASSION ON ME  
IN MY CHAINS,  
AND JOYFULLY ACCEPTED THE PLUNDERING OF  
YOUR GOODS, KNOWING THAT YOU HAVE A  
BETTER AND MORE ENDURING POSSESSION FOR  
YOURSELVES IN HEAVEN.”**

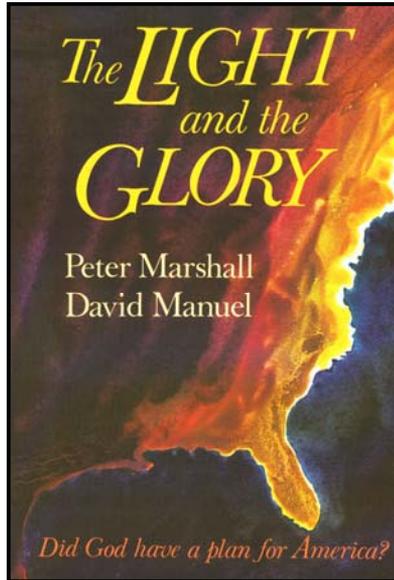
Heb. 10:32-34

This exhortation of Paul could still be proclaimed today to most of the Body of Christ throughout the world, but not here in America! “Plunder our goods?” We will exercise our inalienable rights and sue! The foundation of American Christianity is rooted in political solutions for what is stated by Paul above. Is it logical that God has done for the 20 percent of American Christianity what He would not do for the 80 percent of the Body of Christ throughout the world? Something is very wrong with this scenario for the Word of God tells us that God is not a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11 KJV). As a preacher of God’s Word here in America, I should be able to take what I have preached in America and preach it in Africa, China, India, Russia – to wherever the Body of Christ abides. If I must alter my message then I am not preaching the truth to Americans. God’s truth must be universal, for that is what the Body of Christ is. The call to be strangers and pilgrims on earth is a universal message. The message of the Kingdom of God presently abiding in the heart of the believer is universal truth. Only if I preach that Jesus Christ is King of His Kingdom and that He desires His Kingdom laws to govern our hearts, am I preaching a universal message.

Could I preach to them that the solution to their woes is to exercise their Christian duty to elect a Christian president? Too bad God did not give the majority of the Body of Christ democracy and a Bill of Rights to protect them from the evil that is in the world. Look again at this delusional statement from "The Light And The Glory":

**"...THE PURITANS SAW THEMSELVES AS CALLED INTO THEIR NEW PROMISE LAND IN ORDER TO FOUND A NEW ISRAEL, WHICH WOULD BE A LIGHT TO THE WHOLE WORLD... A CITY SET UPON A HILL. THE PURITANS UNDERSTOOD NEW ENGLAND TO BE A TYPE AND EMBLEM OF NEW JERUSALEM... A MODEL OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST UPON EARTH... LIVING PROOF TO THE REST OF THE WORLD...THE STAGE FOR A NEW ACT IN THE DRAMA OF MANKIND'S REDEMPTION... WE AMERICANS, WERE MEANT TO BE A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES... A DEMONSTRATION TO THE WORLD..."**

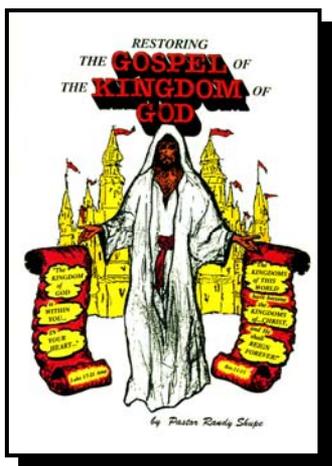
(Excerpts from The Light and the Glory- Peter Marshall)



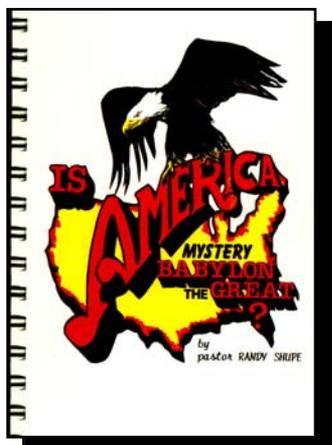
No, we Americans were not! This is the universal commission of the church. American Christians believe that the form of government in this country was divinely given by God. This is delusional thinking birthed by the Puritan theology. It should not matter to Christians who is the President of this country! We are not here to pursue life, liberty and happiness. The early church was not defeated from its commission to reconcile the world to God even by the evil oppressive ruler, Nero of Rome. The more Christians he slaughtered, the more the church grew. All of church history over the last 2,000 years bears the same testimony. Whoever was in power of earthly kingdoms was of no importance to the gospel of the Kingdom of God. This is not accepted thinking in this country among Christians. It matters greatly who is the President, and that is why the emphasis upon the Christian duty to vote. Not to do so is viewed as accountable sin. You won't find that in the Bible!

I am well aware that I have stated some hard things in this chapter. I would like to suggest some in-depth reading material to back up what I have stated to be truth needful for God's people to carefully consider. I have written these three books to help you to consider the overwhelming evidence pertaining to America not being what it claims to be, namely, "One Nation Under God."

The fourth book is an out-of-print book (we have re-printed) by a secular historian that debunks the Puritan claim that America is God's "New Israel." He proves rather that it is a "New Rome" fashioned after the ancient Roman Empire. If he is right (and I believe he is), Christians are being sold a bill of goods pertaining to the origin of this country as being divinely inspired by God Almighty as the Puritans claimed.



"The gospel" literally means "good news." Jesus and Paul preached the good news of the Kingdom of God. Modern-day theology has eliminated the core message of the Kingdom of God, reducing it to "you must be born again." There is more to the Kingdom of God than the new birth. This 268 page book calls for the restoration of the message of the Kingdom of God. It deals also with three subtle substitutes that Satan presents for the true Kingdom of God. You will be shocked by what they are! This book emphasizes what is to be the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of God's people.



Could a nation whose cherished motto is "one nation under God," and whose currency bears the declaration "in God we trust," be what the Word of God calls "Mystery Babylon the Great"? This book presents the overwhelming evidence that America is Mystery Babylon. It explores the numerical evidence hidden in the great seal of the United States as well as the historical comparison of ancient Rome and modern-day America. It presents the political evidence of America as the new world order to come. Every follower of Christ should know the hidden identity of Mystery Babylon.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PRIORITY OF BECOMING

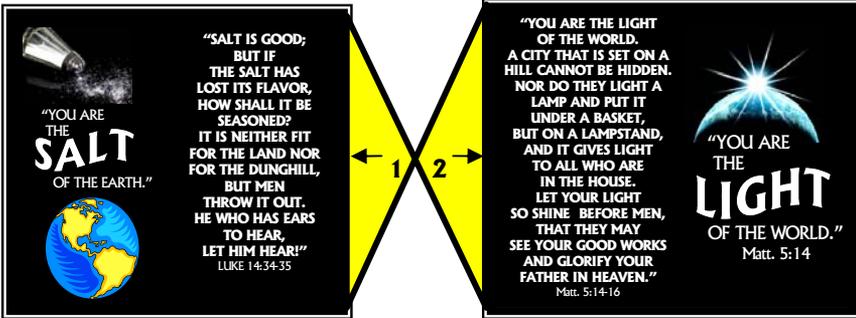
# "SALT AND LIGHT"



The invisible God expects the unsaved world to be able to "taste and see" the goodness of Himself by means of His own people on earth fulfilling the dual mandate to become salt ("taste") and light ("see"). This chapter is dedicated to establishing the importance and meaning of these two priorities in the hearts and minds of God's people. Clear warning is given to Christians who fail to function properly in these areas:

**"YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH;  
BUT IF THE SALT LOSES ITS FLAVOR, HOW SHALL IT BE SEASONED?  
IT IS THEN GOOD FOR NOTHING BUT TO BE THROWN OUT AND  
TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT BY MEN. YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.  
A CITY THAT IS SET ON A HILL CANNOT BE HIDDEN. NOR DO THEY  
LIGHT A LAMP AND PUT IT UNDER A BASKET, BUT ON A LAMPSTAND,  
AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO ALL WHO ARE IN THE HOUSE.  
LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR  
GOOD WORKS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN."**  
Matt. 5:13-16

## THE DUALISTIC MANDATE FOR EVERY FOLLOWER OF CHRIST:



Of this dualistic mandate we are readily more familiar and comfortable understanding the call to be “the light of the world” for we know that the Word says, “God is light” (1 Jn. 1:5), but it is not recorded anywhere that “God is salt.” To understand the significance of New Testament believers being “the salt of the earth”, we must first consider what God has recorded of the importance of salt in the Old Testament. Consider these references:

**COVENANT OF SALT:** Num. 18:19 2 Chron.13:5

**“ALL THE HEAVE OFFERINGS OF THE HOLY THINGS, WHICH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL OFFER TO THE LORD, I HAVE GIVEN TO YOU AND TO YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WITH YOU AS AN ORDINANCE FOREVER; IT IS A COVENANT OF SALT FOREVER BEFORE THE LORD WITH YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS WITH YOU.”**

**“SHOULD YOU NOT KNOW THAT THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL GAVE DOMINION OVER ISRAEL TO DAVID FOREVER, TO HIM AND HIS SONS, BY A COVENANT OF SALT?”**

**SACRIFICES OF SALT:** Lev. 2:13, Ex. 30:35,37

**“AND EVERY OFFERING OF YOUR GRAIN OFFERING YOU SHALL SEASON WITH SALT; YOU SHALL NOT ALLOW THE SALT OF THE COVENANT OF YOUR GOD TO BE LACKING FROM YOUR GRAIN OFFERING. WITH ALL YOUR OFFERINGS YOU SHALL OFFER SALT.”**

**“YOU SHALL MAKE OF THESE AN INCENSE, A COMPOUND ACCORDING TO THE ART OF THE PERFUMER, SALTED, PURE AND HOLY...IT SHALL BE TO YOU HOLY FOR THE LORD.”**

**MIRACLE OF SALT:** 2 Kings 2:19-22

**“THEN THE MEN OF THE CITY SAID TO ELISHA, ‘PLEASE NOTICE, THE SITUATION OF THIS CITY IS PLEASANT, AS MY LORD SEES; BUT THE WATER IS BAD, AND THE GROUND BARREN.’ AND HE SAID, ‘BRING ME A NEW BOWL, AND PUT SALT IN IT.’ SO THEY BROUGHT IT TO HIM. THEN HE WENT OUT TO THE SOURCE OF THE WATER, AND CAST IN THE SALT THERE, AND SAID, ‘THUS SAYS THE LORD: ‘I HAVE HEALED THIS WATER; AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH OR BARRENNESS.’ SO THE WATER REMAINS HEALED TO THIS DAY...”**

Although the Scripture does not explain why God chose salt as the basis of His covenants and holy offerings, we can see clearly that there is a significant emphasis to salt being used by God in His interactions with man. I believe this quotation from an encyclopedia sheds some light on why salt might have been chosen by God:

“Salt cannot be burned or destroyed. Perhaps because of salt’s durability, God used it as a metaphor to indicate that as salt keeps its flavor, so the Lord’s covenant with the priesthood was durable.

More likely, however, is that the "covenant of salt" refers to a practice that rendered contracts irrevocable during the time period in which the Bible was written. In biblical times, men carried pouches of salt on their belts. When a pact, promise, or contract was made, the men from each of the participating parties would intermingle the salt from their own pouches with the salt from the pouches of the other party. This reminded the men that they could not retrieve their own salt from the other pouch, symbolizing the fact that they could not go back on their word... In 2 Chron. 13:5, salt refers to God’s irrevocable pledge and intended loyalty in fulfilling the Davidic covenant and God’s desire for the loyalty of David’s lineage to Him if the people are to enjoy the blessings of the covenant. The preservative quality of salt represents the fidelity or loyalty intended in keeping the covenant.”

**From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**

Let us consider some interesting facts about salt: It was once so scarce and precious that it was used as money. Caesar's soldiers received part of their pay in common salt. This was known as “salarium” from which the word “salary” comes. In the days when workers were paid their wages in salt, the still often-used expression “he is not worth his salt”, meant a person was not working hard enough to earn his wages. What did Jesus have in mind when He made this statement:

**“YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH; BUT IF THE SALT LOSES ITS FLAVOR, HOW WILL IT BE SEASONED? IT IS GOOD FOR NOTHING BUT TO BE THROWN OUT AND TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT BY MEN.”**

Matt. 5:13

Salt that had lost its flavor was used to build Rome's great networks of roads. Roman soldiers built one of the great military roads in history, the Via Salaria (Salt Road). Originating from the salt works located at Ostia, it stretched all the way to the city of Rome. Pure salt was precious, but the majority of salt is impure due to other unwanted chemicals and contaminated with imbedded granules of sand. Therefore they built roads with it. Such useless salt was considered “...good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

One problem we might have with fully understanding salt from a biblical perspective is that, for us, salt is so common. It's everywhere, it's in everything, and it's relatively cheap. It seems, therefore, an insignificant thing.

**SALT IS GOOD"**  
 Luke 14:34    Mark 9:49

"CAN FLAVORLESS FOOD BE EATEN WITHOUT SALT? IS THERE ANY TASTE IN THE WHITE OF AN EGG? MY SOUL REFUSES TO TOUCH THEM; THEY ARE AS LOATHSOME FOOD TO ME."  
 Job 6:6



But for people in biblical times the word "salt" prompted a set of associations that were precise. In addition to being a preservative to halt corruption of meat, salt was a precious seasoning. Consider how Job viewed the value of salt as a seasoning. So could it be said of popcorn. Without salt, everyone will attest it is loathsome to eat. (Have you ever tried salt on watermelon-umm good!). So many good foods are enhanced by a proper seasoning with salt. However, we all have experienced the effect of using too much salt. As believers, we can not only be "salt-less" in expressing Christ to others, but we can also be too salty in attempting to fulfill Paul's mandate to "season our conversation with salt":

**"WALK IN WISDOM TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE, REDEEMING THE TIME. LET YOUR SPEECH ALWAYS BE WITH GRACE, SEASONED WITH SALT, THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW YOU OUGHT TO ANSWER EACH ONE."**  
 Col. 4:5-6

God's "Covenant of Salt" in the Old Testament was meant to convey the fidelity or loyalty intended in keeping the covenant, both by God Himself and those with whom the covenant was made.

For the most part, such imagery has been lost in the lives of God's people in the New Covenant. Salt is no longer precious or costly. It is cheap-just like much of the presentation of the gospel has become one of "cheap grace" in which Christ does all the dying and suffering while the Christian does all the believing and receiving.

 <p><b>"EVERY OFFERING YOU SHALL SEASON WITH SALT. YOU SHALL NOT ALLOW THE SALT OF THE COVENANT TO BE LACKING... WITH ALL YOUR OFFERINGS YOU SHALL OFFER SALT."</b>  <small>LEV. 2:13</small></p>	 <p><b>"...EVERY SACRIFICE WILL BE SEASONED WITH SALT. SALT IS GOOD, BUT IF THE SALT LOSES ITS FLAVOR, HOW WILL YOU SEASON IT? HAVE SALT IN YOURSELVES."</b>  <small>Mark 9:49-50</small></p>
--	--



Jesus said, “..Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another” (Mark 9:50). Salt-less Christianity is seen by unbelievers when brethren cannot get along together. It is seen in the fact that divorce among Christians has exceeded that of unbelievers.

It is seen when believers practice fornication and adultery, covetousness and greed, just as much as the unbelievers. The only difference is that believers do those same things to the tune of “Amazing Grace.”

One more illustration of salt is found in the New Testament as a sober warning to all believers. It is the story of Lot’s wife. Jesus uses her demise into a pillar of salt as a warning to all Christians who hold dear to self-preservation. Christ used the imagery of the cross to portray what the daily life of a believer will be like:

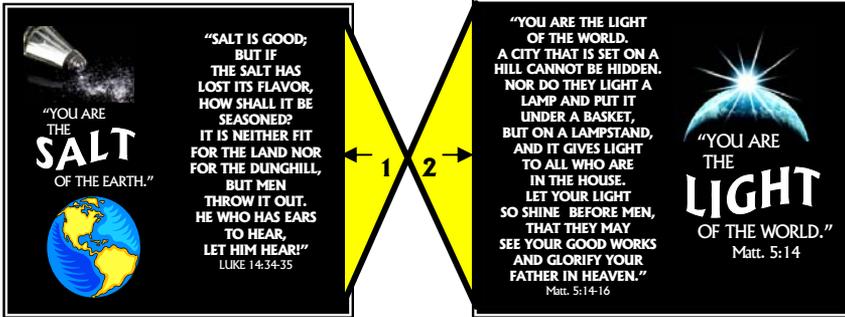


**“IF ANYONE DESIRES TO COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY, AND FOLLOW ME...FOR WHAT ADVANTAGE IS IT TO A MAN IF HE GAINS THE WHOLE WORLD, AND IS HIMSELF DESTROYED OR LOST?”**  
 Luke 9:23-25

Lot’s wife looked back in a longing way to the world she was reluctantly being forced to abandon. It looked good to her even though God was about to bring swift judgment upon it for its sinful ways. She became a useless pillar of salt. Keeping this in mind, Jesus warns us all, “Remember Lot’s wife.” However, in the midst of a very lukewarm church steeped in cheap grace, “take this with a grain of salt.” We use this saying today with little understanding of its meaning. If a truth is going down hard, seems difficult to swallow, then take it with a grain of salt to make it taste better.

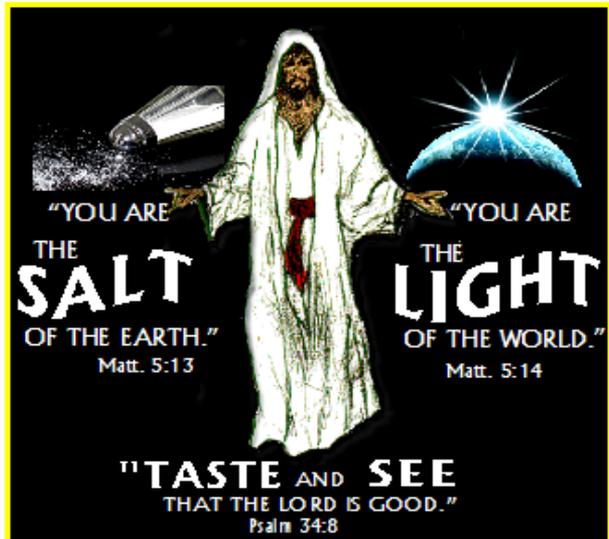
Let us now look at the second topic of

## THE DUALISTIC MANDATE FOR EVERY FOLLOWER OF CHRIST:



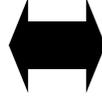
Again we are going to see Jesus make a contrast of believers. In the first area we saw Him compare "salt" (believers) who had flavor to those who had lost their flavor, becoming useless to God. In this second illustration we will see Jesus comparing "light" (believers) who were set on a hill, lighting the house for all to see good works that glorified God the Father, but to other "light" (believers) who "hid their light under a basket." In other words, they chose rather not to show forth any good works that would glorify God the Father. Let me remind you of God's objective in this dual mandate:

It is by becoming "the salt of the earth" that believers enable the unbelievers to "taste" that the Lord is good. It is by becoming "the light of the world" that believers enable the unbelievers to "see" that the Lord is good. This is why God wants His people to be "salt and light." We are here to reveal the invisible God to:

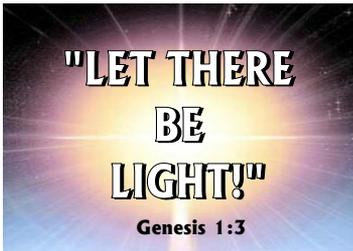


**"...THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING...  
WHOSE MINDS THE GOD OF THIS AGE  
HAS BLINDED,  
WHO DO NOT BELIEVE..."**  
2 Cor. 4:3-4

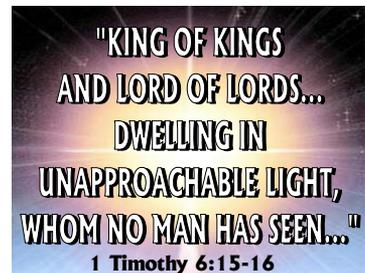
Don't you just love how simplistic the Scriptures can be at times? Here are two statements about God: "God is Love" and "God is light." We tend to favor "God is love" because we have love clearly illustrated for us in Paul's "love Chapter", 1 Cor. 13. Let us see if we can define as clearly what it means for God to be compared to light.



The subject of light permeates the Scriptures throughout. God opens the Word by stating in Genesis, "Let there be light!" (Gen. 1:3) Note that He also closes the Scriptures with the illustration that Jesus Christ will replace the need of the sun in eternity with the phrase, "They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord gives them light." (Rev. 22:5). The SON replaces the SUN!



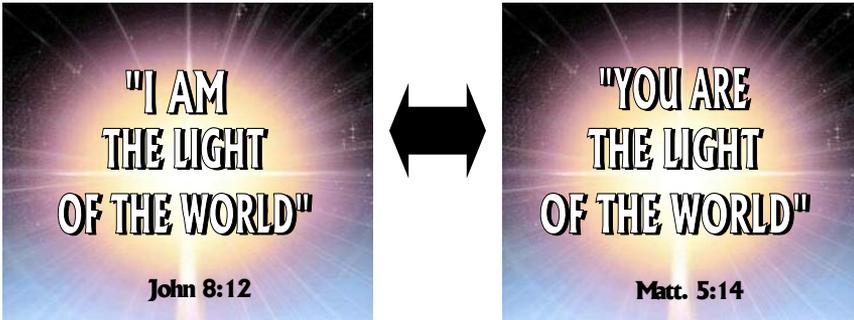
Consider these parallel truths from the Old and the New Testaments. God who is light, covers Himself with light like a garment. As King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ dwells in what is called "unapproachable light." The SON is just like the SUN itself. The brilliance of the sun makes it unapproachable. So is God due to His brilliance. However, God records that, in eternity, "They shall see His face" (Rev. 22:4).



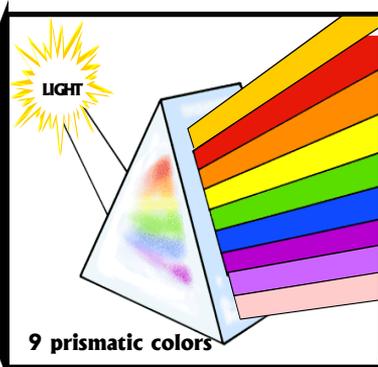
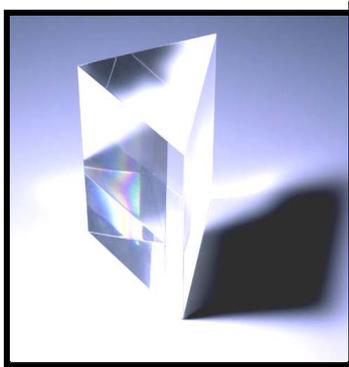
Now the Scriptures begin to make a transition from what God is as light and what God expects His people to be as “children of light.” We who once were in darkness have become light in the Lord and are now commanded to “Walk as children of light.” God not only says, “God is light” but goes on to say, “and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 Jn. 1:5). If we continue to “walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth” (1 Jn. 1:6).



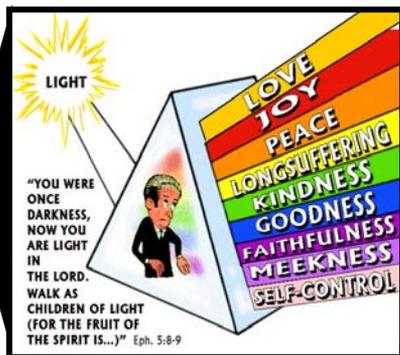
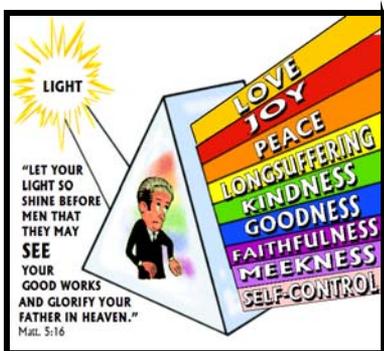
Compare these two inescapable truths: What Jesus Christ is Himself as “the light of the world” has become the divine commission that has now been transferred to His people who live on the face of the earth. Let us now consider how it is that we believers are to fulfill the mandate given by God to His people to be “the light of the world.”



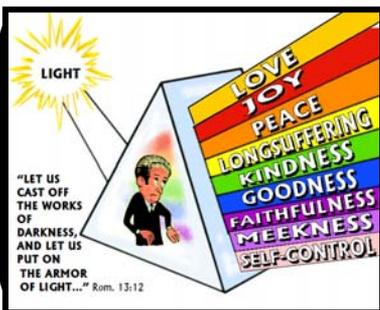
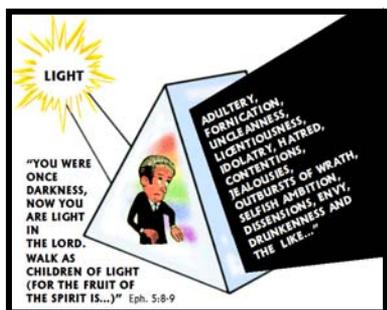
Let us see if we can use a natural illustration to gain spiritual insight as to what it means for God's people to be “the light of the world.” God is invisible due to the fact that He dwells in “unapproachable light” which makes it impossible for Him to be seen (1 Tim. 6:16). So is light in its purest form, invisible. Light illuminates what it falls upon, but light itself, like God, is invisible. However, what comprises light can be seen when it is passed through a prism such as demonstrated in these two examples: 



The believer functions as God's prism. As "God (who) is light", is filtered through the sanctified and Spirit-led life of the believer, unregenerated mankind can "see" God by means of the believer's good works (Mat. 5:16). What are seen as good works are the nine fruits of the Spirit as numerated in Gal. 5:22-23 and Eph. 5:9:



However, even born-again believers still have a "flesh"(sin) nature, born of Satan, as does every unregenerated person. Sadly, far too many of God's people continue to "walk after the flesh" instead of the new spirit nature received by means of the new birth (Gal. 5:16-17). This kind of "prism" reflects the "works of darkness" (Gal. 5:19-21, Eph. 5:8-9, Rom. 13:12) instead of what comprises God's light:



So important is this subject, I produced a separate DVD just on these two subjects. This teaching was taken from the Priorities Series. Please note that if you have the Priorities DVD Series, you already have these two teachings.

If not, I suggest you order a copy of this 2 hour DVD mini series in order that you may grasp what is meant by the call to God's people to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world."



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE PRIORITY OF BEING JESUS CHRIST'S

# AMBASSADOR

**"NOW ALL THINGS  
ARE OF GOD,  
WHO HAS  
RECONCILED US TO  
HIMSELF THROUGH JESUS  
CHRIST,  
AND HAS GIVEN US  
THE MINISTRY OF  
RECONCILIATION...  
THEREFORE WE ARE  
AMBASSADORS FOR  
CHRIST,  
AS THOUGH GOD WERE  
PLEADING THROUGH US...  
BE RECONCILED TO GOD."**

2 Cor. 5:18-20

*The Kingdom of God*

Believers seem to clamor for some kind of "ministry." Here is a God-given ministry for every believer: The ministry of reconciliation performed by means of the believer's high calling as an Ambassador for Christ.

The call to be a Christian is not easy when you consider some of the vivid illustrations God uses to remind us what that role entails. I have displayed them graphically for you below.

- |  |     |  |
|--|-----|--|
| <b>C<br/>H<br/>R<br/>I<br/>S<br/>T<br/>I<br/>A<br/>N<br/>I<br/>T<br/>Y</b> | 1.  | I AM A <u>DISCIPLE OF CHRIST</u>           |
|  | 2.  | I AM A <u>SERVANT OF CHRIST</u>            |
|  | 3.  | I AM A <u>SOLDIER OF CHRIST</u>            |
|  | 4.  | I AM AN <u>AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST</u>       |
|  | 5.  | I AM A <u>WITNESS UNTO CHRIST</u>          |
|  | 6.  | I AM A <u>PRIEST TO GOD</u>                |
|  | 7.  | I AM <u>THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE OF CHRIST</u>  |
|  | 8.  | I AM <u>THE SALT/LIGHT OF THE WORLD</u>    |
|  | 9.  | I AM A <u>STRANGER/PILGRIM ON EARTH</u>    |
|  | 10. | I AM PART OF THE <u>CHURCH OF CHRIST</u>   |
|  | 11. | I AM A MEMBER OF <u>THE BODY OF CHRIST</u> |
|  | 12. | I AM THE ESPOUSED <u>BRIDE OF CHRIST</u>   |

We can begin to see that it is as diversified as Joseph's "robe of many colors" or like the "many crowns on His head" used in Revelation to describe Christ's multiple roles. We are working our way through this list of 12 priorities. It is a graphic way to spell "Christianity." We have looked at being a disciple, a soldier, a stranger and pilgrim, a witness, and the call to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We are now adding what should be considered a very "high calling of God" upon the believer while he/she is still on the earth: the divine calling of every believer to be an "Ambassador for Christ."



**SERVANT**



**AMBASSADOR**



**BRIDE**



**PRIEST**



**SALT**

**LIGHT**



**SOLDIER**



**PILGRIM**

**“GOD... HAS GIVEN US  
THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION...  
AND HAS COMMITTED TO US  
THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION.”**

2 Cor. 5:18-19



**“THEREFORE WE ARE  
AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST,  
AS THOUGH GOD WERE  
PLEADING THROUGH US...”**

2 Cor. 5:20

**A POSITION OF DIGNITY AND HONOR:**

**“AMBASSADOR”**

**“AN AMBASSADOR IS A DIPLOMATIC OFFICIAL  
ACCREDITED TO A FOREIGN SOVEREIGN OR  
GOVERNMENT... TO SERVE AS THE OFFICIAL  
REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS OR HER OWN COUNTRY...  
AMBASSADORS ARE MINISTERS  
OF THE HIGHEST RANK,  
WITH AUTHORITY TO REPRESENT  
THEIR HEAD OF STATE.”**

Webster

Ponder the above definition Webster gives of an ambassador as equally applicable to the believer's appointment as an “Ambassador for Christ” who is the sovereign King over the eternal, everlasting Kingdom of God. As such, believers become “the official representative...ministers of the highest rank, with authority to represent their Head of State” (Christ and His Kingdom!)

When a believer thinks of being called into the ministry, the general trend is to think of such a calling as consisting of being appointed by Christ in this manner:

**“When He ascended on high...(He) gave gifts to men...  
And He Himself gave some to be APOSTLES, some  
PROPHETS, some EVANGELISTS, and some PASTORS and  
TEACHERS...” Eph. 4:8-11**

However, it is quite obvious that the Holy Spirit has recorded that this is a ministry given to “some” but not to all! It is also quite clear that this ministry given to some has a distinct purpose in mind:

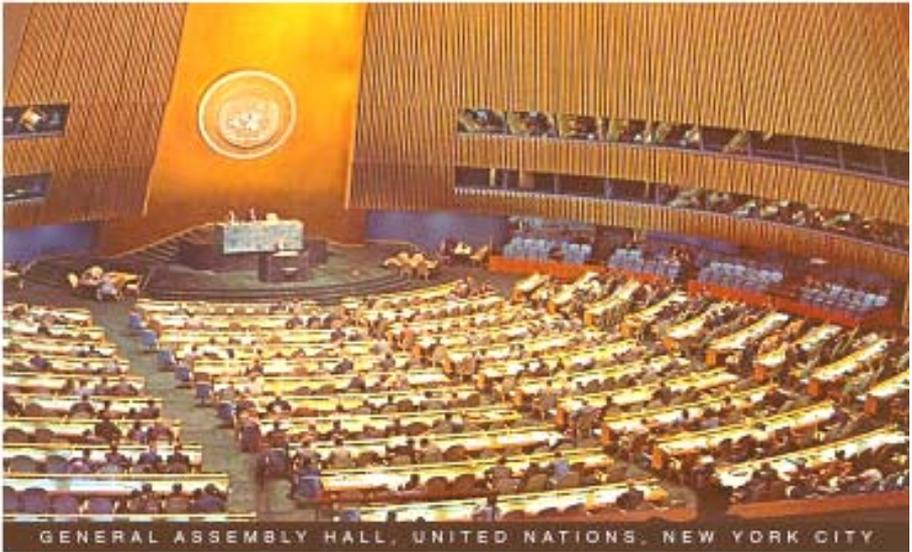
**“When He ascended on high...(He) gave gifts to men...And He  
Himself gave some to be APOSTLES, some PROPHETS, some  
EVANGELISTS, and some PASTORS and TEACHERS,  
for THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS for THE WORK OF  
MINISTRY...” Eph. 4:8-12**

The fivefold ministry gifts of Christ given to “some” were imparted so that the saints of God would be enabled to become thoroughly equipped for the work of their own ministry, which is “the ministry of reconciliation” performed by the believer’s high calling as an “Ambassador for Christ.” The unique calling of the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor and the teacher was given by Christ so that each of these unique gifts could be used to prepare God’s ambassadors, the body of Christ, to be equipped for their ministry to unbelievers. This is what is meant by the prerequisite statement of Paul in saying:

**“BUT TO EACH ONE OF US GRACE WAS GIVEN  
ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF CHRIST’S GIFT.”  
Eph. 4:7**

Every believer receives of the various aspects of God’s grace given to those in the fivefold ministry so that they can be properly equipped for their ministry as ambassadors. The apostle imparts certain aspects of his God-given knowledge to equip the saints. The prophet imparts his God-given visionary knowledge of things to come to equip the saints for their ministry. The evangelist imparts to the believer a burden for winning souls. The pastor and the teacher likewise give of their doctrinal expertise to prepare God’s people for the work of their ministry. Ignore God’s various gifts of grace given to the fivefold ministry, and the believer will be ill-equipped for his/her own ministry as “ministers of reconciliation” and as “Ambassadors for Christ.” Not everyone is called to the fivefold ministry, but everyone indeed is called to be an ambassador for Christ in a Christless world! It is the fivefold ministry given to some that prepares the whole body of Christ for the work of their ministry.

There are hundreds of hand-picked ambassadors meeting in this room in the United Nations building. They represent nearly every nation and kingdom on earth, with one exception; namely, "The Kingdom of God." That special ambassadorship has been awarded to every member and subject of the Kingdom of God via the new birth.



**“NOW ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD, WHO HAS RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, AND HAS GIVEN US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. THAT IS, THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES TO THEM, AND HAS COMMITTED TO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION. THEREFORE WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, AS THOUGH GOD WERE PLEADING THROUGH US: WE IMPLORER YOU ON CHRIST’S BEHALF, BE RECONCILED TO GOD. FOR HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM. WE THEN, AS WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM ALSO PLEAD WITH YOU NOT TO RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN....BEHOLD NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME; BEHOLD, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION. WE GIVE NO OFFENSE IN ANYTHING, THAT OUR MINISTRY MAY NOT BE BLAMED”**

2 Cor. 5:18-6-3

The last sentence above is worth repeating. Every ambassador of Christ must direct his/her steps in such a manner that:

**“WE GIVE NO OFFENSE IN ANYTHING,  
THAT OUR MINISTRY MAY NOT BE BLAMED”**

This picture of Obama’s pastor, Rev. Wright, during the 2008 election campaigns reminds us how a wrong representation can be conveyed by a professing ambassador of God. How much his distorted racial ranting hurt Barack Obama’s presidential bid is not the real issue at stake for politics is not God’s commission on earth for His people.



The real issue at stake is what Rev. Wright has conveyed to unsaved people about God by means of his race-biased, self-justifying, religiously-coated hate message that prevents the unsaved from being reconciled to God. Rev. Wright will be judged for his ambassadorship just as I will be as a pastor/teacher of God’s Word. Paul states these words pertaining to his own careful and guarded ambassadorship before unbelievers:

**“FOR WE ARE NOT, AS SO MANY,  
PEDDLING THE WORD OF GOD;  
BUT AS OF SINCERITY,  
BUT AS FROM GOD,  
WE SPEAK IN THE SIGHT OF GOD AND CHRIST.”**

2 Cor. 2:17

**“THEREFORE SINCE WE HAVE THIS MINISTRY...  
WE HAVE RENOUNCED THE HIDDEN THINGS OF  
SHAME,  
NOT WALKING IN CRAFTINESS  
NOR HANDLING THE WORD OF GOD DECEITFULLY,  
BUT BY MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUTH,  
COMMENDING OURSELVES  
TO EVERY MAN’S CONSCIENCE  
IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.”**

2 Cor. 4:1-2

**“GOD... HAS GIVEN US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION... AND HAS COMMITTED TO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION.”**  
2 Cor. 5:18-19



**“THEREFORE WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, AS THOUGH GOD WERE PLEADING THROUGH US...”**  
2 Cor. 5:20

**“I therefore beseech you to HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED...”**  
Eph. 4:1

**“Therefore DO NOT BE ASHAMED OF THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LORD... who has SAVED US and CALLED US WITH A HOLY CALLING...”**  
2 Tim. 1:8-9

Scriptures like these two will take on a whole new perspective when we, as Christians, understand the universal high calling of God upon His people to be Ambassadors for Christ. This is the “holy calling” of which Paul speaks which is bestowed upon every follower of Christ.

**“HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED”**

There are lessons to be learned by considering the results of behavior of earthly ambassadors:

**Ambassador recalled for unbecoming conduct**

JERUSALEM Mar 12, 2007 (Reuters) - Israel has recalled its ambassador in El Salvador after he was found drunk and naked ...in the yard of his official residence... "The ministry sees his behavior as unbecoming of a diplomat," the spokeswoman said.

**Kenyan Ambassador Recalled Following Sex Allegations**

September 20, 2005- The Kenyan ambassador to the United States was recalled after allegations surfaced that he sexually assaulted a fellow Kenyan diplomat, according to a diplomat posted at the United Nations...

**US Ambassador to Armenia Recalled Due to Statement on Armenian Genocide:**

07 March, 2006 US Ambassador to Armenia is recalled to Washington... His statement on the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey in 1915 was the cause of the recall of the American Ambassador. "I used the word "genocide", which reflected my personal point of view - that of John Evans and not a politician. However, it was inappropriate," the Ambassador stated...

Three examples of earthly ambassadors being “recalled” by their governments. There are some parallels we can make to the calling of God’s ambassadors, but remember this principle:

**“FOR THE GIFTS AND CALLINGS OF GOD ARE IRREVOCABLE”**

Rom. 11:29

The moral to the three stories above is, mess up as an ambassador of an earthly kingdom and you will quickly face an embarrassing “recall” such as depicted above. However God does not do that with His wayward ambassadors in this life. Behave like a bad Ambassador for Christ and it will appear like you will suffer no reproof for your actions. However, this is erroneous thinking for it will come in the afterlife at “The judgment Seat of Christ”:

**“...WE MAKE IT OUR AIM... TO BE WELL PLEASING TO HIM, FOR WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, THAT EACH ONE MAY RECEIVE THE THINGS DONE IN THE BODY, ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAS DONE, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD. KNOWING THEREFORE THE TERROR OF THE LORD, WE PERSUADE MEN...”**

2 Cor. 5:9-11

What we can learn from the first two examples above is that, due to immoral behavior, the office of an ambassador can easily bring disgrace upon the sovereignty it represents. The Israeli ambassador was removed for “behavior unbecoming of a diplomat.” When we tell the unbelieving world that we represent King Jesus and His Kingdom of righteousness, we personally need to have behavior that does not bring disgrace upon the Sovereignty that we claim to represent. The ill-chosen actions of behavior can quickly nullify the message we proclaim with our mouth. The world, along with God, rejects a hypocrite!

The third example I listed is to illustrate the need to stick to the message we were given to deliver on behalf of the Sovereignty we represent. Personal opinions and “personal points of view” are not the work of an ambassador:

**US Ambassador to Armenia Recalled Due to Statement on Armenian Genocide**

07 March, 2006 US Ambassador to Armenia is recalled to Washington... His statement on the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey in 1915 was the cause of the recall of the American Ambassador. “I used the word “genocide”, which reflected my personal point of view - that of John Evans and not a politician. However, it was inappropriate,” the Ambassador stated...

Often an ambassador is given a specific declaration by his government or king to be delivered to another nation's head of state. Nothing is to be added to that message, and certainly nothing is to be taken away from it. The ambassador is to deliver what he/she was given. The object lesson is plain: We, as Ambassadors of Christ, have been given a specific declaration pertaining to how we are to administer God's desire to "reconcile the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). God's written Word is that declaration. Having been given "the ministry of reconciliation", we are not to water-down the specified message with "personal points of view." When the gospel says, "Repent," (Matt. 3:2, 4:17, Luke 13:3-5, Luke 24:47, Acts 26:20), we are not authorized to change the emphasis from repentance to "just believe and receive," or "Smile! God loves you," or "God has a plan for your life." These are private interpretations-personal points of view.

Neither are we authorized to remove "the Kingdom of God" from the message of the new birth (Jn. 3:3,5). Christians in America are trying to seize the government of America for God because the message of the new birth has indeed been divorced from its counterpart, "the Kingdom of God." The result is an earth-bound form of Christianity rooted in political solutions for spiritual problems. Mankind is to repent **BECAUSE** "the Kingdom of God is at hand." This was the clear teaching of John the Baptist and Jesus Himself (Matt. 3:2, 4:17). The gospel of the Kingdom of God has been replaced with the subtle substitute of "One Nation Under God."

We should not only act and speak like an ambassador, but we should strive to look like one as well. Have you ever seen the Queen of England in public in hair curlers or blue-jeans? No, simply because she is well aware that she represents her kingdom.

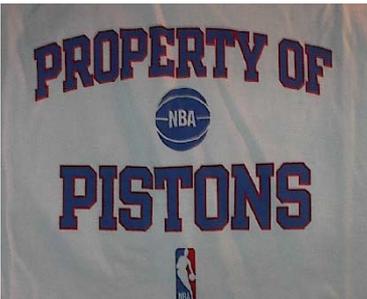


**A POSITION OF DIGNITY  
AND HONOR**

**"AMBASSADOR"**

**AN AMBASSADOR IS A  
DIPLOMATIC OFFICIAL  
ACCREDITED TO A FOREIGN  
SOVEREIGN OR GOVERNMENT...  
TO SERVE AS THE OFFICIAL  
REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS OR  
HER OWN COUNTRY...  
AMBASSADORS ARE MINISTERS  
OF THE HIGHEST RANK,  
WITH AUTHORITY TO  
REPRESENT THEIR HEAD  
OF STATE.**

Most Americans (and even many Christians) are walking billboards. Christians advertise for the merchants of the earth a whole host of things which have nothing to do with the Kingdom of which they are Ambassadors.



All this commercialism may be fine for unbelievers, but is this what a believer should wear in public? Should we be an endorsement for the idols of this world? Jesus warns:

**“FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS,  
THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO.”**

Matt. 6:21

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE PRIORITY OF THE

# PRIESTHOOD

### OF THE BELIEVER



**"YOU HAVE REDEEMED US TO GOD BY  
YOUR BLOOD...  
AND HAVE MADE US KINGS AND  
PRIESTS TO OUR GOD..."**

Rev. 5: 9-10

**"COMING TO HIM...CHOSEN  
BY GOD AND PRECIOUS,  
YOU ALSO, AS LIVING  
STONES ARE BEING BUILT UP  
A SPIRITUAL HOUSE, A HOLY  
PRIESTHOOD,  
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL  
SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO  
GOD THROUGH  
JESUS CHRIST."**

1 Pet. 2:4-5

**"YOU ARE A CHOSEN GENERATION,  
A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD,  
A HOLY NATION,  
HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE,  
THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO CALLED  
YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT;  
WHO ONCE WERE NOT A PEOPLE  
BUT NOW ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD, WHO HAD NOT OBTAINED  
MERCY BUT NOW HAVE OBTAINED MERCY."**

1 Pet. 2:9-10

Ponder well the above passages written to New Testament believers. This is how God sees every follower of Jesus Christ: "As a holy priesthood...a royal priesthood." Catholicism selects a few to be priests in its erroneous concept of Christianity, but this is not so according to the Scriptures. This is a universal calling upon every born-again believer!

Let us begin our examination of the priesthood of the believer by making a comparison between the calling of Israel's priesthood and that of the Church:

The unchanging God has repeated nearly the same words to the Church as He originally spoke to Israel. The difference between these two priesthoods centers upon the type of sacrifices they offered to God.



Israel offered physical sacrifices that were acceptable to God, but the Church is to offer spiritual ones:

**“...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD,  
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES  
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD  
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.”**

1 Pet. 2:-5

Notice that these spiritual sacrifices are offered to God the Father “through Jesus Christ.”

The present ministry of Jesus Christ is that of our High Priest:



**“NOW THIS IS THE MAIN POINT OF THE THINGS WE ARE SAYING: WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST, WHO IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF THE MAJESTY IN THE HEAVENS, A MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY AND OF THE TRUE TABERNACLE WHICH THE LORD ERECTED, AND NOT MAN. FOR EVERY HIGH PRIEST IS APPOINTED TO OFFER BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES. THEREFORE IT IS NECESSARY THAT THIS ONE ALSO HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER...BUT NOW HE HAS OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY, INASMUCH AS HE IS MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED ON BETTER PROMISES.”**

Heb. 8:1-6 excerpts

What has happened to the apostle Paul's "main point" that Jesus Christ is presently the High Priest of the Church, to those believers who have inherited "a better covenant established on better promises"? If Paul were to attend our modern-day churches, wouldn't he brand what is presented about Jesus as "another gospel"? When was the last time you heard Jesus presented as "our High Priest"? The absence of this emphasis in modern-day preaching does not change the fact that He is the High Priest of the Church, and that, as such, He is expecting His people

**"...TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES  
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."**

1 Pet. 2:-5

It is the "royal, holy priesthood" of believers on earth that are to offer to "our High Priest," Jesus Christ, spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God the Father. As the "Mediator of the better covenant established on better promises," Jesus Christ will receive "both gifts and sacrifices" from His people and pass them on to God the Father. Does this sound like the brand of Christianity widely accepted and practiced by the Church? More than likely, to speak in such terms would be branded as Old Testament legalism because of the ignorance most Christians have of the priesthood of the believer!

**"EVERY HIGH PRIEST IS APPOINTED TO OFFER BOTH GIFTS  
AND SACRIFICES. THEREFORE IT IS NECESSARY  
THAT THIS ONE(OUR HIGH PRIEST)  
ALSO HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER."**

Hebrews 8:3



For most New Covenant believers, it would be hard to list from rote memory what are the specific sacrifices listed in Scripture that are acceptable to God. I therefore strongly encourage you to commit them to memory.

How else will we be able to fulfill what is required of us in our God-given role as a priest unto our High Priest if we don't even know what those sacrifices are?

Let me state that by the word "sacrifice" we are not talking about doing something for God that is not in our heart such as, "I don't really feel like it, but here is a sacrifice of praise." That kind of attitude would constitute a blemished sacrifice as depicted in Mal. 1:6-8. Sacrifices that are acceptable to God must flow from a heart of gratitude, not dutiful reluctance.

**"LET'S SEE,  
THERE IS  
THE SACRIFICE  
OF...??"**



Let us now consider what is spelled out in Scripture as spiritual sacrifices. There are eight mentioned, here is the first:

**1. OFFER UP  
TO GOD THE  
SACRIFICE OF**

**PRAISE**

**"...A HOLY  
PRIESTHOOD,  
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL  
SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE  
TO GOD THROUGH  
JESUS CHRIST."  
1 PETER 2:5**

**"THEREFORE BY HIM  
LET US CONTINUALLY OFFER  
THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE TO GOD,  
THAT IS, THE FRUIT OF OUR LIPS,  
GIVING THANKS TO HIS NAME."  
Hebrews 13:15**



Of the majority of God's first covenant people (Israel), the Scriptures record that they "murmured in their tents" against God (Psm.106:25, 1 Cor. 10:10), Far too often, God gets blame from the lips of His people instead of praise. This stems out of a lack of knowledge of the character and nature of God as revealed in His Word. The highest revelation of God is that He is "A Righteous Judge." That implies that He cannot and will not do anything unrighteous toward His people. And yet, I hear people express how mad they are at God. If you know the God of the Bible, you could never be mad at Him. What kind of words do you express toward God? Are they words of murmuring against God or words of praise to God?

Church services are a great opportunity to offer verbal praise to God. Wonderful songs have been penned that express the level of one's love for God. However, at times the words of a devotional song contain expressions that are beyond what is in the believer's heart.

I suggest that you do not sing words to God that are not in harmony with your walk with Him. A silent prayer over these words to God as a desire for your walk is more in order. Why do I say that? Because Jesus warns:

**“THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,  
BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME,  
AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME...”** Mark 7:6

I have not sought to place these eight sacrifices in any form of chronological order or level of importance, for I am not sure there is a proper order. Certainly an argument can be made that some sacrifices are more important than others. Perhaps this second spiritual sacrifice should have been listed first, because I am convinced that people who find it difficult to praise God with their lips lack thanksgiving in their heart. A favorite teacher of mine, Derek Prince, made a distinction between praise and thanksgiving in this manner:

**“WE PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS  
AND WE THANK GOD FOR WHAT HE DOES”**

If a believer does not know who God is in all His fullness, then the level of praise will be lowered. If a believer does not recognize what God does for him/her, then the level of thanksgiving will be greatly lacking.

**2. OFFER UP  
TO GOD THE  
SACRIFICE OF**

**“...A HOLY  
PRIESTHOOD,  
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL  
SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE  
TO GOD THROUGH  
JESUS CHRIST.”**  
1 PETER 2:5

# THANKSGIVING

**“WHAT SHALL I RENDER TO THE  
LORD FOR ALL HIS BENEFITS  
TOWARD ME? I WILL OFFER TO YOU  
THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING.”**  
Psalms 116:12,17



Thanksgiving is an attitude. So is un-thankfulness. It should be well-noted that much of what is in the world today that is ungodly stems out of the sin of being unthankful:

**“...ALTHOUGH THEY KNEW GOD,  
THEY DID NOT GLORIFY HIM AS GOD,  
NOR WERE THEY THANKFUL...  
THEREFORE GOD GAVE THEM UP  
TO VILE PASSIONS...”**

Rom. 1:21,26

Sober words, especially when you see that these were a people like us, “they knew God.”

What are we to be thankful for? My answer is “everything!” Be thankful for where you were born, you could be living in a land of spiritual darkness such as in the Asian 10-40 window, much of which has yet to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Be thankful for the ability to walk, see, hear, speak and think! Be thankful for health and wealth (the poorest in this land is rich!). Be thankful for water at your fingertips (hot and cold). Be thankful for God’s protection as spelled out in Psalm 91 (do your part and God will do His). Be thankful for the abundance of food available in this land for most of the world goes to bed hungry (many are starving). Be thankful for freedoms that much of the world does not experience. Be thankful for God’s amazing grace and mercy in not rewarding you according to your sins! Be thankful for the power God has given us by means of the Holy Spirit to enable us to live a victorious life over sin and sickness! The word “thankful” only appears twice in the New Testament. Once as stated above, “Nor were they thankful” (Rom. 1:21). The second place it appears is Col. 3:15 in which it says, “Be thankful.” The choice is ours.

The third spiritual sacrifice God wants His holy, royal priesthood to offer to Him is the sacrifice of “joy.” Biblical joy is not the same as the world’s “happiness.” Philip Keller in his book, *The Fruit of the Spirit*, makes this distinction between the two:

### 3. OFFER UP TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF

# JOY

“THEREFORE I WILL OFFER SACRIFICES OF JOY IN HIS TABERNACLE.”  
Psalm 27:6

“...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.”  
1 PETER 2:5



**“JOY IS NOT HAPPINESS. HAPPINESS IS CONDITIONED BY PEOPLE AROUND ME, IT’S CONDITIONED BY EVENTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ARE TAKING PLACE IN MY LIFE. HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON WHAT’S HAPPENING TO ME... JOY HAS TO DO WITH MY RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. JOY FUNCTIONS IN MY LIFE INDEPENDENTLY OF ANYTHING OR ANYONE OR ANY CIRCUMSTANCE THAT’S HAPPENING AROUND ME. JOY IS NOT DEPENDENT IN ANY WAY ABOUT WHAT’S HAPPENING OUTSIDE ME. IT DEPENDS UPON WHAT HAS OR IS HAPPENING WITHIN ME.”**

Only the Bible can define for us what is true joy. Here are a few examples: “God is our exceeding joy” (Psm. 43:4). “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10). “The fruit of the Spirit is joy” (Gal. 5:22). “In Your presence is fullness of joy” (Psm. 16:11). “I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab.3:18).

We are to express joy even in the midst of hardships, persecution and trials (Rom. 5:3-4, Jm. 1:2-4, 1 Pet. 1:6-7). Why so? Because it is by means of such that we are perfected and conformed into the image of Jesus, who also was “perfected by the things He suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

The fourth spiritual sacrifice God wants on an ongoing basis is the sacrifice of repentance. We tend to think of repentance as a one-time act that we performed at the new birth. Repentance is a way of life, not a one-time event.

#### **4. OFFER UP TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF**

# **REPENTANCE**

**“...A HOLY  
PRIESTHOOD,  
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL  
SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE  
TO GOD THROUGH  
JESUS CHRIST.”**  
1 PETER 2:5

**“THE SACRIFICES OF GOD  
ARE A BROKEN SPIRIT,  
A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE HEART.  
THESE O GOD  
YOU WILL NOT DESPISE.”**

Psalm 51:17



The Bible tells us not to sin (1 Jn.2:1), but if we do sin then we are to “confess our sins” (1 Jn. 1:9). Although we find forgiveness through confession, we still need to offer to God the sacrifice of repentance. Most people think repentance is being sorry for your sin. Not true! Godly Sorrow leads to repentance:

**“NOW I REJOICE, NOT THAT YOU WERE MADE SORRY,  
BUT THAT YOUR SORROW LED TO REPENTANCE...GODLY  
SORROW PRODUCES REPENTANCE TO SALVATION,  
NOT TO BE REGRETTED.”** 2 Cor. 7:9-10

What then is repentance if it is not sorrow for sin? Repentance is turning away from sin:

**“I ENTREATED YOUR FAVOR WITH MY WHOLE HEART; BE MERCIFUL  
TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD. I THOUGHT ABOUT MY WAYS,  
AND TURNED MY FEET TO YOUR TESTIMONIES.  
I MADE HASTE, AND DID NOT DELAY TO KEEP YOUR  
COMMANDMENTS.”**  
Psalm 119:58-60

Jesus came not only to forgive our iniquity, but also to turn us away from all iniquity:

**“GOD, HAVING RAISED UP HIS SERVANT JESUS, SENT HIM TO BLESS YOU,  
IN TURNING AWAY EVERY ONE OF YOU FROM YOUR INIQUITIES.”**  
Acts 3:26

Much of Christianity gives emphasis only to the forgiveness of sins. However, the other half of the truth cannot be ignored:

**“HE WHO COVERS HIS SINS WILL NOT PROSPER.  
BUT HE WHO CONFESSES AND FORSAKES THEM WILL HAVE MERCY.”**  
Prov. 28:13

The fifth spiritual sacrifice God wants His people to offer up to Him as an acceptable sacrifice is the sacrifice of righteousness. Here again, I find Christianity lacks a full understanding of the doctrine of righteousness.

**5. OFFER UP  
TO GOD THE  
SACRIFICE OF**

# RIGHTEOUSNESS

**"OFFER  
THE SACRIFICE  
OF  
RIGHTEOUSNESS..."**  
Psalm 4:5

**"...A HOLY  
PRIESTHOOD,  
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL  
SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE  
TO GOD THROUGH  
JESUS CHRIST."  
1 PETER 2:5**



Christianity is well-versed in the imputed righteousness the believer receives from the sacrifice of Christ:

**"FOR HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN  
FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE  
RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM."**

2 Cor. 5:21

However, this cannot be construed as being the "sacrifice of righteousness" that we, as a holy and royal priesthood, are to offer up to God. We cannot offer to God the sacrifice Christ has already offered by the sacrifice of Himself!

What God wants from us are acts, works and fruits of righteousness-righteous living before God! Ponder these Scriptures as depicting another kind of righteousness that is acceptable in God's sight:

**"THAT YOU MAY APPROVE THE THINGS THAT ARE  
EXCELLENT, THAT YOU MAY BE SINCERE AND WITHOUT OFFENSE  
TILL THE DAY OF CHRIST, BEING FILLED WITH THE FRUITS OF  
RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH ARE BY CHRIST JESUS,  
TO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD."** Phil. 1:10-11

**"...DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS,  
WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY  
IN THIS PRESENT AGE..."**

Titus 2:12

**"THE LORD REWARDED ME ACCORDING TO MY RIGHTEOUSNESS;  
ACCORDING TO THE CLEANNESS OF MY HANDS HE HAS  
RECOMPENSED ME. FOR I HAVE KEPT THE WAYS OF THE LORD, AND  
HAVE NOT WICKEDLY DEPARTED FROM MY GOD....I DID NOT PUT  
AWAY HIS STATUTES FROM ME. I WAS ALSO BLAMELESS BEFORE HIM,  
I KEPT MYSELF FROM MY INIQUITY. THEREFORE THE LORD HAS  
RECOMPENSED ME ACCORDING TO MY RIGHTEOUSNESS, ACCORDING  
TO THE CLEANNESS OF MY HANDS IN HIS SIGHT."**

Psalm 18:20-24

Do not allow anyone to tell you that, as a believer, “all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.” Yes, the Bible does say that in Isaiah 64:6. However, you only need to read the verse above it to see that in context it is talking about a people who “need to be saved” (Isa. 64:5). It is the righteousness of the unsaved that are as filthy rags to God, but not the righteous acts of the believer! To prove the point, look at this prophetic depiction of the Bride of Christ clothed in “fine linen, clean and bright”:

**“...THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME, AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY. AND TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINE CLEAN AND BRIGHT, FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS (Amplified: “THE UPRIGHT, JUST, AND GODLY LIVING, DEEDS AND CONDUCT OF THE SAINTS”) Rev. 19:7-8**

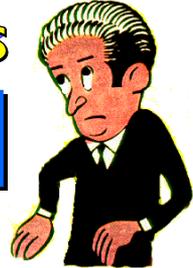
That does not sound like “filthy rags righteousness” to me!

The sixth spiritual sacrifice spelled out in Scripture as an acceptable sacrifice to God deals with our tithes and offerings to God. Paul, in this passage from Philippians, conveys that our money can be a “sweet-smelling aroma” that is “well-pleasing to God.”

**6. OFFER UP TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

**“...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.”  
1 PETER 2:5**

**“CONCERNING GIVING... (IT IS) A SWEET -SMELLING AROMA, AND ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE, WELL PLEASING TO GOD.”  
Philippians 4:15-18**



However, in order to be so it must be given with a right motive. Consider Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians:

**“SO LET EACH ONE GIVE AS HE PURPOSES IN HIS HEART, NOT GRUDGINGLY OR OF NECESSITY; FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER.”  
2 Cor. 9:7**

This verse stresses the importance of a proper attitude in our giving. We are not to give with a reluctant heart, not out of peer pressure, but with a joyful obedience that flows from the heart.

Modern-day Christianity in this country does not lack for an emphasis upon giving. However, it does lack for a proper emphasis upon why we are to give. God is not to be viewed as better interest than the First National Bank—we are not to give to get a hundred-fold return.

We are to give to honor God:

**“HONOR THE LORD WITH YOUR POSSESSIONS,  
AND WITH THE FIRSTFRUITS OF ALL YOUR INCREASE...”**

Prov. 3:9

We are to give so that God's house is provided for:

**“BRING ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE,  
THAT THERE MAY BE FOOD IN MY HOUSE...”**

Mal. 3:10

**“...BRING A TENTH..TO THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD,  
TO THE ROOMS OF THE STOREHOUSE...  
WE WILL NOT NEGLECT THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD.”**

Neh. 10:38-39

The seventh area that constitutes a spiritual sacrifice that is acceptable to God deals with the believer's physical body. Note the oxymoronic concept: “our bodies presented as a living sacrifice.” Old Testament sacrifices were always dead (animal) bodies offered to God.

**7. OFFER UP  
TO GOD THE  
SACRIFICE OF  
YOUR  
BODY**

**“...PRESENT YOUR BODIES  
A LIVING SACRIFICE,  
HOLY,  
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD,  
WHICH IS  
YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.”**  
Romans 12:1

**“...A HOLY  
PRIESTHOOD,  
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL  
SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE  
TO GOD THROUGH  
JESUS CHRIST.”**  
1 PETER 2:5



Here is a New Testament twist: “a living (human) sacrifice.” There is a reason why God wants our bodies willingly offered to Him-it belongs to Him:

**“OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS THE  
TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS IN YOU, WHOM  
YOU HAVE FROM GOD, AND YOU ARE NOT YOUR  
OWN? FOR YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE;  
THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY AND IN  
YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD'S (PROPERTY)”**

1 Cor. 6:19-20

Many of God's people live in their body as if they are free to do with it whatever they please. We are now “renters” of God's purchased possession-our bodies. You cannot do as you please with someone else's property. We are not “free” to kill the body with drugs, smoke, alcohol or junk food! Glorify God in your body by taking good care of it for God, respecting the fact that it is now the temple of the Holy Spirit!

The temple of God (our body) is not for sexual immorality. Please note that the apostle Paul singles out sexual immorality as a sin above all other sins:

**“NOW THE BODY IS NOT FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY BUT FOR THE LORD, AND THE LORD FOR THE BODY...FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY. EVERY SIN THAT A MAN DOES IS OUTSIDE THE BODY, BUT HE WHO COMMITS SEXUAL IMMORALITY SINS AGAINST HIS OWN BODY. OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...?”**

1 Cor. 6:13,18-19

**“MARRIAGE IS HONORABLE AMONG ALL, AND THE BED UNDEFILED; BUT FORNICATORS AND ADULTERERS GOD WILL JUDGE.”** Heb. 13:4

The eighth and final sacrifice God desires for His people to offer up to Him as an acceptable sacrifice is this aspect of “doing good.” Scripture not only exhorts us to “not forget to do good” but also “let us not grow weary while doing good” (Gal. 6:9).

**8. OFFER UP TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF**

**DOING GOOD AND TO SHARE**

**“DO NOT FORGET TO DO GOOD AND TO SHARE, FOR WITH SUCH SACRIFICES GOD IS WELL PLEASSED.”**  
Hebrews 13:16

**“...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.”**  
1 PETER 2:5



I believe this implies that we will not always be recognized for the good we do, but rather, we must keep on doing good as Galatians goes on to tell us, “...we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Gal. 6:9). The next verse in Galatians gives us the first category of people to whom we are to “do good”:

**“THEREFORE, AS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY, LET US DO GOOD TO ALL, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO ARE OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.”**

Gal. 6:10

Certainly we don't mind helping out a brother or sister in the Lord that is in need. However, this is not the only category of people that the Scriptures instruct us to “do good” unto:

**“BUT I SAY UNTO YOU WHO HEAR; LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU... LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD, LEND, HOPING FOR NOTHING IN RETURN...”**

Luke. 6:27,35

Then we might add a third class of people to whom we are to “do good” and be “willing to share”:

**“HE HAS DISPERSED ABROAD, HE HAS GIVEN TO THE POOR...”**

Psm. 112:9

**“HE WHO HAS PITY ON THE POOR LENDS TO THE LORD,  
AND HE WILL PAY BACK WHAT HE HAS GIVEN”**

Prov. 19:17

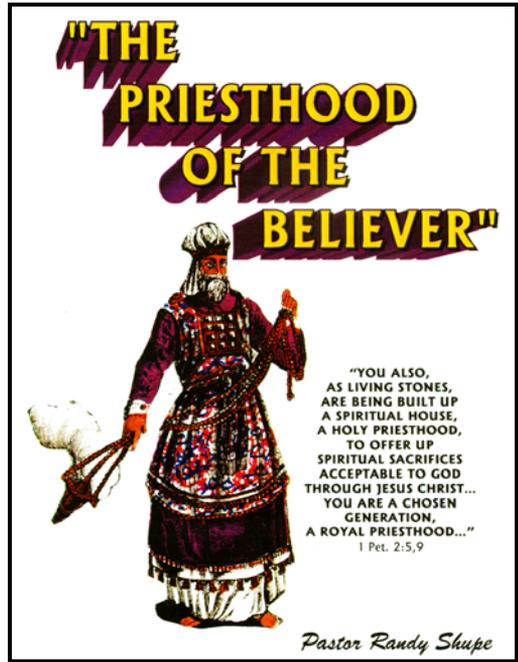
**“AND GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE ALL GRACE ABOUT TOWARD  
YOU, THAT YOU, ALWAYS HAVING ALL SUFFICIENCY IN ALL  
THINGS, HAVE AN ABUNDANCE FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”**

2 Cor. 9:8

God has blessed His people in America with great abundance. He has a purpose for doing so, “...that you...have an abundance for every good work.” The poor live in far away places. Many of those places fill our nightly news with stories of great need due to cyclones, earthquakes, famines, floods, wars and such like. We are commanded to “remember the poor” (Gal. 2:10). Take a look at Gospel For Asia’s website (GFA.com). There are many things they are doing that are worthy of our God-given abundance.

This chapter has only laid out as a challenge, the barest expression of these spiritual sacrifices. For a more in-depth teaching on the subject, I highly recommend this DVD series which I taught some time ago in our congregation.

**12 hours of  
illustrated  
teaching  
on 4 DVD’s  
in one album  
\$25.00  
(plus \$ 4.00  
shipping and  
handling)**



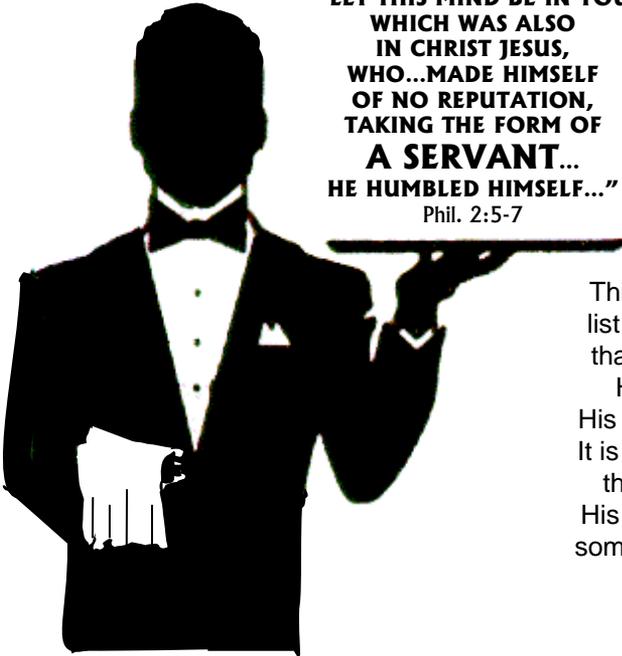
**"THE  
PRIESTHOOD  
OF THE  
BELIEVER"**

**"YOU ALSO,  
AS LIVING STONES,  
ARE BEING BUILT UP  
A SPIRITUAL HOUSE,  
A HOLY PRIESTHOOD,  
TO OFFER UP  
SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES  
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD  
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST...  
YOU ARE A CHOSEN  
GENERATION,  
A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD..."**  
1 Pet. 2:5,9

*Pastor Randy Shupe*

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# THE PRIORITY OF BEING A **SERVANT** OF THE MOST HIGH GOD



**“LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU  
WHICH WAS ALSO  
IN CHRIST JESUS,  
WHO...MADE HIMSELF  
OF NO REPUTATION,  
TAKING THE FORM OF  
A SERVANT...  
HE HUMBLD HIMSELF...”  
Phil. 2:5-7**

This is the eighth in a list of twelve priorities that God spells out in His Word as being His will for His people. It is important to grasp that God never asks His people to do or be something that He has not demonstrated Himself.

The Scripture above reveals that in addition to Jesus coming to earth to inherit such lofty roles as “a Prophet like unto Moses” (Acts 3:22-26), as “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession” (Heb.3:1), as “the Chief Cornerstone of the Household of God” (Eph.2:19-20), as “King of the Kingdom of God” (Jn. 18:36-37), as “Head of the Body, the Church” (Col. 1:18), He also came to assume the lowly office of a servant.

It is to this same humble position that God calls every believer in Christ. This chapter is dedicated to establishing this often-ignored priority in the hearts of God's people.

Jesus must have taught His disciples well this principle of servanthood. Look carefully at how five of the New Testament writers identify themselves as they open their epistles. Although three of the five were definitely holding the highest office in the government of God's church, that of an Apostle, (Jude and Timothy are debatable) they listed themselves first and foremost as servants of Jesus Christ:



**"PETER,  
A SERVANT  
AND APOSTLE OF  
JESUS CHRIST..."**

2 Pet. 1:1



**"JUDE,  
A SERVANT  
OF JESUS CHRIST..."**

Jude 1



**"JAMES,  
A SERVANT  
OF GOD AND THE LORD  
JESUS CHRIST..."**

James 1:1

**"PAUL AND TIMOTHY,  
SERVANTS  
OF JESUS CHRIST..."**

Phil. 1:1



Segments of today's church leaders seem to cherish being introduced with lofty titles.

Pastors place in front of their names the preferred title "Reverend" when only God is worthy of reverence. Television personalities flash on the screen, "Apostle such and such" or "Prophet so and so." Not that these governmental gifts are not for today, but I don't believe they should be blatantly printed in large print on business cards or seminar brochures. If one is truly an Apostle or Prophet in God's church today, the people will know and recognize those gifts without personal promotion. I pastor a local church and have a calling to teach God's Word. I reluctantly accept the use of these titles (pastor and teacher) because they state what functions I do for God's Kingdom. However, I prefer to be known best as "a servant of the Most High God." It is very interesting to note that this phrase, "servants of the Most High God," appears twice in Scripture, once in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament.

It is most noteworthy that both of these references were spoken by the mouth of pagan unbelievers who recognized true servants of God when they saw them:

# "SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD"

**Dan. 3:26**

**Acts 16:16-17**

**"THEN  
NEBUCHADNEZZAR  
WENT NEAR THE  
MOUTH OF THE  
BURNING FIERY  
FURNACE AND  
SPOKE, SAYING,  
"SHADRACH,  
MESHACH, AND  
ABED-NEGO,  
SERVANTS OF  
THE MOST HIGH GOD,  
COME OUT,  
AND COME HERE.' "**

**"...A CERTAIN  
SLAVE GIRL  
POSSESSED  
WITH A SPIRIT OF  
DIVINATION...  
FOLLOWED PAUL  
AND US, AND CRIED  
OUT, SAYING,  
'THESE MEN ARE  
THE SERVANTS OF  
THE MOST HIGH  
GOD, WHO  
PROCLAIM TO US  
THE WAY OF  
SALVATION.' "**

These two testimonies remind me of a similar story of the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who attempted to cast out demons "in the name of Jesus that Paul preached." The demons replied, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" (Acts 19:14). Jesus and Paul were servants of God, these men were not.



This idiotic picture is an oxymoron. Servants don't wear crowns while they serve. It is a conflict of interest. Paul brought reproof to the church at Corinth for it's brand of today's popular "King's Kids" theology.

**"...YOU HAVE REIGNED AS KINGS WITHOUT US**

**– AND INDEED I COULD WISH YOU DID REIGN, THAT WE ALSO MIGHT REIGN WITH YOU! FOR I THINK THAT GOD HAS DISPLAYED US, THE APOSTLES, LAST... WE ARE FOOLS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, BUT YOU ARE WISE IN CHRIST! WE ARE WEAK, BUT YOU ARE STRONG! YOU ARE DISTINGUISHED, BUT WE ARE DISHONORED!..."**

1 Cor. 4:8-10

Some of today's hype that is put forth as God's will for His people stands in direct opposition to Paul's words above.

God does promise His overcoming saints that they shall have "power over the nations" and "rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26-27), but not now! Reigning is reserved for the Millennial Kingdom to come. Serving in God's present internal Kingdom is the key for the future. Serve now-reign later! Reign now-serve later! This is the clear teaching of Christ.

Two of Jesus' disciples were having a discussion with Jesus about their desire to sit on His right hand and on His left in the Kingdom to come. Jesus gave this principle to them that will govern who will and will not reign in the coming Kingdom:

**"...YOU KNOW THAT THOSE WHO ARE CONSIDERED RULERS OVER THE GENTILES LORD IT OVER THEM, AND THEIR GREAT ONES EXERCISE AUTHORITY OVER THEM. YET IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU; BUT WHOEVER DESIRES TO BECOME GREAT AMONG YOU SHALL BE YOUR SERVANT. AND WHOEVER OF YOU DESIRES TO BE FIRST SHALL BE SLAVE OF ALL. FOR EVEN THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE..."**

Mark 10:42-45

Search the Scriptures and you will find this is the clear and often repeated teaching of Christ! An emphasis upon being a servant in this life leads to reigning in the life to come. Here are two more examples:



**“...BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT WHOM HIS MASTER WILL FIND SO DOING WHEN HE COMES. TRULY, I SAY TO YOU THAT HE WILL MAKE HIM RULER OVER ALL THAT HE HAS.”**

Luke 12:43-44

**“WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; YOU HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE YOU RULER OVER MANY THINGS.”**

Matt. 25:23

The faithful servant will one day become ruler over all that the master has. What is required? He must be found a faithful servant of God. We live in a culture dominated by the philosophy of the gentiles which centers upon doing whatever is necessary to get to the top. To be in authority is the world's priority. As followers of Christ, we must cultivate the wiser counsel as stated above. Humility in this life as a servant of God leads to great authority in the life to come.

There are several governing principles we need to ponder that will determine whether God will indeed say to each of us, “Well done good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:23). What is the criteria that determines whether our servanthood will be deemed

(1) “good” and (2) “faithful” in God's estimation?

Let me suggest seven for your consideration:

## 1. HUMILITY



**THE MARK OF  
A SERVANT**

**“... LET NOTHING BE DONE THROUGH SELFISH AMBITION OR CONCEIT, BUT IN LOWLINESS OF MIND LET EACH ESTEEM OTHERS BETTER THAN HIMSELF... LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS... HE MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION...TAKING THE FORM OF A SERVANT... HE HUMBLED HIMSELF...”**

Phil.2:3-8 excerpts

In the natural realm we could picture a humble servant best with the illustration of a waiter. I must say that I have experienced some waiters who totally failed to bear any resemblance to what is described above in Phil. 2:5-8.

However, normally we find that waiters or waitresses know what they are supposed to do. They are to serve, and serve well, with a good attitude towards what they are doing. There is nothing more pleasant than a waiter or waitress who does all things well. Needless to say, (but I will) there is nothing worse than a high-minded, obnoxious person performing with a spirit of duty and drudgery. The same contrasts apply in the spiritual realm in our service to God. We are to bear the attitude of a servant who functions in lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than himself, making himself of no reputation by humbling himself. Jesus taught by example in taking the lowly task of foot washing, thus teaching His disciples how to serve one another. I do not believe He intended for this to become a church ritual to be literally practiced. Perhaps in today's society we should wash one another's cars as fulfilling the mandate to assume the lowly task. It was an object lesson designed to convey the essence of servanthood. We should always be quick and ready to do what no one else really wants to do. This is humbleness of mind. This is esteeming others better than ourselves. It should be practiced in our homes, in our work places as well as in our churches. Paul states:

**“BE OF THE SAME MIND TOWARD ONE ANOTHER. DO NOT SET YOUR MIND ON HIGH THINGS, BUT ASSOCIATE WITH THE HUMBLE. DO NOT BE WISE IN YOUR OWN OPINION.”** Romans 12:16



**“SERVANTS, BE OBEDIENT TO THOSE WHO ARE YOUR MASTERS ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING, IN SINCERITY OF HEART, AS TO CHRIST, NOT WITH EYE SERVICE, AS MEN-PLEASERS, BUT AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, DOING THE WILL OF GOD FROM THE HEART, WITH GOODWILL DOING**

**SERVICE, AS TO THE LORD, AND NOT TO MEN, KNOWING THAT WHATEVER GOOD ANYONE DOES, HE WILL RECEIVE THE SAME FROM THE LORD...”**

Eph. 6:5-8

**“SERVANTS, OBEY IN ALL THINGS YOUR MASTERS ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, NOT WITH EYESERVICE AS MEN-PLEASERS, BUT IN SINCERITY OF HEART, FEARING GOD. AND WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT HEARTILY, AS TO THE LORD AND NOT TO MEN, KNOWING THAT FROM THE LORD YOU WILL RECEIVE THE REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE; FOR YOU SERVE THE LORD CHRIST. BUT HE WHO DOES WRONG WILL BE REPAID FOR THE WRONG WHICH HE HAS DONE...”** Col. 3:22-25

Our society does not have a master-servant structure as it existed in Paul's day. However, the principles from the above still can be applied. The closest relationship to which these principles apply is that of our work environment. Most of us are employees of an employer. This is today's master-servant relationship. God requires His people to have sincerity of heart in all that they do. We are to serve men understanding that we are really serving God Himself! If we cheat our employers, we cheat our God. Note that God will repay wrong as well as right service. God wants His people to be under authority in the workplace, in the church ("Obey those who rule over you"-Heb.13:7,17), and in society ("Let every soul be subject to governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God..."-Rom.13:1). God will repay for right and wrong done in all these areas of authority.

**3.**

### **USEFUL TO THE MASTER**



**THE MARK OF  
A SERVANT**

**"...IN A GREAT HOUSE THERE ARE NOT ONLY VESSELS OF GOLD AND SILVER, BUT ALSO OF WOOD AND CLAY, SOME FOR HONOR AND SOME FOR DISHONOR. THEREFORE, IF ANYONE CLEANSSES HIMSELF FROM THE LATTER,**

**HE WILL BE A VESSEL FOR HONOR, SANCTIFIED AND USEFUL FOR THE MASTER, PREPARED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK."**

**2 Tim.2:20-21**

When an important person comes to your house for dinner, you will seek to put on the table all your vessels of honor. You will not serve his drink in a paper cup, or give him a plastic fork, will you? The verses above imply that God saves His vessels of honor for His good works. He wants sanctified saints who have cleansed themselves from all that would bring dishonor to His name. These are vessels considered to be useful for the Master.

When God had a message to impart which "in other ages was not made known to the sons of men", He entrusted it to His holy apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:5). When the early church had need of men even to wait on tables, God wanted men chosen with the criteria of being "of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:2-3). One of those men, Stephen, would go from the lowly task of waiting on tables to being "full of faith and power, doing great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8).

It could be said of Stephen “he who was faithful in what is least is faithful also in much...” (Luke 16:10). The U. S. Marine Corps is always advertising for a few good men, and so is God looking for a few good vessels of honor to carry out His good works. A good servant is one that is useful to the Master.

4.

## **FAITHFUL TO THE MASTER**



**THE MARK OF  
A SERVANT**

**“MOREOVER IT IS  
REQUIRED IN SERVANTS  
THAT ONE BE FOUND  
FAITHFUL”**

1 Cor. 4:1

**“AND MOSES INDEED WAS FAITHFUL  
IN ALL HIS HOUSE  
AS A SERVANT,  
FOR A TESTIMONY...”**

Heb.3:5

God requires His servants to be found faithful. Moses was “faithful in all his house as a servant.” The very next verse states that Christ is “... over His own house, whose house we are...” (vs.6). The question is whether we, as the church (the house of Christ) will have a testimony like Moses of being found faithful as a servant.

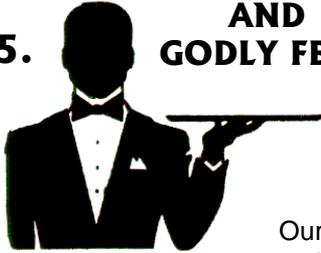
**“...WHO CAN FIND A FAITHFUL MAN?”**

Proverbs 20:6

This verse from Proverbs implies that faithfulness is a rare quality. This is strange in light of the fact that faithfulness is listed as one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:22). Is it possible that this is the main area in which God's people are “grieving the Holy Spirit by whom they were sealed for the day of redemption”? (Eph.4:30). The fact of the matter is that God asks His people to be available to Him. He takes the available and makes them capable. It was so with Moses, although he was slow of speech and not eloquent (Ex.4:10-12). In spite of his deficiencies, God sent him to speak on His behalf to Pharaoh. God told Moses, “I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say” (Ex.4:12).

Our faithfulness as servants will determine our rewards in heaven. This is the clear teaching of Jesus in the parables of the talents and minas (Luke 19:11-27, Matt.25:14:-30). The unprofitable servant, however, was cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 25:30). Truly it is required in servants that one be found faithful.

5.



**THE MARK OF  
A SERVANT**

**GRACE,  
REVERENCE  
AND  
GODLY FEAR**

**“...LET US HAVE  
GRACE,  
BY WHICH WE MAY  
SERVE GOD  
ACCEPTABLY  
WITH REVERENCE  
AND GODLY FEAR.”**

Heb. 12:28

Our first thoughts might be that grace and fear don't mix together. However, we find this mix recorded of the early church:

**“AND GREAT GRACE WAS UPON THEM ALL... (Acts 4:33)  
“THEN ALL THE CHURCHES THROUGHOUT ALL JUDEA,  
GALILEE AND SAMARIA HAD PEACE AND WERE EDIFIED.  
AND WALKING IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD AND IN THE  
COMFORT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THEY WERE MULTIPLIED.”**  
(Acts 9: 31)

The theology of the modern-day church emphasizes only the need to walk in the comfort of the Holy Spirit by means of the grace of God. The doctrine of the fear of the Lord is relegated to the God of the Old Testament, the law-giver. This cannot be substantiated, for the contents of the book of Acts refutes such nonsense. What about the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts Chapter Five? These were New Testament believers who lost their lives solely because they lied to the Holy Spirit. The God of the New Testament swiftly killed them resulting in great impact upon the church:

**“SO GREAT FEAR CAME UPON ALL THE CHURCH  
AND UPON ALL WHO HEARD THESE THINGS”** Acts 5:11

Then consider the contrast recorded just 15 verses prior to the “great fear” induced upon this early church:

**“...AND GREAT GRACE WAS UPON THEM ALL.”** Acts 4:33

When God's people violate His great grace, then God may resort to a dose of great fear. A delicate balance of these two concepts needs to be restored to the theology of the church of today. Consider this principle from the Old Testament which easily can be seen as the moral to the story of Ananias and Sapphira. This passage easily could have been written as an epitaph on their tombstones:

**“FOR WHEN YOUR JUDGMENTS ARE IN THE EARTH, THE  
INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS.  
LET GRACE BE SHOWN TO THE WICKED; YET HE WILL NOT  
LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS...”** Isa. 26:9-10

6.



**THE MARK OF  
A SERVANT**

**HIS LABORS  
ARE HIS  
REASONABLE SERVICE**

**“...WHEN YOU HAVE DONE ALL  
THOSE THINGS WHICH YOU WERE  
COMMANDED, SAY, WE ARE  
UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.  
WE HAVE DONE WHAT WAS OUR  
DUTY TO DO.”**

Luke 17:10

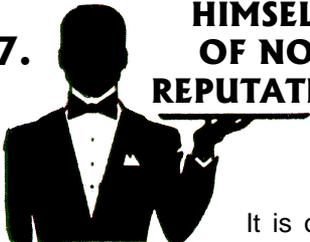
The above parable is warning about thinking too highly of ourselves as servants. There are things that God considers as our reasonable service. Paul taught this as well:

**“I BESECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF  
GOD, THAT YOU PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE,  
HOLY, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, WHICH IS  
YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.”**

Rom. 12:1

It would be easy to think that we have given God the greatest gift in the world when we offer our body as a living sacrifice. However, this is expected as part of our reasonable service. When a soldier shows up for battle, is this not his reasonable service? However, if he risks life and limb in battle, he may receive a commendation for service beyond the line of duty. Servants serve. This is their reasonable service. The servant who hears, “Well done good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:23), will excel in his service to God. He will seek to do more than what is expected. When compelled to go one mile, he will volunteer to go two (Matt. 5:41). He will be like the good Samaritan who went far beyond what would be expected. Don't just be a servant of God. Be the best servant of God. It will be worth it!

7.



**THE MARK OF  
A SERVANT**

**MAKES  
HIMSELF  
OF NO  
REPUTATION**

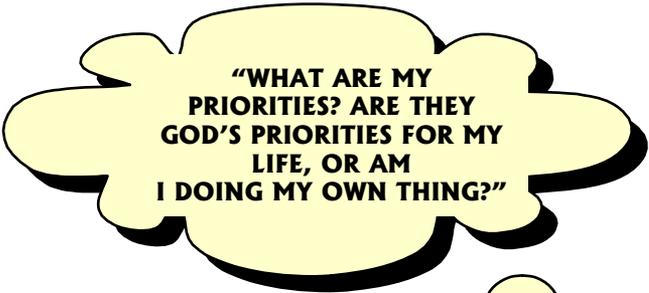
**“...BEING IN THE FORM  
OF GOD,  
HE MADE HIMSELF  
OF NO REPUTATION,  
TAKING THE FORM  
OF A SERVANT...”**

Phil. 2:5-8

It is one thing to serve to be seen, but quite another to serve behind the scenes. An example of what I mean could be seen in the fact that many men would prefer to preach than to pray. One is visible to men, but the other invisible.

Jesus condemned the Pharisees who “loved to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men” (Matt. 6:5). However, God commended those who would “go into your room, shut the door, and pray to your father in secret.” (Matt. 6:6).

To pray in public may earn us the reputation before men as a man of prayer. However, when we pray in secret our reputation will only be known by God. If we will do one in public, but not the other in private, then we must weigh what our motives are. Are we, like the Pharisees, seeking a reputation before men? That is pride. The servant is to make himself of no reputation. I believe it would require that we do far more behind the scenes than we do when we can be seen. Jesus taught this secret principle concerning not only praying, but in giving, and in fasting (Matt. 6:1-18). It is a difficult and delicate mandate to carry out. Paul said, “...we make it our aim...to be well-pleasing to Him”(2Cor.5:9). In another place he said, “... circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit...whose praise is not from men but from God” (Rom.2:29). John the Baptist summarizes the needed mentality that we must cultivate, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn. 3:30).



**“WHAT ARE MY  
PRIORITIES? ARE THEY  
GOD’S PRIORITIES FOR MY  
LIFE, OR AM  
I DOING MY OWN THING?”**

**“EXAMINE AND TEST  
AND EVALUATE YOUR  
OWN SELVES  
TO SEE WHETHER YOU  
ARE HOLDING TO  
YOUR FAITH AND  
SHOWING THE PROPER  
FRUITS OF IT.”**

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



A SERVANT IS TO BE HUMBLE:

"Let this mind (ATTITUDE) be in you which was also in CHRIST JESUS, who, being in the FORM OF GOD, MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, taking the FORM OF A SERVANT...HE HUMBLD HIMSELF..." Phil.2:5-8

A SERVANT DOES GOD'S WILL:

"But as SERVANTS OF CHRIST, doing the WILL OF GOD FROM THE HEART." Eph.6:6

A SERVANT IS A VESSEL OF HONOR:

"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for HONOR and some for DISHONOR. Therefore if anyone CLEANSSES HIMSELF from the LATTER, he will be A VESSEL FOR HONOR, SANCTIFIED and USEFUL FOR THE MASTER, PREPARED for every GOOD WORK." 2 Tim.2:20-25

A SERVANT WILL BE FAITHFUL:

"Moreover IT IS REQUIRED in SERVANTS that one BE FOUND FAITHFUL." 1 Cor.4:2

MOSES indeed was FAITHFUL in all his house AS A SERVANT, for a TESTIMONY..." Heb.3:5

A SERVANT WILL SERVE GOD WITH REVERENCE and FEAR:

"LET US...SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY with REVERENCE and GODLY FEAR." Heb.12:28

A SERVANT WILL SEEK TO PLEASE HIS MASTER:

"Therefore we MAKE IT OUR AIM...to be WELL PLEASING TO HIM." 2 Cor.5:9

# THE COST OF BEING A SERVANT

## CHAPTER NINE

### CORPORATE PRIORITY: BEING BUILT TOGETHER INTO GOD'S

# SPIRITUAL HOUSE

**"YOU ALSO, AS LIVING STONES  
ARE BEING BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE..."**

1 Pet. 2:5

**"BUT CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE,  
WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE..."**

Heb. 3:6

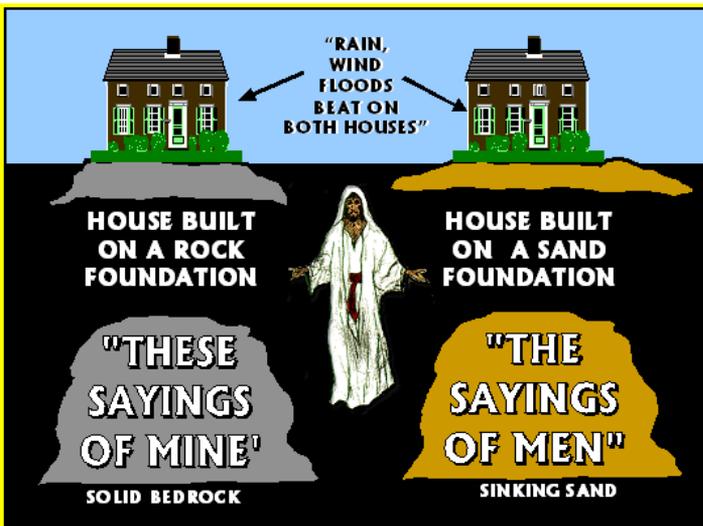
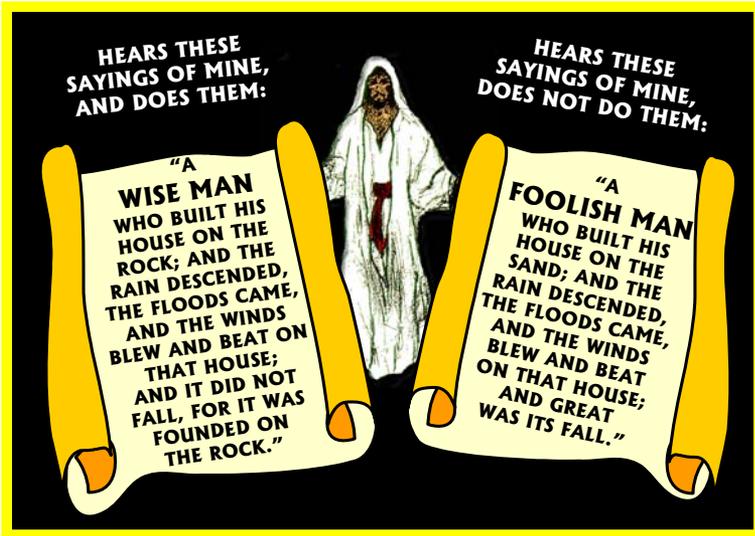
**"NOW THEREFORE, YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS  
AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE  
SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.  
HAVING BEEN BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE  
APOSTLES AND THE PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF  
BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE,  
IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING JOINED  
TOGETHER, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD,  
IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER FOR  
A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT."**

Eph. 2:18-22

In our on-going study of God's (12) biblical priorities for His people, we have come to the last four which are corporate identities: (1) "Christ's Spiritual House, (2) the Church of Jesus Christ, (3) the Body of Jesus Christ, and (4) the Espoused Bride of Christ." By corporate identities I make a distinction between the first eight priorities that were individually achievable and these last four areas which require our involvement with other believers. Look again at the above passage from Ephesians Chapter Two, and note the mandate of "being joined together" and "being built together." Peter also conveys this plurality of involvement in referring to us as "living stones...being built up a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5). It takes more than one stone to build a house.

The physical house God required of Israel in the wilderness had a building plan as given to Moses with the specific warning, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain" (Heb. 8:5). The spiritual house of Jesus Christ also has a specified building plan that was given to the early church.

Before we look at what constitutes the spiritual house of Christ, let us ponder the building principles Jesus Himself set down as needful for a house that will be able to withstand the onslaught of Satan's opposition. Consider these words of Jesus found in Matthew Chapter Seven:



The previous parable stresses the importance of building upon a solid foundation. The “sayings of Jesus” is the bedrock upon which the house is enabled to withstand all the forms of pressure Satan brings upon it. Our spiritual house also has a specified foundation upon which it is to be built:

**“NOW THEREFORE, YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD. HAVING BEEN BUILT ON**

**THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND THE PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE,**

**IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING JOINED TOGETHER, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD, IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER FOR A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT.”**

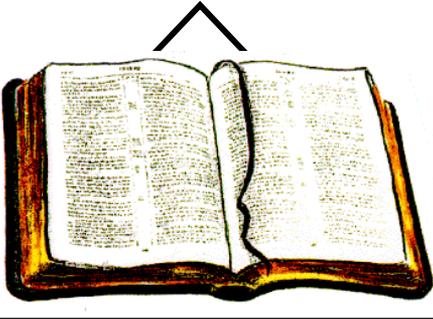
Eph. 2:18-22

In Matthew’s account the foundation is limited to the sayings of Jesus. Paul’s account of the spiritual house which Christ is building, speaks of the foundation to include the sayings of the apostles and the prophets along with Jesus’ sayings as the “Chief Cornerstone.” When Peter warned of mockers that would come in the last days, he gave this reminder pertaining to the importance of the sayings of the apostles and the prophets:

**“...I STIR UP YOUR PURE MINDS BY WAY OF REMINDER, THAT YOU MAY BE MINDFUL OF THE WORDS WHICH WERE SPOKEN BEFORE BY THE HOLY PROPHETS, AND OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF US THE APOSTLES OF THE LORD AND SAVIOR...”**

2 Pet. 3:1-2

**JESUS CHRIST,  
THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE**

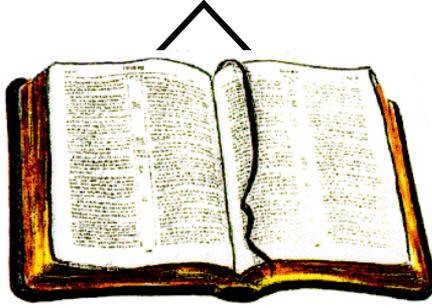


**THE HOLY PROPHETS**

**THE HOLY APOSTLES**

The foundation for this spiritual house is clearly defined. It is the sayings of Christ, the sayings of the prophets and the sayings of the apostles. In essence, it is the contents of the Word of God upon which this spiritual house is to be built.

**JESUS CHRIST,  
THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE**



**THE HOLY PROPHETS**

**THE HOLY APOSTLES**

Paul the apostle gives us yet another vitally important picture of this spiritual house:



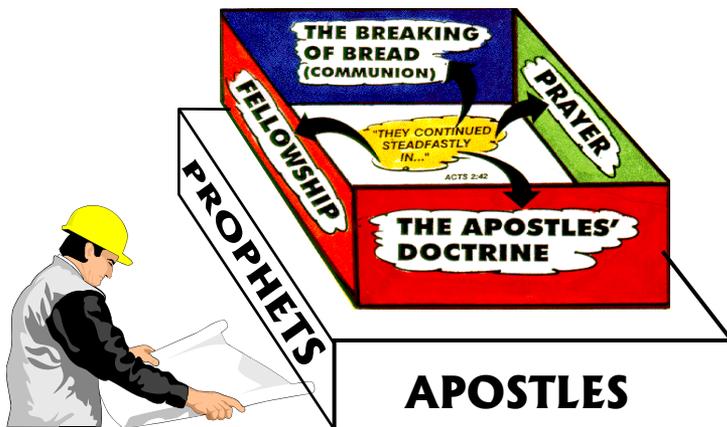
**“FOR WE ARE GOD’S FELLOW WORKERS; YOU ARE GOD’S FIELD, YOU ARE GOD’S BUILDING. ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME, AS A WISE MASTER BUILDER I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND ANOTHER BUILDS ON IT. BUT LET EACH ONE TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDS ON IT. FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN ANYONE LAY THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST.**

**NOW IF ANYONE BUILDS ON THIS FOUNDATION WITH (1) GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES, (OR 2) WOOD, HAY STRAW, EACH ONE’S WORK WILL BECOME MANIFEST; FOR THE DAY WILL DECLARE IT, BECAUSE IT WILL BE REVEALED BY FIRE; AND THE FIRE WILL TEST EACH ONE’S WORK, OF WHAT SORT IT IS (“GOLD,SILVER,PRECIOUS STONES, OR WOOD,HAY, STRAW”) . IF ANYONE’S WORK WHICH HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES (THE TEST OF FIRE) HE WILL RECEIVE A REWARD. IF ANY ONE’S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS (OF REWARD); BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE.”**

1 Cor. 3:9-15

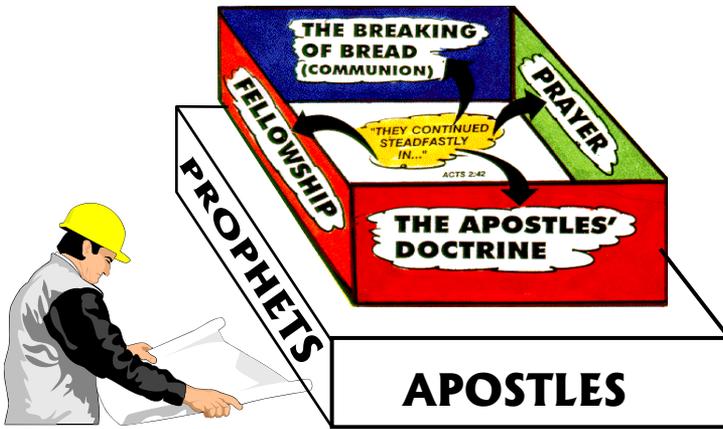
We are God's building. Paul laid the foundation for this building-it is Jesus Christ. No other foundation will work. The building which is to be erected on this foundation consists of the work/labor of the believer. Two choices of building materials are given: (1) "gold, silver and precious stones" or (2) "wood, hay and straw." It is obvious which category will survive the test of fire being applied to it. You cannot destroy "gold, silver or precious stones" by fire, but "wood, hay and straw" will quickly be consumed. The moral to the story is this: One category of building materials is very costly to obtain as it must be dug out of the ground at great expense and labor while the other material is cheap and easily obtained on the surface of the ground.

Let me show you the very costly building that God wants you to build, the one that will pass the test of fire and ultimately provide for you great rewards in heaven for your hard labors:



**“...AND THAT DAY ABOUT THREE THOUSAND SOULS WERE ADDED TO THEM. AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES DOCTRINE AND FELLOWSHIP, IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD, AND IN PRAYERS.”**  
 Acts 2:41-42

**“HAVING BEEN BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND THE PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE, IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING JOINED TOGETHER, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD, IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER FOR A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT.”**  
 Eph. 2:18-22



Paul gives us the revelation of the foundation of this spiritual house as well as the house itself in Ephesians 2:18-22.. The foundation is based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ as the Chief Cornerstone and the commandments (doctrine) of the apostles and prophets.

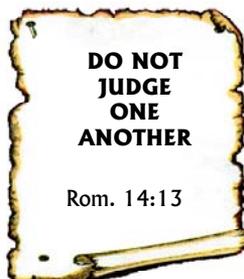
The building itself consists of believers interacting with other believers for the purpose of being “joined together and “built together” into God’s spiritual house. The passage in Acts 2:42 shows us the four building-block principles that the Holy Spirit singled out which constitute the structural walls of this spiritual house. It is unto the construction of these four walls that believers, as “living stones” (1 Pet. 2:5), are to submit to God’s stated objective of becoming “joined together” and “built together” into a “holy temple in the Lord” for the “habitation of God in the Spirit.”

No born-again believer is exempt from this God-given corporate mandate. Churches are not perfect, but this is the source where other believers are to be found with whom we are to be “joined together” and “built together.” It is within imperfect churches that God perfects His people as they painfully learn to “continue steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread (communion), and in (corporate) prayers” as Acts 2:42 so states. You can’t achieve these corporate goals as a solo-Lone Ranger-type of Christian. If you are a Christian, hear the Word of the Lord concerning the need for public assembly with other believers:

**“...AND LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER IN ORDER TO STIR UP LOVE AND GOOD WORKS, NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER, AS IS THE MANNER OF SOME, BUT EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER, AND SO MUCH THE MORE AS YOU SEE THE DAY APPROACHING.”**

Heb. 10:24-25

The Bible speaks of several types of doctrine. There is sound doctrine, unsound doctrine, false doctrine, and more specifically, "the apostles doctrine." What is "the apostles doctrine?" Below I have assembled for your consideration a collection of the apostles doctrine on how believers are to interact with "one another." We have instruction from eight different epistles and four different apostles. Take the time to prayerfully meditate on this display of some of the commandments from our holy apostles that we are to obey (2 Pet. 3:2). Think of your personal interaction with other believers from your local congregation, and you will know to what degree you are "continuing steadfastly in the apostles doctrine":



**CONSIDER  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

Heb. 10:24

**WAIT  
FOR  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

1 Cor. 11:33

**FELLOWSHIP  
WITH  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

1 Jn. 1:7

**DEPEND  
UPON  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

Rom. 12:5

**GREET  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

Rom. 16:16

**CARE FOR  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

1 Cor. 12:25

**BE OF THE  
SAME MIND  
TO  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

Rom. 12:16

**BEAR THE  
BURDENS OF  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

Gal. 6:2

**RECEIVE  
AND ACCEPT  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

Rom. 15:7

**DO NOT BE A  
STUMBLING  
BLOCK TO  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

Rom. 14:13

**STIR UP LOVE  
AND GOOD  
WORKS TO  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

Heb. 10:24

**BE KIND  
TO  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

Eph. 4:32

**HAVE  
COMPASSION  
ON ONE  
ANOTHER**

1 Pet. 3:8

**GIVE  
PREFERENCE  
TO  
ONE  
ANOTHER**

Rom. 12:10

**“EXAMINE AND TEST  
AND EVALUATE YOUR  
OWN SELVES TO SEE  
WHETHER YOU ARE  
HOLDING TO YOUR  
FAITH AND SHOWING  
THE PROPER FRUITS OF  
IT. TEST AND PROVE  
YOURSELVES...”**

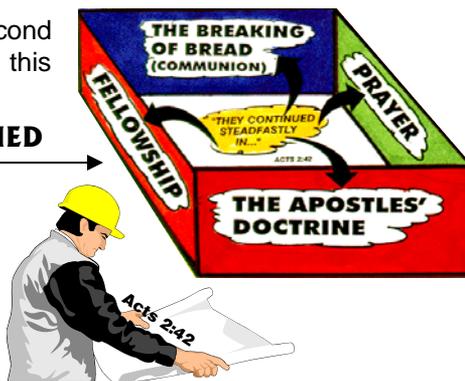
2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified

Certainly there is more to “the apostles doctrine” than what is presented on the previous page. However, it is a good sampling of the CORPORATE emphasis that the apostles placed upon the church of being joined together with other believers. When Paul spoke of the Body of Christ, he stressed “The body is not one member but many...there are many members, yet one body” (1 Cor. 12:14,20). To the Ephesian church he stated, “...the whole body, joined and knit together...according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16). Once your eyes are opened to the corporate emphasis contained within the apostles doctrinal teachings, the Word of God will take on a new perspective which places responsibility on every believer to work toward these corporate objectives. I am firmly convinced that a great part of the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10-13, 2 Cor.5:9-11) will judge the level of corporate involvement of God’s people. For instance Paul stated, “...that each one may receive the things done in the body...whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). I believe Paul is referring to the corporate body of Christ in these verses. What kind of corporate things have we done in the body of Christ-good or bad? Are you building or tearing down?

Let us look now at the second costly building block of this spiritual house:

**“...AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN...”**

Fellowship is different than relationship. I am related to the whole body of Christ by means of the blood of Christ.

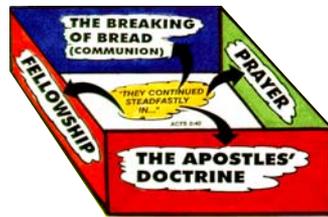


Webster defines relationship as “united by blood-a blood relative.” I have relationship to all brothers and sisters who are in Christ via the new birth through faith in His blood. However, I do not, and cannot, have fellowship with all my spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ. Relationship is universal, but the ability to have fellowship is limited generally to a physical location. The definition of this word will tell us why this is true. Webster defines fellowship as:

**FELLOWSHIP: “THE COMPANIONSHIP OF PERSONS ON EQUAL AND FRIENDLY TERMS...THE STATE OF BEING TOGETHER OR SHARING...MUTUAL PARTICIPATION, COMMON INTEREST, OR EXPERIENCE...”**  
 Webster

**FELLOWSHIP: "THE COMPANIONSHIP OF PERSONS ON EQUAL AND FRIENDLY TERMS...THE STATE OF BEING TOGETHER OR SHARING...MUTUAL PARTICIPATION, COMMON INTEREST, OR EXPERIENCE..."**

Webster



The Greek word translated as “fellowship” in the New Testament literally means, “Partaker-one of a pair.” Consider a fuller rendering of this word in Strong’s Concordance:

**“KOINONIA” GR. “PARTICIPATION, SOCIAL INTERCOURSE... TO COMMUNICATE, TO HAVE COMMUNION... ROOT: SHARER, PARTAKER, PARTNER.”**

This sampling of passages using the word “together” conveys to us what is a commitment to fellowship with one another within a locally assembled group of believers in which we spend quality time together. It is far more than relationship to other Christians. It is a commitment to become “joined together...knit together...built up together.” It is to become a body of believers that are one in unity and purpose.

Eph 2:21	whole building, being fitted together, grows into a
Eph 2:22	you also are being built together for a dwelling
Eph 4:16	body, joined and knit together by what every joint
Phil 1:27	with one mind striving together for the faith of the
Col 2:2	be encouraged, being knit together in love, and
Col 2:13	your flesh, He has made alive together with Him,
Col 2:19	the body, nourished and knit together by joints and
Heb 10:25	assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner

**“...THAT YOU MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US; AND TRULY OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER AND WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. AND THESE THINGS WE WRITE TO YOU THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL.”**

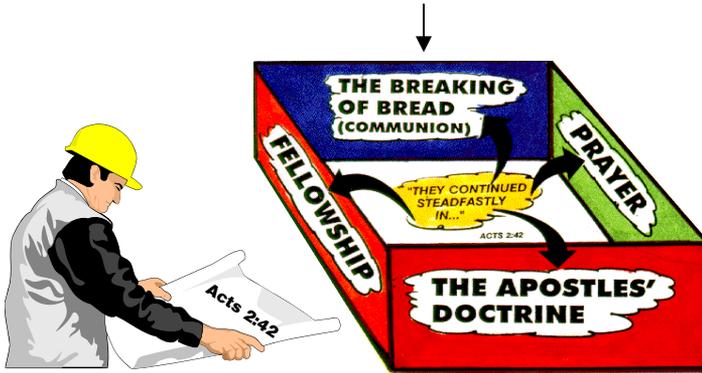
1 Jn. 1:3-4

**“...HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED, WITH ALL LOWLINESS AND GENTLENESS, WITH LONGSUFFERING, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE, ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE.”**

Eph. 4:1-3

Let us look now at the third costly building block of this spiritual house:

**“...AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN...”**



**“THIS CUP OF BLESSING WHICH WE BLESS,  
IS IT NOT THE COMMUNION  
OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST?  
THE BREAD WHICH WE BREAK,  
IS IT NOT THE COMMUNION  
OF THE BODY OF CHRIST?”**

1 Cor. 10:16

The above verse from the apostle Paul proves that “the breaking of bread” speaks of the act of partaking of the sacrament of communion. It is not speaking of just sharing a meal together with brethren, but is rather tied to the common-union we have with the blood of Christ.

Paul goes on to remind us that it was Jesus Himself who instituted the partaking of the ritual practice of communion in which bread and wine represents the sacrificial work of Christ in instituting the New Covenant by means of His body and His blood:

**“FOR I RECEIVED FROM THE LORD THAT WHICH I ALSO DELIVERED TO YOU: THAT THE LORD JESUS...TOOK BREAD; AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, HE BROKE IT AND SAID, ‘TAKE EAT; THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU; DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.’ IN THE SAME MANNER HE ALSO TOOK THE CUP AFTER SUPPER, SAYING, ‘THIS CUP IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD. THIS DO, AS OFTEN AS YOU DRINK IT, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.’ FOR AS OFTEN AS YOU EAT THIS BREAD AND DRINK THIS CUP, YOU PROCLAIM THE LORD’S DEATH TILL HE COMES.”**

1 Cor. 11:24-26

The power of tradition continues to make the Word of God of no effect (Mk. 7:13). For the most part, both Christians and many churches tend to place more emphasis upon celebrating the birth of Christ rather than His death! A recent survey of protestant Christians revealed that less than two percent of those surveyed partook of communion on a regular basis. Either it isn't offered by some churches or when it is, the people do not bother to show up for it. This is certainly not the pattern we see of the early church in the book of Acts:

**“NOW ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK,  
WHEN THE DISCIPLES CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK BREAD...  
THERE WERE MANY LAMPS IN THE UPPER ROOM WHERE THEY  
WERE GATHERED TOGETHER.” Acts 20:7-8**

Communion in the early church was not a “once every six weeks for ten minutes during the Sunday morning service.” They gathered together on the first day of the week-every week to break bread together. Communion was important to the early church because it maintained right relationships between them and their God and between themselves and the rest of the brethren. Communion was a time of reconciliation with God and with men. Communion was instituted so that those in Covenant relationship with God and one another could deal thoroughly with sin-sin against God and sin against one another. The modern-day doctrinal position of “every sin I ever have committed or ever will commit is already under the blood” is heresy. The Scriptures say:

**“IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM, AND WALK  
IN DARKNESS, WE LIE AND DO NOT PRACTICE THE TRUTH.  
BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, WE  
HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF  
JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSSES US FROM ALL SIN.  
IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NO SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES,  
AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US. IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE  
IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND TO  
CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.”**

1 Jn. 1:6-9

Paul was careful to give the Corinthians the whole counsel of God pertaining to communion. Although it was to be a “cup of blessing” (1 Cor. 10:16), Paul warned believers about taking communion in an unworthy manner:

**“THEREFORE WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD OR DRINKS THIS CUP  
OF THE LORD IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER WILL BE GUILTY OF  
THE BODY AND THE BLOOD OF THE LORD. BUT LET A MAN  
EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD  
AND DRINK OF THAT CUP.**



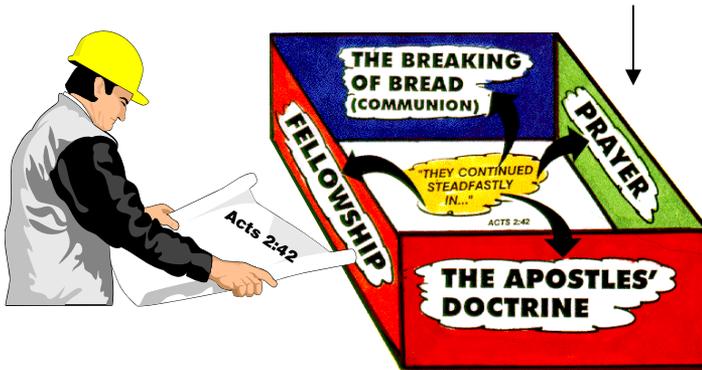
**FOR HE WHO EATS AND DRINKS IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER EATS AND DRINKS JUDGMENT TO HIMSELF, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY. FOR THIS REASON MANY ARE WEAK AND SICK AMONG YOU, AND MANY SLEEP (died)."**

1 Cor. 11:27-30

The "unworthy manner" Paul refers to is "not discerning the Lord's body." By that he means the body of believers in Christ! It is possible to take communion asking God to forgive our sins while at the same time we hold unforgiveness against another member of the body of Christ—our brethren! By this double standard of forgiveness, many a Christian has become weak, sick or even have died due to their unforgiving heart towards a brother or sister! Communion is where we are forgiven of our sins and where we forgive others! It is an important wall in the building of a spiritual house!

Last, but certainly not least,  
let us examine the fourth wall of this spiritual house:

**"...AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN..."**



**"PETER WAS THEREFORE KEPT IN PRISON,  
BUT CONSTANT PRAYER WAS OFFERED TO  
GOD FOR HIM BY THE CHURCH."**

Acts 12:5

**"PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND  
SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT, BEING  
WATCHFUL TO THIS END WITH ALL  
PERSEVERANCE AND SUPPLICATION FOR  
ALL THE SAINTS..."**

Eph. 6:18

**"CONTINUE EARNESTLY IN PRAYER, BEING  
VIGILANT IN IT WITH THANKSGIVING...  
PRAYING ALSO FOR US..."**

Col. 4:2-3

How important is prayer in the building of this spiritual house. We can answer that by these words of Jesus:



**“THEN HE TAUGHT, SAYING TO THEM,  
‘IS IT NOT WRITTEN,  
‘MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED**

# **A HOUSE OF PRAYER**

**FOR ALL NATIONS?”**

Mark 11:17

Jesus' house is not called “a house of doctrine.” It is not to be known as “a house of fellowship.” Neither is it to be called “a house of communion.” Jesus' house is to be called “a house of prayer.” Even beyond that it is a house of prayer “for all nations.” As important as is “the apostles doctrine, fellowship and the breaking of bread (communion)”, the wall of prayer is given a preeminence as this spiritual house bears the God-appointed title of “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

Paul reminds us as believers:

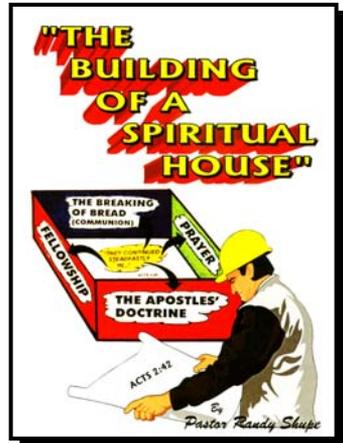
**“HE WHO BUILT THE HOUSE HAS MORE HONOR THAN  
THE HOUSE. FOR EVERY HOUSE IS BUILT BY SOMEONE,  
BUT HE WHO BUILT ALL THINGS IS GOD...  
BUT CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE,  
WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE...”**

Heb. 3:3-6

The spiritual house is a high priority in God's Word. To help you grasp its significance, I want to recommend this DVD series that I taught some years back on this subject:

**“THE BUILDING OF  
A SPIRITUAL HOUSE”  
14 HOURS OF ILLUSTRATED  
TEACHINGS ON 4 DVD DISCS IN  
ONE ALBUM**

**Album \$25.00  
plus \$ 3.00 shipping**



## CHAPTER TEN

### THE PRIORITY OF

# THE CHURCH

## OF JESUS CHRIST

**“JESUS...ASKED HIS DISCIPLES, SAYING, ‘WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I, THE SON OF MAN, AM?’ SO THEY SAID, ‘SOME SAY JOHN THE BAPTIST, SOME ELIJAH, AND OTHERS JEREMIAH OR ONE OF THE PROPHETS.’ HE SAID TO THEM, ‘BUT WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?’ AND SIMON PETER ANSWERED AND SAID, ‘YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.’ JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, ‘BLESSED ARE YOU, SIMON BAR-JONAH, FOR FLESH AND BLOOD HAS NOT REVEALED THIS TO YOU, BUT MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN. AND I ALSO SAY TO YOU THAT YOU ARE PETER, AND ON THIS ROCK, I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, AND THE GATES OF HADES SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT AND I GIVE YOU THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU BIND ON EARTH WILL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU LOOSE ON EARTH WILL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN.”** Matt. 16:13-19

**“MOREOVER IF YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU, GO AND TELL HIM HIS FAULT BETWEEN YOU AND HIM ALONE. IF HE HEARS YOU, YOU HAVE GAINED YOUR BROTHER. BUT IF HE WILL NOT HEAR YOU..TELL IT TO THE CHURCH. BUT IF HE REFUSES TO HEAR THE CHURCH, LET HIM BE TO YOU LIKE A HEATHEN AND A TAX COLLECTOR. ASSURELY, I SAY TO YOU, WHATEVER YOU BIND ON EARTH WILL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU LOOSE ON EARTH WILL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN, AGAIN I SAY TO YOU THAT IF TWO OF YOU AGREE ON EARTH CONCERNING ANYTHING THAT THEY ASK, IT SHALL BE DONE FOR THEM BY MY FATHER IN HEAVEN. FOR WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME, I AM THERE IN THE MIDST OF THEM.”** Matt. 18:15-20

Jesus spoke of His church in the gospels only three times. Those three uses of the word “church” are in the verses above. Take the time to consider the context in which Jesus mentions the responsibility and function of His church on earth. There is a contextual common denominator that links these verses of Matthew 16 and Matthew 18 together. It is the commissioning of the church with heavenly-based, delegated authority to use the “keys of the Kingdom of Heaven” to bind and to loosen as needed both satanic powers (“the gates of Hades”), as well as rebellious brethren who will not submit to the authority of the church to govern itself.

Professing brethren who will not submit to God's delegated authority established within the church are to eventually be branded by church leadership as being no different than unsaved "heathen and tax collectors." Heavy stuff!

Jesus' message in Matthew 16:13-19 centers upon the Divine revelation that Jesus is more than a mere man, or a prophet of God, but rather is "The Christ, the Son of the living God." This is "the rock" upon which the church is to be built. It is not the pompous, erroneous "revelation" of Catholicism that "Peter is the rock upon which Christ would build His church." The gates of Hades cannot withstand the Divine revelation that Jesus is the Christ-the Son of God! This message is to be the central theme of the church and it is to use the "keys of the Kingdom" to defend the purity of this revelation against the likes of Catholicism, Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses who are satanically seeking to warp who Jesus really is.

Jesus' message in Matthew 18:15-20 centers upon the Divine commissioning of the church to keep itself cleansed from the danger of rebellion within; namely, rebellious brethren who will not submit to the authority of the church to settle matters of division and strife among its members. How would you evaluate the success of the church in achieving these two mandates from Matthew 16 and 18? In prophetically describing what His church would look like right up to His coming for it at the rapture, Jesus said it would contain a mixture such as described in these two parables:

### **THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS**

Matt. 25:1-13

**"THEN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SHALL BE LIKENED TO TEN VIRGINS WHO TOOK THEIR LAMPS AND WENT OUT TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM. NOW FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE, AND FIVE WERE FOOLISH. THOSE WHO WERE FOOLISH TOOK THEIR LAMPS AND TOOK NO OIL WITH THEM, BUT THE WISE TOOK OIL IN THEIR VESSELS WITH THEIR LAMPS. BUT WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM WAS DELAYED, THEY ALL SLUMBERED AND SLEPT. "AND AT MIDNIGHT A CRY WAS HEARD: 'BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM IS COMING; GO OUT TO MEET HIM!' THEN ALL THOSE VIRGINS AROSE AND TRIMMED THEIR LAMPS. AND THE FOOLISH SAID TO THE WISE, 'GIVE US SOME OF YOUR OIL, FOR OUR LAMPS ARE GOING OUT.' BUT THE WISE ANSWERED, SAYING, 'NO, LEST THERE SHOULD NOT BE ENOUGH FOR US AND YOU; BUT GO RATHER TO THOSE WHO SELL, AND BUY FOR YOURSELVES.' AND WHILE THEY WENT TO BUY, THE BRIDEGROOM CAME, AND THOSE WHO WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING; AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT. "AFTERWARD THE OTHER VIRGINS CAME ALSO, SAYING, 'LORD, LORD, OPEN TO US!' BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID, 'ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, I DO NOT KNOW YOU.' "WATCH THEREFORE, FOR YOU KNOW NEITHER THE DAY NOR THE HOUR IN WHICH THE SON OF MAN IS COMING."**

In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven as consisting of ten virgins. Half of them were wise and the other half were foolish. When Jesus came as a “thief in the night”, He took the wise virgins in with Him, but left the foolish ones behind for the world that they loved. This is Jesus’ depiction of how the church age will end. As much as half of the professing Christians on earth will be left behind due to their foolish (rebellious) behavior. Get used to the mixture within the church. It will not go away prior to His coming, and neither should you because of it!

## **THE WHEAT AND THE TARES**

Matt. 13:24-30

**“ANOTHER PARABLE HE PUT FORTH TO THEM, SAYING: 'THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MAN WHO SOWED GOOD SEED IN HIS FIELD; BUT WHILE MEN SLEPT, HIS ENEMY CAME AND SOWED TARES AMONG THE WHEAT AND WENT HIS WAY. BUT WHEN THE GRAIN HAD SPROUTED AND PRODUCED A CROP, THEN THE TARES ALSO APPEARED. SO THE SERVANTS OF THE OWNER CAME AND SAID TO HIM, 'SIR, DID YOU NOT SOW GOOD SEED IN YOUR FIELD? HOW THEN DOES IT HAVE TARES?' HE SAID TO THEM, 'AN ENEMY HAS DONE THIS.' THE SERVANTS SAID TO HIM, 'DO YOU WANT US THEN TO GO AND GATHER THEM UP?' BUT HE SAID, 'NO, LEST WHILE YOU GATHER UP THE TARES YOU ALSO UPROOT THE WHEAT WITH THEM. LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER UNTIL THE HARVEST, AND AT THE TIME OF HARVEST I WILL SAY TO THE REAPERS, "FIRST GATHER TOGETHER THE TARES AND BIND THEM IN BUNDLES TO BURN THEM, BUT GATHER THE WHEAT INTO MY BARN."'**

In the parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven as consisting of good seed which He planted (wheat) and the counterfeit seed the devil planted within the kingdom of God on the earth. Jesus said they would grow up together until He sends forth His angels to “gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness” (vs. 41). Not everything (or person) that comes in the name of the Lord is from God. Some, as Satan’s emissaries, are disguised as wheat (Christians). Get used to the mixture within the church. It will not go away, and neither should you because of it!

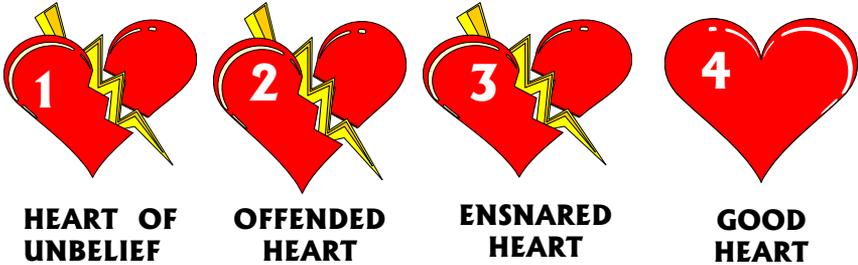
I have seen and heard of so many of God’s saints sitting at home in disgust because of what they have seen in the churches. In reality, they have seen exactly what Jesus prophetically said they would, a church that would continue to be comprised of wise and foolish virgins right up until the coming of Christ at the rapture. They have seen a church comprised of wheat and tares, true and false believers.

A church with people in it who actually have been planted by Satan to bring reproach upon the name of Christ through division and strife, and why so? Because Satan knows very well the principle that:

**“EVERY KINGDOM DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF IS BROUGHT TO DESOLATION, AND EVERY CITY OR HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF WILL NOT STAND”**  
Matt. 12:25

Should the “wise wheat” bail out of the church because of the presence of the foolish and the tares?

Then of course, we also have the clear statement of Jesus pertaining to those who “hear the word of the Kingdom” (Matt. 13:19), that only one in four people will have a right heart condition to bring forth the fruit of the Kingdom of God in their lives:



**"THEREFORE HEAR THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER: WHEN ANYONE HEARS THE WORD OF THE KINGDOM, AND DOES NOT UNDERSTAND IT, THEN THE WICKED ONE COMES AND SNATCHES AWAY WHAT WAS SOWN IN HIS HEART. THIS IS HE WHO RECEIVED SEED BY THE WAYSIDE. BUT HE WHO RECEIVED THE SEED ON STONY PLACES, THIS IS HE WHO HEARS THE WORD AND IMMEDIATELY RECEIVES IT WITH JOY; YET HE HAS NO ROOT IN HIMSELF, BUT ENDURES ONLY FOR A WHILE. FOR WHEN TRIBULATION OR PERSECUTION ARISES BECAUSE OF THE WORD, IMMEDIATELY HE STUMBLES. NOW HE WHO RECEIVED SEED AMONG THE THORNS IS HE WHO HEARS THE WORD, AND THE CARES OF THIS WORLD AND THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES CHOKE THE WORD, AND HE BECOMES UNFRUITFUL. BUT HE WHO RECEIVED SEED ON THE GOOD GROUND IS HE WHO HEARS THE WORD AND UNDERSTANDS IT, WHO INDEED BEARS FRUIT AND PRODUCES: SOME A HUNDREDFOLD, SOME SIXTY, SOME THIRTY."**  
Matt. 13:18-23

This parable is not limited to the initial act of salvation, but rather is a principle that is always at work among “saved” people. Jesus is merely stating that fruit-bearing Christians will be in the minority in spite of the expressed will of God:

**“BY THIS  
IS MY FATHER GLORIFIED,  
THAT YOU BEAR MUCH**

**FRUIT  
FRUIT**

**AND SO YOU WILL BE  
MY DISCIPLES.”**

John 15:8



**“I CHOSE YOU...THAT YOU  
SHOULD BEAR MUCH**

**FRUIT  
FRUIT**

**AND THAT YOUR FRUIT  
SHOULD REMAIN.”**

John 15:16

Is the “good heart” Christian to abandon the church because it is filled with saved people whose hearts are filled with unbelief, offense or enslavement with things other than God? Is the answer to not assemble with such a mixture? Specifically Paul warns the believer not to follow such a pattern:

**“LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER IN ORDER TO STIR UP LOVE AND GOOD WORKS, NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER AS IS THE MANNER OF SOME, BUT EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER, AND SO MUCH THE MORE AS YOU SEE THE DAY APPROACHING.”**

Heb. 10:24-25

As we see what “day” approaching? The day in which Jesus Christ will separate the wise from the foolish virgins. The day in which Jesus will send forth His angels to “gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness”, namely, Satan’s tares. As this day approaches, the good heart, fruit-bearing Christians are to NOT “forsake the assembling of themselves together, as is the manner of some.” We tend to think that those not assembling are just the backsliders in heart. Many of them are backsliders, but this is an exhortation to those capable of “stirring up (backsliders) to love and good works! Jude exhorts the believer to:

**“KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD, LOOKING FOR THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST UNTO ETERNAL LIFE. AND ON SOME HAVE COMPASSION, MAKING A DISTINCTION; BUT OTHERS SAVE WITH FEAR, PULLING THEM OUT OF THE FIRE, HATING EVEN THE GARMENT DEFILED BY THE FLESH.”**

Jude 21-22

If all of the problems previously stated among the brethren are not enough, then we might also consider that the plight of the church is worsened all the more in this prophetic depiction by Jesus, as well as several of the apostles, pertaining to the corruption that will take place among the leadership within the church:

**“FOR I KNOW THIS, THAT AFTER MY DEPARTURE SAVAGE WOLVES WILL COME IN AMONG YOU, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK. ALSO FROM AMONG YOURSELVES MEN WILL RISE UP SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS, TO DRAW AWAY THE DISCIPLES AFTER THEMSELVES.”**

Acts 20:29-30



**PAUL**

**“FOR SUCH ARE FALSE APOSTLES, DECEITFUL WORKERS, TRANSFORMING THEMSELVES INTO APOSTLES OF CHRIST. AND NO WONDER! FOR SATAN HIMSELF TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT. THEREFORE IT IS NO GREAT THING IF HIS MINISTERS ALSO TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO MINISTERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...”**

2 Cor. 11:13-14



**JESUS**

**“BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS, WHO COME TO YOU IN SHEEP’S CLOTHING, BUT INWARDLY THEY ARE RAVENOUS WOLVES...”**

Matt. 7:15

**“BUT THERE WERE ALSO FALSE PROPHETS AMONG THE PEOPLE, EVEN AS THERE WILL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU, WHO WILL SECRETLY BRING IN DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES...AND MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS, BECAUSE OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE BLASPHEMED. BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS...”**

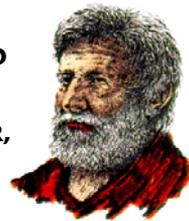
2 Pet. 2:1-3



**PETER**

**“...I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO WRITE TO YOU CONCERNING OUR COMMON SALVATION...FOR CERTAIN MEN HAVE CREPT IN...UNGODLY MEN, WHO TURN THE GRACE OF OUR GOD INTO LICENTIOUSNESS...THESE ARE SPOTS IN YOUR LOVE FEASTS, WHILE THEY FEAST WITH YOU WITHOUT FEAR, SERVING ONLY THEMSELVES...AND THEY MOUTH GREAT SWELLING WORDS, FLATTERING PEOPLE TO GAIN ADVANTAGE...”**

Jude 3-16 excerpts



**JUDE**

As I write this miserable prophetic depiction of the church, I find myself feeling depressed, perhaps as much as you are in reading it. But, dear brethren, God wants us to know what we are going to experience within the confines of the church, both in the pulpit as well as in the pew! These are prophetic warnings given with the intent to prevent us from being weary and discouraged in our souls. Even the world knows, "To be forewarned is to be forearmed." Why else did Paul say such things as :

**"AND LET US NOT GROW WEARY WHILE DOING GOOD,  
FOR IN DUE SEASON WE SHALL REAP IF WE DO NOT  
LOSE HEART." Gal. 6:9**

**"FOR GOD IS NOT UNJUST TO FORGET  
YOUR WORK AND LABOR OF LOVE WHICH YOU HAVE  
SHOWN TOWARD HIS NAME, IN THAT YOU HAVE  
MINISTERED TO THE SAINTS, AND DO MINISTER."**

Heb. 6:10

My experiences in God's church reminds me of an old secular movie entitled, "Great Expectations." When I first entered the ministry over 30 years ago, I had "great expectations" for the church of Jesus Christ until I became illuminated to such truths as I have shared with you in this newsletter. I am not discouraged, but I am forearmed against utopia theology for the church that stands in opposition to what is recorded in the Word. Multitudes of preachers are feeding God's people a steady diet of "great expectations" of corporate revival coming to the church. However, prophecy is devoid of such promise apart from usurping the promises God has made to Israel in the last days (Joel 2). The prophetic description of Philadelphia as the model of the raptured church stresses the point that this church has only "a little strength" (Dunamis-dynamite power-signs/wonders), but is rather taken for other stated reasons than miraculous power:

**"...I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR...  
FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH ("POWER" Amp.),  
HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME...  
BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE,  
I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL  
WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD TO TEST  
THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH.  
BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!  
HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE  
THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN "**

Rev. 3:8-10

The majority of the church will continue to be plagued with foolish virgins, tares planted by Satan, and the majority (3 out of 4) of believers failing to bear in their lives the fruit of the Kingdom due to yielding to Satan's temptations of unbelief, offense and ensnarement in earthly alternatives. The leadership of the church will continue to have its share of false apostles, false teachers and wolves in sheep's clothing. However, in the midst of all this we have the Philadelphian church, (the church of "brotherly love") which will continue to keep God's Word, not deny His name, and keep the commandment to persevere. This church will be taken out of this chaotic world prior to God releasing upon the earth a great time of tribulation to test the unfaithful that are left behind. Jesus' counsel to all members of His church is to:

**"TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES, LEST YOUR HEARTS BE WEIGHED DOWN WITH CAROUSING, DRUNKENNESS, AND CARES OF THIS LIFE, AND THAT DAY COME UPON YOU UNEXPECTEDLY. FOR IT WILL COME AS A SNARE ON ALL THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH. WATCH THEREFORE, AND PRAY ALWAYS THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS THAT WILL COME TO PASS, AND TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN."**

Luke 21:34-36

Let me set before you what the Word of God reveals are God's priorities for this segment of His church who desire to be "counted worthy to escape" :



**"A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE TO YOU,  
THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER;  
AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, THAT  
YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER.  
BY THIS ALL WILL KNOW  
THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES,  
IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER."**

John 13:34-35

**"BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE  
ANOTHER, FOR LOVE IS OF GOD; AND  
EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF  
GOD AND KNOWS GOD. HE WHO DOES  
NOT LOVE DOES NOT KNOW GOD,  
FOR GOD IS LOVE."**

1 Jn.4:7-8



Loveless Christianity is an oxymoron. Paul enumerates in 1 Corinthians Chapter 13 a whole host of things we can do for God as Christians that will be considered as nothing if we do not have love. Included in that list is great faith and great sacrifice—even martyrdom! All will profit nothing if divorced from the motivation of love. We are to love even our enemies (Matt. 5:44). Impossible you say? Not when we realize that love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22) which is produced in us as we “Walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16), “Hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev. 3:22), “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God” (Eph. 4:30) and be continually “Filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

The second thing we must do as members of the church that desires to be counted worthy to escape is to be a lover and defender of truth. Consider how Paul describes the church:



**“I WRITE SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW  
HOW YOU OUGHT TO CONDUCT  
YOURSELF IN THE HOUSE OF GOD,  
WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING  
GOD, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE  
TRUTH.”**

1 Tim. 3:15

God’s people have always had trouble standing for the truth. Jeremiah the prophet described a segment of Israel as:

**“MY PEOPLE...THEY ARE NOT VALIANT  
FOR THE TRUTH ON THE EARTH...AND  
WILL NOT SPEAK THE TRUTH...TRUTH  
HAS PERISHED AND HAS BEEN CUT OFF  
FROM THEIR MOUTH...”**

Jer. 9:3-5, 7:28



Jesus is called “the truth” (Jn.14:6). The Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth” (Jn. 14:17). God’s Word “is truth” (Jn. 17:17). The church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). Jesus gave two purposes for truth: One is to “make you free” (Jn.8:32), and the other is “to sanctify them by your truth” (Jn. 17:19). Half-truths will not set us free from the bondages of sin and tradition, nor will they sanctify (set apart) the believer. We need the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The purpose of the rapture is to remove the truth from the earth and allow it to be replaced with a lie. This is God’s judgment on a world who does not love the truth (2 Thess. 2:9-12).

The third thing we must do, as members of the church that desires to be counted worthy to escape, is to embrace the call by God to demonstrate a life lived for God before Satan's principalities and powers regardless of the cost:

**“TO THE INTENT THAT NOW THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD MIGHT BE MADE KNOWN BY THE CHURCH TO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES...”**

Eph. 3:10

God has chosen the faithful in His church to make a public demonstration of unswerving allegiance to God before Satan's rebellious kingdom of principalities and powers. This was done before by a man called Job of whom God testified him to be:

**“...NONE LIKE HIM ON THE EARTH, A BLAMELESS AND UPRIGHT MAN, ONE WHO FEARS GOD AND SHUNS EVIL.”**

Job. 1:8

This is to be the testimony of the church as well. Unfortunately, as we have seen prophesied, much of the professing church will fall short of that testimony. Even so, like the Marines, God is looking for a few good men like Job so that God can work through them as He did through Job:

**“FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD RUN TO AND FRO THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH, TO SHOW HIMSELF STRONG ON BEHALF OF THOSE WHOSE HEART IS LOYAL TO HIM.”**

2 Chron 16:9

Job faced immense hardship, to say the least. Through his trials he bore the testimony, “In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong” (Job 1:22). Job proved that he did not serve God just for the blessings or for the protection from Satan's evil oppression. He indeed fulfilled Eph. 3:10 to the letter even before it was written. Job is a type of the church that God is looking for throughout the whole earth. Lastly, the church is called to embrace the higher calling God has placed upon it other than the act of salvation:

**“CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER, THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH.... THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”**

Eph 5:25-33



Ultimately, Jesus is  
after a bride.  
She will come from  
the segment of  
the church described  
below:



**“CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH  
AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER,  
THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER  
WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD,  
THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF  
A GLORIOUS CHURCH,  
NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING,  
BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY  
AND WITHOUT BLEMISH....  
THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY,  
BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”**  
Eph 5:25-33

**“LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE AND GIVE HIM GLORY,  
FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME,  
AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY.”  
AND TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO BE ARRAYED  
IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND BRIGHT,  
FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS  
 (“UPRIGHT, JUST, AND GODLY LIVING, (DEED, CONDUCT) OF  
THE SAINTS” Amp.)  
OF THE SAINTS.**

**THEN HE SAID TO ME, "WRITE:  
'BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO  
THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!"  
AND HE SAID TO ME,  
"THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD."**

Rev 19:7-10

**“WHAT ARE MY  
PRIORITIES? ARE THEY  
GOD’S PRIORITIES FOR MY  
LIFE, OR AM  
I DOING MY OWN THING?”**

**“EXAMINE AND TEST  
AND EVALUATE YOUR  
OWN SELVES  
TO SEE WHETHER YOU  
ARE HOLDING TO  
YOUR FAITH AND  
SHOWING THE PROPER  
FRUITS OF IT.”**

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## THE PRIORITIES OF

### THE BODY OF CHRIST



### THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

**"FOR AS THE BODY IS ONE AND HAS MANY MEMBERS, BUT ALL THE MEMBERS OF THAT ONE BODY, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY, SO ALSO IS CHRIST. FOR BY ONE SPIRIT WE WERE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY -- WHETHER JEWS OR GREEKS, WHETHER SLAVES OR FREE -- AND HAVE ALL BEEN MADE TO DRINK INTO ONE SPIRIT. FOR IN FACT THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER BUT MANY.. .BUT NOW GOD HAS SET THE MEMBERS, EACH ONE OF THEM, IN THE BODY JUST AS HE PLEASED. AND IF THEY WERE ALL ONE MEMBER, WHERE WOULD THE BODY BE? BUT NOW INDEED THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS, YET ONE BODY. AND THE EYE CANNOT SAY TO THE HAND, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU"; NOR AGAIN THE HEAD TO THE FEET, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU."...BUT GOD COMPOSED THE BODY, HAVING GIVEN GREATER HONOR TO THAT PART WHICH LACKS IT, THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SCHISM IN THE BODY, BUT THAT THE MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE SAME CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER. AND IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL THE MEMBERS SUFFER WITH IT; OR IF ONE MEMBER IS HONORED, ALL THE MEMBERS REJOICE WITH IT. NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY."**

1 Cor.12:12-37 excerpts

**" FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY. FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST. BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED, OR IF YOU RECEIVE A DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED, OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED -- YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT!"** 2 Cor. 11:2-4

**"...CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER, THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH...FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY, OF HIS FLESH AND OF HIS BONES... THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH."**

Eph 5:25-32



The Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ.

These are the last two of the twelve priorities of God we have been examining. We shall consider them together because one (the Bride) is formed out of the other (the Body). We become members of the Body of Christ by means of the new birth, "For by one Spirit we were baptized into one body..." (1 Cor. 12:13). As members of that body, we become betrothed to Christ as Paul explains above. However, Paul also expresses a fear of corruption of the espoused Bride by the craftiness of Satan through the presentation of "another Jesus...a different spirit...a different gospel."



This chapter is dedicated to alerting the members of the Body of Christ to the present satanic deception by which members of the Body of Christ may forfeit their right to be part of the Bride of Christ for all eternity!

The Bride is a reward, not an unconditional guarantee!

# THE BODY OF CHRIST



**MANY** ONE BODY **MEMBERS**

**“FOR AS THE BODY IS ONE AND HAS MANY MEMBERS, BUT ALL THE MEMBERS OF THAT ONE BODY, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY, SO ALSO IS CHRIST. FOR BY ONE SPIRIT WE WERE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY -- WHETHER JEWS OR GREEKS, WHETHER SLAVES OR FREE -- AND HAVE ALL BEEN MADE TO DRINK INTO ONE SPIRIT. FOR IN FACT THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER BUT MANY... BUT NOW GOD HAS SET THE MEMBERS, EACH ONE OF THEM, IN THE BODY JUST AS HE PLEASED. IF THE FOOT SHOULD SAY, "BECAUSE I AM NOT A HAND, I AM NOT OF THE BODY," IS IT THEREFORE NOT OF THE BODY? AND IF THE EAR SHOULD SAY, "BECAUSE I AM NOT AN EYE, I AM NOT OF THE BODY," IS IT THEREFORE NOT OF THE BODY? IF THE WHOLE BODY WERE AN EYE, WHERE WOULD BE THE HEARING? IF THE WHOLE WERE HEARING, WHERE WOULD BE THE SMELLING? AND IF THEY WERE ALL ONE MEMBER, WHERE WOULD THE BODY BE? BUT NOW INDEED THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS, YET ONE BODY. AND THE EYE CANNOT SAY TO THE HAND, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU"; NOR AGAIN THE HEAD TO THE FEET, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU."...BUT GOD COMPOSED THE BODY, HAVING GIVEN GREATER HONOR TO THAT PART WHICH LACKS IT, THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SCHISM IN THE BODY, BUT THAT THE MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE SAME CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER. AND IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL THE MEMBERS SUFFER WITH IT; OR IF ONE MEMBER IS HONORED, ALL THE MEMBERS REJOICE WITH IT.**

**NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY.”**

1 Cor.12:12-37 excerpts

**“FOR I SAY, THROUGH THE GRACE GIVEN TO ME, TO EVERYONE WHO IS AMONG YOU, NOT TO THINK OF HIMSELF MORE HIGHLY THAN HE OUGHT TO THINK, BUT TO THINK SOBERLY, AS GOD HAS DEALT TO EACH ONE A MEASURE OF FAITH. FOR AS WE HAVE MANY MEMBERS IN ONE BODY, BUT ALL THE MEMBERS DO NOT HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION, SO WE, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST, AND INDIVIDUALLY MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER. HAVING THEN GIFTS DIFFERING ACCORDING TO THE GRACE THAT IS GIVEN TO US, LET US USE THEM: IF PROPHECY, LET US PROPHECY IN PROPORTION TO OUR FAITH; OR MINISTRY, LET US USE IT IN OUR MINISTERING; HE WHO TEACHES, IN TEACHING; HE WHO EXHORTS, IN EXHORTATION; HE WHO GIVES, WITH LIBERALITY; HE WHO LEADS, WITH DILIGENCE; HE WHO SHOWS MERCY, WITH CHEERFULNESS.”**

Rom. 12:3-8

**"I, THEREFORE, THE PRISONER OF THE LORD, BESEECH YOU TO WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED, WITH ALL LOWLINESS AND GENTLENESS, WITH LONGSUFFERING, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE, ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE. THERE IS ONE BODY..."**

Eph. 4:1-4

**"THEREFORE, AS THE ELECT OF GOD, HOLY AND BELOVED, PUT ON TENDER MERCIES, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, MEEKNESS, LONGSUFFERING; BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, IF ANYONE HAS A COMPLAINT AGAINST ANOTHER; EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE YOU, SO YOU ALSO MUST DO. BUT ABOVE ALL THESE THINGS PUT ON LOVE, WHICH IS THE BOND OF PERFECTION. AND LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, TO WHICH ALSO YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE BODY..."**

Col. 3:12-15

**"...BUT, SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, (the believer) MAY GROW UP IN ALL THINGS INTO HIM WHO IS THE HEAD -- CHRIST -- FROM WHOM THE WHOLE BODY, JOINED AND KNIT TOGETHER BY WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES, ACCORDING TO THE EFFECTIVE WORKING BY WHICH EVERY PART DOES ITS SHARE, CAUSES GROWTH OF THE BODY FOR THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE."**

Eph 4:15-16

**"...HOLDING FAST TO THE HEAD, FROM WHOM THE WHOLE BODY, NOURISHED AND KNIT TOGETHER BY JOINTS AND LIGAMENTS, GROWS WITH THE INCREASE WHICH IS FROM GOD."**

Col. 2:19

The above verses contain nearly all of Paul's teaching, admonishment, and exhortation to Christians as members of the Body of Christ, which includes you and me. Therefore, I advise that you don't lightly skim read these verses, but rather ponder the contents carefully, for every member of the Body of Christ will be judged by the standards contained within it:

**" FOR WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, THAT EACH ONE MAY RECEIVE THE THINGS DONE IN THE BODY, ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAS DONE, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD. KNOWING, THEREFORE, THE TERROR OF THE LORD, WE PERSUADE MEN..."**

2 Cor 5:10-11



# THE BODY OF CHRIST



**MANY** ————— **ONE BODY** ————— **MEMBERS**

**“...BUT NOW GOD HAS SET THE MEMBERS, EACH ONE OF THEM, IN THE BODY JUST AS HE PLEASED. IF THE FOOT SHOULD SAY, "BECAUSE I AM NOT A HAND, I AM NOT OF THE BODY," IS IT THEREFORE NOT OF THE BODY? AND IF THE EAR SHOULD SAY, "BECAUSE I AM NOT AN EYE, I AM NOT OF THE BODY," IS IT THEREFORE NOT OF THE BODY? IF THE WHOLE BODY WERE AN EYE, WHERE WOULD BE THE HEARING? IF THE WHOLE WERE HEARING, WHERE WOULD BE THE SMELLING? AND IF THEY WERE ALL ONE MEMBER, WHERE WOULD THE BODY BE? BUT NOW INDEED THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS, YET ONE BODY. AND THE EYE CANNOT SAY TO THE HAND, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU"; NOR AGAIN THE HEAD TO THE FEET, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU."...BUT GOD COMPOSED THE BODY, HAVING GIVEN GREATER HONOR TO THAT PART WHICH LACKS IT, THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SCHISM IN THE BODY, BUT THAT THE MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE SAME CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER. AND IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL THE MEMBERS SUFFER WITH IT; OR IF ONE MEMBER IS HONORED, ALL THE MEMBERS REJOICE WITH IT. NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY.”**

1 Cor.12:12-37 excerpts

Using the illustration of the physical body's inter-dependency upon its various members, Paul likens it to the spiritual Body of Christ which also has many members that comprise a unified, single body. What good is an eye without a hand? The illustration is that the eye helps the hand to do what it needs to do. What does the ear do, but direct what the eye is to focus upon? What good are feet apart from a brain to direct their movement? Which is the most important part of the physical body? The answer is none apart from the other parts of the body aiding it. There is to be “no schism” or sectarian division among the members of the Body of Christ. No elitist attitude allowed! The members of the Body of Christ are not to be self-centered, or self-willed, but rather to focus upon what is best for the whole body. The whole body is to compassionately experience sorrows, sufferings, and rejoicings together! This is Paul's message, this is God's will!

# THE BODY OF CHRIST



**MANY** ————— **ONE BODY** ————— **MEMBERS**

**“FOR I SAY, THROUGH THE GRACE GIVEN TO ME, TO EVERYONE WHO IS AMONG YOU, NOT TO THINK OF HIMSELF MORE HIGHLY THAN HE OUGHT TO THINK, BUT TO THINK SOBERLY, AS GOD HAS DEALT TO EACH ONE A MEASURE OF FAITH. FOR AS WE HAVE MANY MEMBERS IN ONE BODY, BUT ALL THE MEMBERS DO NOT HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION, SO WE, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST, AND INDIVIDUALLY MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER. HAVING THEN GIFTS DIFFERING ACCORDING TO THE GRACE THAT IS GIVEN TO US, LET US USE THEM: IF PROPHECY, LET US PROPHECY IN PROPORTION TO OUR FAITH; OR MINISTRY, LET US USE IT IN OUR MINISTERING; HE WHO TEACHES, IN TEACHING; HE WHO EXHORTS, IN EXHORTATION; HE WHO GIVES, WITH LIBERALITY; HE WHO LEADS, WITH DILIGENCE; HE WHO SHOWS MERCY, WITH CHEERFULNESS.”**

Rom. 12:3-8

Spiritual gifts have the tendency to puff up the individual who has them as though they are “special” in the sight of God. Paul emphasizes that all spiritual gifts are just that—gifts that are given by the grace of God, not the merit of the individual:

**“...THAT YOU MAY LEARN IN US NOT TO THINK BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN, THAT NONE OF YOU MAY BE PUFFED UP ON BEHALF OF ONE AGAINST THE OTHER. FOR WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFER FROM ANOTHER? AND WHAT DO YOU HAVE THAT YOU DID NOT RECEIVE? NOW IF YOU DID RECEIVE IT, WHY DO YOU GLORY AS IF YOU HAD NOT RECEIVED IT?”**

1 Cor. 4:6-7

God’s gifts are given to individuals for the overall benefit of equipping the whole body.

# THE BODY OF CHRIST



**MANY** ONE BODY **MEMBERS**

**“I, THEREFORE, THE PRISONER OF THE LORD, BESEECH YOU TO WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED, WITH ALL LOWLINESS AND GENTLENESS, WITH LONGSUFFERING, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE, ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE. THERE IS ONE BODY...”**

Eph. 4:1-4

**“THEREFORE, AS THE ELECT OF GOD, HOLY AND BELOVED, PUT ON TENDER MERCIES, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, MEEKNESS, LONGSUFFERING; BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, IF ANYONE HAS A COMPLAINT AGAINST ANOTHER; EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE YOU, SO YOU ALSO MUST DO. BUT ABOVE ALL THESE THINGS PUT ON LOVE, WHICH IS THE BOND OF PERFECTION. AND LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, TO WHICH ALSO YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE BODY...”**

Col. 3:12-15

Unity is what God wants for His people. It takes a conscious “endeavoring” (concentrated effort, hard work) to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond (glue) of peace. It takes “super-glue” to do the work, namely, the fruit of the Spirit of Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, gentleness (goodness) faithfulness, meekness and self-control.

The greatest hindrance to the unity of the Spirit is the “spirit” of unforgiveness at work among members of the body:

**“PURSUE PEACE WITH ALL MEN...LOOKING DILIGENTLY LEST ANYONE FALL SHORT OF THE GRACE OF GOD; LEST ANY ROOT OF BITTERNESS SPRINGING UP CAUSE TROUBLE, AND BY THIS MANY BECOME DEFILED.”**

Heb.12:14-15

God's objective for the Body of Christ is to "grow up" into, and remain under, the headship of Christ. This is not a "headless body" that God has created.

**"...BUT, SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, (the believer) MAY GROW UP IN ALL THINGS INTO HIM WHO IS THE HEAD -- CHRIST -- FROM WHOM THE WHOLE BODY, JOINED AND KNIT TOGETHER BY WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES, ACCORDING TO THE EFFECTIVE WORKING BY WHICH EVERY PART DOES ITS SHARE, CAUSES GROWTH OF THE BODY FOR THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE."**

Eph 4:15-16

**"AND HE IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH... THAT IN ALL THINGS HE MAY HAVE THE PREMINENCE..."**

Col. 1:18

**"...HOLDING FAST TO THE HEAD, FROM WHOM THE WHOLE BODY, NOURISHED AND KNIT TOGETHER BY JOINTS AND LIGAMENTS, GROWS WITH THE INCREASE WHICH IS FROM GOD."**

Col. 2:19

**THE BODY OF CHRIST**



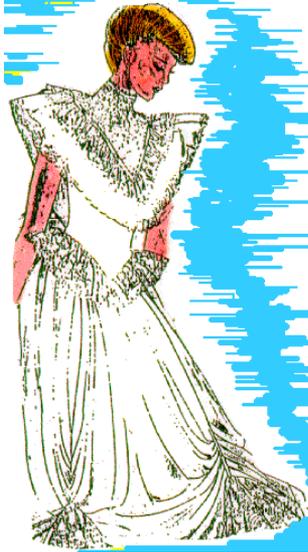
**MANY** ————— **ONE BODY** ————— **MEMBERS**

Having established what constitutes the Body of Christ, let us now consider —————>

# THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

**"...CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER, THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH... FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY...THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH."**

Eph 5:25-32



**"LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE AND GIVE HIM GLORY, FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME, AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY." AND TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND BRIGHT, FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS. THEN HE SAID TO ME, "WRITE: 'BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!'" AND HE SAID TO ME, "THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD."**

Rev 19:7-9

**" FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY.**

**FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST. BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED, OR IF YOU RECEIVE A DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED, OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT!"**

2 Cor. 11:2-4

**"I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT; FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME...BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY! HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN. HE WHO OVERCOMES, I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD, AND HE SHALL GO OUT NO MORE. I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM, WHICH COMES DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD. AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM MY NEW NAME."**

Rev 3:8-12

# THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

**"THEN I, JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND..."**

Rev 21:2



**"COME, I WILL SHOW YOU THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE."**

**AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY IN THE SPIRIT TO A GREAT AND HIGH MOUNTAIN, AND SHOWED ME THE GREAT CITY, THE HOLY JERUSALEM, DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD."**

Rev 21:9-11

**"LISTEN, O DAUGHTER, CONSIDER AND INCLINE YOUR EAR; FORGET YOUR OWN PEOPLE ALSO, AND YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE; SO THE KING WILL GREATLY DESIRE YOUR BEAUTY; BECAUSE HE IS YOUR LORD, WORSHIP HIM... THE ROYAL DAUGHTER IS ALL GLORIOUS WITHIN THE PALACE; HER CLOTHING IS WOVEN WITH GOLD. SHE SHALL BE BROUGHT TO THE KING IN ROBES OF MANY COLORS; THE VIRGINS, HER COMPANIONS WHO FOLLOW HER, SHALL BE BROUGHT TO YOU. WITH GLADNESS AND REJOICING THEY SHALL BE BROUGHT; THEY SHALL ENTER THE KING'S PALACE."**

Ps 45:10-15

**"WHO CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS WIFE? FOR HER WORTH IS FAR ABOVE RUBIES. THE HEART OF HER HUSBAND SAFELY TRUSTS HER...MANY DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE WELL, BUT YOU EXCEL THEM ALL." CHARM IS DECEITFUL AND BEAUTY IS PASSING, BUT A WOMAN WHO FEARS THE LORD, SHE SHALL BE PRAISED. GIVE HER OF THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS, AND LET HER OWN WORKS PRAISE HER IN THE GATES."**

Prov 31:10-31 excerpts

The above passages of Scripture contain the revelation of the Bride of Christ which Paul depicts as "a great mystery ("hidden truth"). These too, like the passages we considered on the Body of Christ, are worthy of our careful scrutiny. These Scriptures cannot be read without concluding that the believer has a great part in laying hold of the inheritance of the Bride of Christ. Although espoused to Christ by means of the new birth, it is evident that a new life of righteous conduct and deeds is needed to secure a place in the Bride.

Let us now consider these passages individually:



**“...CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER, THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH... FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY, OF HIS FLESH AND OF HIS BONES... THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”**

Eph 5:25-32

We have been well taught that “Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.” However, we have not been as well taught pertaining to why He did so. The two uses of “that”, above, tell us what are Christ’s higher purposes in giving Himself for the church. The first reason is that He wants a sanctified church that is washed not only in the Blood of Christ, but one that is continually washing in the sanctifying and cleansing water of the Word!

Secondly, Christ gave Himself for the church in order that He might present this glorious sanctified church that is without spot, blemish, wrinkle or any such thing, to Himself as His Bride. Let us add another revelation of the apostle Paul to the above concept:

**“ FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY. FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST. BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED, OR IF YOU RECEIVE A DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED, OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT!”**

2 Cor. 11:2-4



Paul intends, so to speak, to “walk the bride down the aisle;” to present her to Christ as a “chaste virgin.” However, he does not present this as an absolute guarantee even though the church is betrothed to Christ. Rather he expresses a fear of corruption by Satan such as he pulled on the original Eve in the garden. This is an important comparison that Paul makes. Satan went after the first Adam’s bride with doctrinal delusion, and Paul is fearful that he will do so with the last Adam’s Bride, the church! (Paul refers to Jesus Christ as “the last Adam” in 1 Cor. 15:45.) Perhaps Paul had another thought in the back of his mind in likening the church to the deception of Eve in the garden (2 Cor. 11:2-4). God put the first Adam to sleep and then formed Eve, his bride, from a part of Adam’s body. It is likely that while the Body of Christ sleeps, God will form the Last Adam’s Bride out of a part of that sleeping church. Paul’s expressed fear for the members of the Body of Christ (the church) is that their minds would be corrupted once again with doctrinal delusion such as the presentation of “another Jesus, a different Spirit or a different gospel” than what he has taught the church. Such delusion would disqualify them as “chaste virgins” (“not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish”- Eph. 5:27). Jesus prophetically predicted that such corruption would indeed plague His “virgins” when He comes as the Bridegroom for His Bride:

**“...THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SHALL BE LIKENED TO TEN VIRGINS...NOW FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE, AND FIVE WERE FOOLISH...AT MIDNIGHT A CRY WAS HEARD, ‘BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM IS COMING; GO OUT TO MEET HIM!’...THE BRIDEGROOM CAME, AND THOSE WHO WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING, AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT. AFTERWARD THE OTHER VIRGINS CAME ALSO SAYING, ‘LORD, LORD, OPEN TO US!’ BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID, ‘ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, ‘I DO NOT KNOW YOU.’**

Matt. 25:1-13 excerpts

We cannot claim the promise of being betrothed to Christ as His Bride-to-be chaste virgins (2 Cor.11:1-3), and then reject the parable in which Jesus comes as the Bridegroom for His virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) as not being applicable to the church. Many do not want to claim this parable as applicable because of the rejection of the foolish virgins by Christ. Only half the virgins are taken, the others are left behind. Only “those who were ready” went in with Christ to the wedding. Is this not the very scenario Paul was expressing fear that would happen?

Because of the presentation of “another Jesus, a different Spirit, and a different gospel”, as much as half of the espoused virgins to Christ are found not ready when the Bridegroom comes due to a watered-down, half-truth presentation of the contents of the gospel message. What is missing? Washing in the water of the Word so that we end up with “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish...”



**“TO.. THE CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA... I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT; FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME...BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY! HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN.**

**HE WHO OVERCOMES, I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD, AND HE SHALL GO OUT NO MORE. I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM, WHICH COMES DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD. AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM MY NEW NAME.”**

Rev 3:8-12

Of the seven letters Jesus wrote to His churches forty years after its inception, only this church at Philadelphia (“brotherly love”) receives not only the promise for the rapture prior to the hour of testing (the tribulation), but also the promise for the Bride of Christ. She is promised, The name of My God (the Father), the name of the city of My God-New Jerusalem, and My new name.” That sounds like wedding bells to me, especially when you see that New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ:

**“THEN I, JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND...”**

Rev 21:2

**"COME, I WILL SHOW YOU THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE."  
AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY IN THE SPIRIT TO A GREAT AND  
HIGH MOUNTAIN, AND SHOWED ME THE GREAT CITY,  
THE HOLY JERUSALEM,  
DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD,  
HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD."**

Rev 21:9-11

Notice it is the "great multitude" in heaven that announces the wedding of the Bride to Christ with the saying, "Let us (the great multitude) be glad and rejoice for...His wife has made herself ready." How was she made ready? By "the righteous acts of the saints." The Amplified Bible is even more blunt, "(the upright, just, and godly living, deeds and conduct...) of the saints."

It is important to note that the Scriptures reveal two different garments for believers. One is the "garments of salvation-ropes of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10). This garment covers members of the Body of Christ. It is received by washing in the blood of Christ for forgiveness of sins (new birth). However, the second garment is a wedding gown of fine linen which is the righteous acts (the upright, just, and godly living, deeds and conduct...) of the saints. This garment clothes the Bride of Christ and comes Only by washing in the water of God's Word in order to be found a chaste virgin who becomes part of "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish..."

**"AND THE NATIONS OF THOSE WHO ARE SAVED SHALL  
WALK IN ITS LIGHT...AND THEY SHALL BRING THE GLORY  
AND THE HONOR OF THE NATIONS INTO IT...BUT THERE  
SHALL BY NO MEANS ENTER IT ANYTHING THAT  
DEFILES...BUT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WRITTEN IN THE  
LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE."**

Rev. 21:24-27 excerpts

The Bride of Christ is prophetically portrayed in Proverbs 31 as "The Virtuous Wife":

**"WHO CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS WIFE? FOR HER WORTH IS FAR  
ABOVE RUBIES. THE HEART OF HER HUSBAND SAFELY TRUSTS  
HER...MANY DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE WELL, BUT YOU EXCEL  
THEM ALL." CHARM IS DECEITFUL AND BEAUTY IS PASSING,  
BUT A WOMAN WHO FEARS THE LORD, SHE SHALL BE  
PRAISED. GIVE HER OF THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS, AND LET  
HER OWN WORKS PRAISE HER IN THE GATES."**

Prov 31:10-31 excerpts

As Proverbs 31 states, "Many daughters have done well" but this virtuous wife "excels them all." Psalm 45 reveals that this "royal daughter" will be accompanied by a host of virgins. At the rapture all wise virgins will be taken. Out of the host of wise virgins Christ will call His Bride.



**“O LISTEN, O DAUGHTER, CONSIDER AND INCLINE YOUR EAR; FORGET YOUR OWN PEOPLE ALSO, AND YOUR FATHER’S HOUSE; SO THE KING WILL GREATLY DESIRE YOUR BEAUTY; BECAUSE HE IS YOUR LORD, WORSHIP HIM... THE ROYAL DAUGHTER IS ALL GLORIOUS WITHIN THE PALACE; HER CLOTHING IS WOVEN WITH GOLD. SHE SHALL BE BROUGHT TO THE KING IN ROBES OF MANY COLORS; THE VIRGINS, HER COMPANIONS WHO FOLLOW HER, SHALL BE BROUGHT TO YOU. WITH GLADNESS AND REJOICING THEY SHALL BE BROUGHT; THEY SHALL ENTER THE KING’S PALACE.”**

Ps 45:10-17

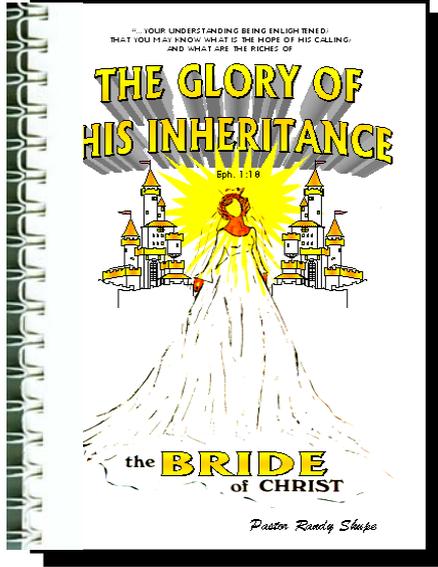
Psalm 45 shows that the Bride of Christ will be center stage in eternity. Plan to be part of it. The Holy Spirit is presently working with the Bride to invite all believers to “come”:

**“I, JESUS,  
HAVE SENT MY ANGEL TO TESTIFY TO YOU  
THESE THINGS IN THE CHURCHES...  
AND THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY,  
‘COME!’ AND LET HIM WHO HEARS SAY,  
‘COME!’  
AND LET HIM WHO THIRSTS COME...”**

Rev.22:16-17

As a further study on this subject, you might consider ordering a copy of a book I wrote entitled,

This book was first published in 1986. It was my first, and is the largest book that the Lord has inspired me to write. It is still among my favorites. After many years of being out of print, I have decided to reprint it in its original format rather than allowing it to no longer be in circulation. Sadly, I must say, the true message of the Bride of Christ remains a “great mystery” to most of God’s people today (Eph. 5:32). With the erroneous “I got it all when I got saved”



theology that permeates most of Christianity, the need to pursue after Paul’s “goal and prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-15) has been theologically rendered null and void.



**“...I PRESS ON, THAT I MAY LAY  
HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST  
JESUS HAS ALSO LAID HOLD OF ME...  
I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE  
PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD  
IN CHRIST JESUS...  
AS MANY AS ARE MATURE,  
HAVE THIS MIND...**

**BRETHREN,  
JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE...  
YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN.”**

Phil. 3:12-17

In spite of the apostle Paul’s admonition to all believers to “join in following my example” and “you have us for a pattern”, we do not see his example and pattern being presented to the saints in today’s modern-day theology.

If indeed Paul is to be our example and pattern, why then are we not being taught the meaning of the goal and prize of which he speaks? This book sets before the believer the “great mystery” of the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-32) as being the goal and prize of “the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”



**“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN  
is like a  
CERTAIN KING  
who  
ARRANGED  
A  
MARRIAGE  
for  
HIS  
SON...”  
Matt. 22:2**



In simplistic form, the ultimate priority of God is stated above. It is a theme found in type and shadow in the story of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis. It is among the final thoughts of Jesus expressed in the book of revelation where we have been given an invitation:

**“And THE SPIRIT and THE BRIDE say, “COME!”  
Rev. 22:17**

One expression of the will of God is contained within the parable of the wedding feast in which it opens with the statement, “...a certain king arranged a wedding for his son...” (Matt. 22:2). There is a moral to the story found in the concluding verse:

**“MANY are CALLED,  
but FEW are CHOSEN.” Matt. 22:14**

This in itself should be sufficient proof that not every virgin is going to attain to be the Bride of Christ. This is a parable about the marriage of Jesus. It is a depiction that many are called but few are chosen. One teacher noted for his humor said, “many are cold and a few are frozen.” The parable gives us insight as to why and how Satan will be successful in corrupting a portion of the betrothed Bride:

- 1. “THEY WERE NOT WILLING  
TO COME.” (vs. 3)**
- 2. “THEY MADE LIGHT OF IT...”  
(vs.5)**
- 3. “THEY WENT THEIR OWN WAYS  
(TO FARMS AND BUSINESSES)... (vs. 5)**

**“WHAT ARE MY  
PRIORITIES? ARE THEY  
GOD’S PRIORITIES FOR MY  
LIFE, OR AM  
I DOING MY OWN THING?”**

**“EXAMINE AND TEST  
AND EVALUATE YOUR  
OWN SELVES  
TO SEE WHETHER YOU  
ARE HOLDING TO  
YOUR FAITH AND  
SHOWING THE PROPER  
FRUITS OF IT.”**

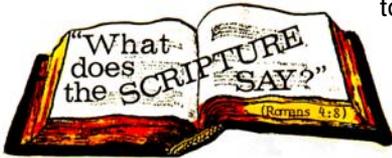
2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



# CONCLUSION

Every person on the face of the earth has priorities. They consist of those things we value the most. There are only two sources from which priorities originate:

The wise will allow God to set his priorities by what is written in



# THE WORD

The fool obtains his priorities from a different source:

**“WISDOM IS IN THE SIGHT OF HIM WHO HAS UNDERSTANDING, BUT THE EYES OF A FOOL ARE ON THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.”**

Prov. 17:24

# THE WORLD



It only takes one letter to change “word” to “world.” However, the priorities established by these two sources are as distinct as day and night. They are most often in direct opposition to each other. The reason is simple. One set comes from the mind of “the Prince of Peace”, and the other originates from the mind of “the prince of darkness.” Paul gives us a clear warning:

**“BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND EMPTY DECEIT, ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF MEN, ACCORDING TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD, AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST.”**

Col.2:8

**“LET A MAN SO CONSIDER US, AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST  
AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD.  
MOREOVER IT IS REQUIRED IN STEWARDS  
THAT ONE BE FOUND FAITHFUL.”**

1 Cor. 4:1-2

When God makes such statements about His church, it places spheres of accountability upon each member, namely, you and me. as a “holy priesthood”, we will be called some day to give account of our stewardship. On that day of judgment, God will measure whether we have “offered spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God” in our God-given role as a holy priesthood. If we have, then we shall hear, “well done good and faithful servant” (“steward”) (Matt. 25:23). Conversely, if we have not fulfilled what God has entrusted to us, then we are in danger of hearing, “...you wicked and lazy servant...” (Matt. 25:26).

The danger is to go about life in ignorance, or even worse, ignoring what areas of accountability the Word of God specifies as “irrevocable gifts and callings.” (Rom. 11:29).

We have examined God's revealed priorities for His people. These twelve themes permeate God's Word. Each category describes a particular role in which God views His people. May God help you to see yourself as he sees you!

- |          |     |  |
|----------|-----|--|
| <b>C</b> | 1.  | <b>I AM A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST</b>           |
| <b>H</b> | 2.  | <b>I AM A PRIEST TO GOD THRU CHRIST</b>    |
| <b>R</b> | 3.  | <b>I AM A SERVANT OF CHRIST</b>            |
| <b>I</b> | 4.  | <b>I AM A SOLDIER OF CHRIST</b>            |
| <b>S</b> | 5.  | <b>I AM A WITNESS FOR CHRIST</b>           |
| <b>T</b> | 6.  | <b>I AM AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST</b>       |
| <b>I</b> | 7.  | <b>I AM THE SALT/LIGHT OF THE WORLD</b>    |
| <b>A</b> | 8.  | <b>I AM A STRANGER/PILGRIM ON EARTH</b>    |
| <b>N</b> | 9.  | <b>I AM THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE OF CHRIST</b>  |
| <b>I</b> | 10. | <b>I AM PART OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST</b>   |
| <b>T</b> | 11. | <b>I AM A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST</b> |
| <b>Y</b> | 12. | <b>I AM THE ESPOUSED BRIDE OF CHRIST</b>   |

**"ESTABLISHING  
RIGHT  
PRIORITIES  
IN A WRONG WORLD"**



Priorities-we all have them. The question must be asked, "Where are we getting them from?" Are they in harmony with God's Word or with this present world?



WHAT ARE MY PRIORITIES  
IN LIFE?  
ARE THEY IN HARMONY WITH  
GOD'S EXPRESSED WILL  
FOR ME?  
COULD I BE DOING MY  
OWN THING?

**"EXAMINE AND TEST AND EVALLIATE  
YOUR OWN SELVES TO SEE WHETHER  
YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH AND  
SHOWING THE PROPER FRUITS OF IT."**

**2 Cor . 13:5 Amplified**

"ESTABLISHING  
**RIGHT  
PRIORITIES**

IN A WRONG WORLD"



Priorities-we all have them. The question must be asked, "Where are we getting them from?" Are they in harmony with God's Word or with this present world?



WHAT ARE MY PRIORITIES  
IN LIFE?  
ARE THEY IN HARMONY WITH  
GOD'S EXPRESSED WILL  
FOR ME?  
COULD I BE DOING MY  
OWN THING?

"EXAMINE AND TEST AND EVALUATE  
YOUR OWN SELVES TO SEE WHETHER  
YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH AND  
SHOWING THE PROPER FRUITS OF IT."

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified

the **WAY,** the **TRUTH,** the **LIFE**  
**TABERNACLE**

Pastor  
Randy Shupe



303-  
423-1325

5690 YUKON ST. ARVADA CO. 80002

[www.PastorRandyShupe.com](http://www.PastorRandyShupe.com)