

STUDIES IN 1 TIMOTHY

PART II

LAW NUMBER NINE: "A Leader Is One of Satan's Primary Targets"

1 Timothy 4:1-5

Key Verse 4:1: "But the Spirit explicitly is saying that in latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and to teachings of demons (demonic teachings)"

TEXT:

v. 1 But the Spirit explicitly is saying that in latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and to teachings of demons (demonic teachings),

v. 2 by the hypocritical preaching of liars, seared in their own consciences (with a red hot branding iron),

v. 3 forbidding to marry, to abstain from foods, which God created for reception with thanksgiving by those who believe and who have experiential knowledge of the truth.

v. 4 Because every created thing of God is good, and nothing is to be thrown away if it is received with thanksgiving.

v. 5 For it is consecrated through the word of God and prayer.

INTRODUCTION:

(Laugh Again by Charles R. Swindoll)

One of my mentors tells me that he was once introduced by a country preacher as "the professor of the Suppository Preaching Department." I asked him what he did after he got up to preach. He smiled and said, "Well, Chuck, I just stood up and supposed the Word, like I always do."
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(Success, Motivation, and the Scriptures by William H. Cook)

Judge Gets Verdict by Mail

WICHITA, KAN. (AP)--The blizzard this week forced everyone to cope with unusual circumstances.

One Wichita man was scheduled to appear in Municipal Court Tuesday with a speeding charge. The court was closed because of the heavy snow, and the following letter arrived in the court clerk's office Friday:

"I was scheduled to be in court February 23, 1971, at 12:15 P.M. concerning a traffic ticket. Well, I was there as scheduled. And to my surprise I was the only one there. No one called and told me that court would be closed.

"After going through the snow to be there on time, I decided to go ahead with the hearing as scheduled, which meant that I had to be the accuser (the patrolman who gave me the citation) and I had to be the accused and also the judge.

"The citation was for going 46 miles per hour in a 35 mile per hour zone. I had the speed alert on my car set on 44 miles per hour. As the accuser I felt that I was going over 35 miles per hour, but as the accused I knew that I was not going 46 miles per hour and as the judge, and being the understanding man that I am, I decided to throw it out of court this time, but it had better not happen again."

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Necessity for Right Kind of Motivation

Spencer Goodreds tells of an old gentleman riding on the ocean liner. When a storm blew up at sea a young woman, leaning against the ship's rail, lost her balance and was thrown overboard. Immediately another figure plunged into the waves beside her and held her up until a life-boat rescued them. To everyone's astonishment the hero was the oldest man on the voyage--an octogenarian. That evening he was given a party in honor of his bravery. "Speech! Speech!" the other passengers cried.

The old gentleman rose slowly and looked around at the enthusiastic gathering. "There's just one thing I'd like to know," he said testily. "Who pushed me?"

It should not be too difficult for the intelligent man to understand why he needs to be acted upon. Both psychology and Scripture agree man needs a push and a pusher.

pp. 106-7

(Lincoln on Leadership: Executive Strategies for Tough Times
by Donald T. Phillips)

His cardinal mistake is that he isolates himself, & allows nobody to see him; and by which he does not know what is going on in the very matter he is dealing with.

Lincoln's reason for relieving Gen. John C. Fremont from his command in Missouri (September 9, 1861)

p. 13

If they turn their backs to the fire, and get scorched in the rear, they'll find they have to sit on the blister."

p. 68

In a letter to Horace Greeley, written in 1862, the president described his view of this "official duty," which included an unbending devotion to flexibility:

I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors; and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

pp. 78-79

We are pursuing "The Laws of Leadership" in our studies in 1 Timothy. We have looked together at 8 LAWS OF LEADERSHIP in the 1st 3 chapters of 1 Timothy:

LAW #1:A Statement of Goal Is Essential in Leadership

LAW #2:Never Get Over the Privilege of Your Position

LAW #3:To Be a Leader You've Got to Be Willing to Fight

LAW #4:A Commitment to Leadership Is a Commitment to Prayer

LAW #5:Leadership Is Primarily a Man's Role

LAW #6:Character Is a Vital Ingredient of Leadership

LAW #7:There Is No Place in Leadership for Dishonest, Double-Tongued Drunks

LAW #8:Jesus Christ Is the Great Model of Leadership

This brings us now to PART II in our "Laws of Leadership" series. We will be looking at chapters 4-6.

We come to a consideration of:

LAW #9:Leaders Are One of Satan's Primary Targets - 4:1-5

SATAN fired a missile of:

TEMPER at MOSES,

LUST at DAVID,

TOTAL DEVASTATION AND SUFFERING at JOB,

FEAR at PETER,

A THORN OF SUFFERING IN THE FLESH of the APOSTLE PAUL,

DISHONESTY at ABRAHAM,

DEPRESSION at ELIJAH,

PRIDE at SAUL,

IDOLATRY at GIDEON,

and GREED at JUDAS.

JAMES also reminds us that TEACHERS are going to "incur the stricter judgment":

James 3:1

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren,
knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.

Demarest says about the passage that is coming under consideration:

Though the final outcome of Christ's struggle has been secured through His victory over sin and death, guerilla warfare continues until He shall come in glory. Resistance to His love continues, and some will even depart from the faith--an act known as apostasy.

Hendriksen says:

Though the church be ever so glorious, reflecting the radiance of its precious Lord and Savior (1 Tim. 3:15, 16), apostasy is just around the corner, for not all who belong outwardly to the church belong to it inwardly. The present chapter deals with this apostasy.

Barnes says:

The leading object of this chapter is to state to Timothy certain things of which he was constantly to remind the church. And having done this, the apostle gives him some directions about his personal deportment.

Wiersbe says:

Paul had warned the Ephesian elders that false teachers would invade the church (Acts 20:28-31), and now they had arrived. The Holy Spirit had spoken in specific terms about these teachers and the prophecy was starting to be fulfilled in Paul's time. Certainly it is fulfilled in our own time. We can recognize false teachers by the description Paul gave in this paragraph.

Guthrie observes:

Having pointed out the exaltation of Christ and the future prospects of the church, the apostle next comes to opposing elements. Whenever truth flourishes error will raise its head, and the apostle is concerned that Timothy should deal rightly with this insidious opposition.

Lenski says:

A reading of this chapter will convince one that it is a unit. Timothy is to be prepared to meet the apostasy foretold by the Holy Spirit. The particle de is merely transitional and is inserted because Timothy is to warn also the churches and their officers against the coming danger.

Lenski says further:

One must certainly be struck by the resemblance between 2 Thess. 2 and Paul's present statements. There the whole great apostasy which is headed by the great antichrist is revealed and we are shown how it shall be blasted by the word and shall finally be utterly destroyed by the Lord's Parousia.

Hiebert says:

With chapter 4 we begin the 3rd main division of the epistle. Here Paul offers Timothy some constructive advice in carrying out the charge committed to him. The advice relates to his personal work in view of the coming apostasy (chap. 4:1-16), as well as to his official work with various groups within the churches (5:1-6:2).

Lock points out:

Yet though each church has to uphold the truth, and though it knows the secret of the true human life, inspired prophets have given us clear warning that in after days some Christians will fall away from the true faith. They will pay heed to evil, misleading spirits, to doctrines inspired by heathen deities embodied in the false teaching of insincere men; men whose own conscience bears the brand of sin upon it; men who teach others that it is a duty not to marry and a duty to abstain from certain kinds of food. Yet it was God who created those foods, and created them that those who have accepted Christ and come to know His full teaching might enjoy them with thankfulness. For every created thing has the Creator's stamp of excellence upon it, and there is none that need be cast aside if only it is accepted with a grateful heart, for then it becomes consecrated by the divine blessing and our responsive prayer.

King observes:

The Bible is a book so true to life. While it delights to record the good, it does not attempt to hide the evil: Abraham's deception, Moses' outburst, Elijah's juniper, Esaias' end. It tells the glowing story of Gideon but does not omit the sad blot on the last page. When the artist came to execute a portrait of Oliver Cromwell, the Protector commanded him to make it a true likeness. "Paint me, wart and all." That is how it is with the Bible portraits, wart and all. That is how it is also when the scriptures delineate the conditions of life. They are never afraid to tell the bad news, but, thank God, alongside will be found the good advice that will serve to meet the situation. Thus it is in this passage.

v. 1 But the Spirit explicitly is saying that in latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and to teachings of demons (demonic teachings),

The word "BUT" takes us back to:

chapter 3:13

For those who have served in the office of a deacon commendably gain for themselves a good standing and much confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

"But the Spirit" in:

Matthew 24 and 25

and 2 Thessalonians 2 reveals these future things.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

As the repository and guardian of the truth, the church must be aware of the strategies of the truth enemies. It is crucial, then, for the church to understand what God has revealed about these enemies.

King says:

Great and glorious things have been unfolded at the close of the previous chapter. Here is it all so different. It is as if we had been traversing a lovely road full of fine houses and beautiful gardens and then turned a corner into a lane of dirty, tumbledown slum property, abounding in weeds and rank disfigurement. "But" is to me always, for good or ill, the corner word of scripture. Timothy will find much of good cheer and encouragement in his oversight, but let him beware, there will be also things that are ugly and evil.

Hiebert says:

The opening "but" introduces a contrast between the sublime mystery of redemption which the church confesses as the norm of Christian faith (3:16) and the coming departure from the faith of which the Spirit warns. Timothy must carry on his work in the clear consciousness of this grim prospect.

J. Vernon McGee says:

"Now" in the authorized version would be better translated "but." This would set in sharp contrast the early doctrinal creed given in the final verse of the preceding chapter and the apostasy within the church that Paul is now going to discuss.

"BUT THE SPIRIT EXPLICITLY IS SAYING."

It is "without disguise."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary would say:

"Clearly," because it is repeated in the teaching of the Lord.

Jude 17, 18

But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, "In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."

Mark 13:22

for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray.

Acts 20:29

I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

Lock translates this word "EXPLICITLY" as:

. . . "clearly," "unmistakably," or more probably, "in express terms," implying that he is quoting a prophecy. If so, the utterance of the Spirit will not have been made to the writer himself but he is quoting that of some other Christian prophet.

Hendriksen says:

"The Spirit says," that is, is now saying. To whom was the Spirit speaking? Acts 29:29, 30 leads me to think that the apostle meant "to myself, perhaps also to others." The Spirit, then, is saying that in later seasons (eras of this new dispensation, eras definitely marked out in God's foreknowledge) some will depart or apostatize from the faith (objective sense), the body of redemptive truth, the Christian religion. The Spirit was saying this expressly in stated terms. There was neither doubt nor vagueness about it.

Barnes says:

It was not by mere hints and symbols and shadowy images of the future. It was in an open and plain manner, in so many words. The object of this statement seems to be to call the attention of Timothy to it in an emphatic manner and to show the importance of attending to it.

Guthrie points out:

The ministry of the Spirit in apocalyptic revelations is emphatically brought out by the word "expressly," indicating that these elements of future events have been distinctly made known.

Hiebert points out:

Timothy must work under the realization of the fact that along with the believing reception being accorded to the preaching of the gospel in many quarters, there will come a definite falling away from the faith which its proclamation awakened.

He says further:

"The Spirit saith expressly." The Holy Spirit himself, the Spirit of prophecy, is the author of the prediction and it is uttered "expressly," that is, clearly and explicitly. Such an apostasy was clearly indicated in the prophetic utterances of Christ but the reference here is to a specific revelation being made by the Spirit. Whether it came to Paul himself or to some other New Testament prophets is not indicated.

"BUT THE SPIRIT EXPLICITLY IS SAYING THAT IN LATTER TIMES."

This is not LAST TIMES but "LATTER TIMES."

J. Vernon McGee says:

The "latter times" mentioned here refers to our times today. Paul was speaking of what lay just ahead for the church in his day.

Guy King says:

It seems to mean times future to the time of writing. The matter envisaged by the apostle, though possibly in bud as he writes, will not be in bloom until later. This is the more likely by reason of the fact that there is no definite article in the Greek, and "in latter times" would be a quite proper rendering with the significance of later on. It is very different with the phrase of 2 Timothy 3:1 "in the last days" where the reference is to the period at the close of the present age immediately prior to the parousia, the return of our Lord Jesus.

King says further:

Oh, to be ready for either, and to be able to rest with the psalmist in the knowledge that "my times are in Thy hand" (Psalm 31:15). Our past redeemed, our present surrounded, our prospect assured.

Demarest agrees with this by saying:

By using the phrase "in the latter times" Paul is referring to a more specific time than in his phrase "in the last days" in 2 Timothy 3:1. Here he seems to be thinking of a time that Timothy will clearly face in which some will depart from the faith. The language of "deceiving spirits" and "doctrines of demons" is a reminder that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephes. 6:12). We do well to be constantly aware that there is a spiritual warfare always going on. To underestimate the power of the enemy is to invite capture.

"BUT THE SPIRIT EXPLICITLY IS SAYING THAT IN LATTER TIMES SOME WILL FALL AWAY FROM THE FAITH."

Matthew 24:11

And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many.

2 Thessalonians 2:4

who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

1 John 2:18

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.

Hiebert says:

The essence of the prediction is that "some shall fall away from the faith." "The faith" here denotes the doctrinal truths of the Christian faith. The verb "fall away" or "apostatize" denotes, not an unintentional fall, but a deliberate withdrawal from the faith once professed. An apostate is not one who gives up his profession of being a Christian, but one who forsakes the truth of the Christian life.

Barnes says:

The meaning is that they would apostatize from the belief of the truths of the gospel. It does not mean that as individuals they would have been true Christians, but that there would be a departure from the great doctrines which constitute the Christian faith. The ways in which they would do this are immediately specified, showing what the apostle meant here by "departing from the faith."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Some people will abandon the faith. Spiritual error is seldom due to innocent mistakes. It is more often due to the conscious strategies of God's spiritual enemies.

1 Timothy 1:19

holding faith and a good conscience, which some, having rejected (repudiated), have suffered shipwreck in their faith.

2 Peter 2:22

It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

2 Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?

"BUT THE SPIRIT EXPLICITLY IS SAYING THAT IN LATTER TIMES SOME WILL" do 2 THINGS:

1. "FALL AWAY FROM THE FAITH,"
2. "PAYING ATTENTION TO DECEITFUL SPIRITS AND TO TEACHINGS OF DEMONS (DEMONIC TEACHINGS)."

Turning their minds away from truth, they begin to pay attention to error.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

It is the teachings of demons that are false doctrines taught by errorists whose views are instigated by demons.

Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Guthrie says:

These are evidently supernatural evil spirits whose existence and influence Paul has vividly described in Ephesians 6:11ff. Such spirits of error are contrasted with the Spirit of truth. In addition, reference is made to "doctrines of devils" which probably means doctrines taught by demons. Although closely akin to the first description, "seducing spirits," it differs by putting the emphasis on the teaching rather than on the teachers.

J. Vernon McGee says:

"Seducing" actually means "wandering," "roving," and it comes from the word "vagabond," or "deceiver," or "seducer." In fact, Satan is all those things. "They shall give heed to satanic spirits."

Lenski says:

The deceitful spirits are false teachers. They are called "spirits" in accord with what they represent and in accord with the spirit that speaks from them. So 1 John 4:1-3 speaks of "spirits," and John tells us to test them. Planos is "wandering" from which we derive planet, "astray from the truth," and thus, "deceitful." The word is used regarding impostors. Whoever lends an ear to such men will be led to apostatize.

Barnes says:

"Giving heed to seducing spirits" rather than to the Spirit of God. It would be a part of their system to yield to those spirits that led astray. The spirits here referred to are any that cause to err and the most obvious and natural construction is to refer it to the agency of fallen spirits.

Hiebert says:

It has well been said that man never stands isolated. If he is not subject to the influence of the Holy Spirit, he at once falls under the power of seducing spirits. These "seducing spirits," spirits that lead astray and deceive, are not the false teachers but the evil spirits animating them.

Guy King says:

These impious beings are expert in the unholy art of seducing, choosing their victim and their moment with cunning precision. They come to a man at a time of intellectual doubt, or of devastating sorrow, or of spiritual failure, or even of bodily weakness--and they insinuate the seed of what is false, which becomes in course of time, the very ruin of a soul, the catastrophe of a life, as in the instance of these unfortunate persons of whom Timothy is here warned. Let none of us suppose that we are to be immune from such attacks or free from such dire results. It behooves us all to exercise eternal vigilance.

"SOME WILL FALL AWAY FROM THE FAITH, PAYING ATTENTION":

1. "TO DECEITFUL SPIRITS,"
2. "TO TEACHINGS OF DEMONS (DEMONIC TEACHINGS)."

1 Corinthians 10:20, 21

No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Wiersbe points out:

This is the only place where demons are mentioned in the pastoral epistles. Just as there is a mystery of godliness concerning Christ (1 Tim. 3:16), so there is a mystery of iniquity that surrounds Satan and his work (2 Thess. 2:7). Satan is an imitator (2 Cor. 11:13-15). He has his own ministers and doctrines and seeks to deceive God's people and lead them astray (2 Cor. 11:3). The first test of any religious doctrine is what it says about Jesus Christ (1 John 4:1-6). It comes as a shock to some people that Satan uses professed Christians in the church to accomplish his work, but Satan once used Peter to try to lead Jesus on a wrong path (Matt. 16:21-23), and he used Ananias and Sapphira to try to deceive the church at Jerusalem (Acts 5). Paul warned that false teachers would arise from within the church (Acts 20:30).

Wiersbe says further:

Their goal is to seduce people and get them to depart from the faith. This is the word "apostasy" and it is defined as a willful turning away from the truth of the Christian faith. These "false teachers" do not try to build up the church or relate people to the Lord Jesus Christ in a deeper way. Instead, they want to get disciples to follow them and join their groups and promote their program. This is one difference between a true church and a religious cult. A true church seeks to win converts to Jesus Christ and to build them spiritually. Conversely, a cult proselytizes, steals converts from others and makes them servants, even slaves, of the leaders of the cult. However, not all apostates are in cults. Some of them are in churches and pulpits teaching false doctrine and leading people astray.

Hiebert says:

"Doctrines of demons" does not mean doctrines about demons but doctrines which the demons teach. They influence the minds of men to give heed to erroneous teaching.

Lenski says:

First the impostors, then, coupled with them, the doctrines they teach, and these Paul calls "doctrines of demons"; James 3:15 has the expression "wisdom demoniacal". This is the genitive of source: doctrines that emanate from demons, and not the objective genitive: doctrines about demons, the latter the Scriptures themselves contain. How Satan himself gets hold of a man's spirit we see in the case of Judas (Luke 22:3; John 13:27; comp. chapter 6:70). Satan is the father of lies, deception is his great work. His tools are his victims. We need not puzzle our minds about the occult activities of demons; the antichristian doctrines betray their origin all too plainly. We can also note the way in which these doctrines wreck men's souls.

J. Vernon McGee says:

I think that we are seeing a real manifestation of the spirit world today, but the best thing you and I can do regarding the devil is to show him a clean pair of heels.

2 Corinthians 2:11

in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

2 Corinthians 4:4

in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 6:15

Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

2 Corinthians 12:7

And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me--to keep me from exalting myself!

Luke 22:31, 32

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

One is reminded of JIM JONES and also the WACO situation when it comes to the power of deception and the horrible consequences that result.

GOING FORWARD IN A BACKWARD WORLD

Much of the world we live in rotates on Satan's standards, which are backwards from the Christian standpoint. See John 14:30, Isa. 55:8. It's a challenge to think and live biblically in this world. Biblical success involves servanthood (Matt. 20, Phil. 2). Biblical power comes from being yielded to God's [standards] given us here (Luke 12:13-34 and I Tim. 6:6-19, Phil. 4:12). Biblical pleasure comes from doing right, and brings peace and joy. (Psalm 1, John 15).

"Going forward in a backward world" by Joseph M. Stowall. Moody, Apr 1989. Page 4.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

A POWERFUL ADVERSARY

If you go to Wartburg, they will show you a dark spot on the old walls which they say was caused by the breaking of an ink bottle that Martin Luther supposedly threw at the devil. Skeptics say it was just the rats inside of the wall that Luther heard. Whether the evil one caused the actual physical disturbance, we do not know. What is important is that Luther recognized that Satan sets himself in opposition to those who champion the Word, and that he never hesitated in fighting him.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

THE GREAT IMPOSTOR

Nature provides us with an illustration that closely parallels the insidious tactics employed by our adversary. According to scientists, Arctic polar bears feed almost entirely on seals. To enjoy such a meal, they sometimes resort to a cunning bit of trickery. If the hole through which the seal gets his food is near the edge of the ice, the polar bear will take a deep breath and swim under water to its exact location. Remaining below the surface, he will then make a tiny scratching sound imitating a fish. When the charmed seal hears this, he dives in for a quick supper, only to find himself suddenly entrapped in the huge, hungry embrace of his predator.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

(Growing More Like Jesus by Richard L. Strauss)

Satan's attacks can be ferocious. And we are weak and vulnerable; we need protection. It is the Word of God that provides our major defense against Satan's assaults. "Thy word have I treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:11). The apostle Paul reminded us that in order to stand against the schemes of the devil, we need to take "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). There is Scripture to help us handle every temptation Satan hurls at us. If you will begin to saturate your mind and soul with the Word, as Jesus did, you will begin to enjoy victory.

p. 38

(To the End of the Race by George McDaniel Cole)

Who Am I?

Within my earthly temple, there's a crowd.
There's one who's humble; one who's proud.

There's one, broken hearted for his sins.
There's one, who just sits . . . and grins.

There's one who loves neighbor as himself.
There's one who cares for no one but self.

From much corroding care I would be free . . .
If I could determine . . . WHICH is really me?

p. 73

(Over the Edge and Back by Joe White)

My Christian friend gave me a poem. (She lost her own brother to an overdose of heroin--after he started out smoking pot!) Read this poem by an unknown author a couple of times, and think about it:

So, little man, you've grown tired of grass,
 LSD, goofballs, cocaine and hash.
 And someone pretending to be a good friend
 says, "Let me introduce you to Miss Heroin."
 Well, honey, before you fool with me,
 let me inform you of how it will be.
 For I will seduce you and make you a slave;
 I've sent men much stronger than you to a grave.
 You think you could never become a disgrace,
 end up an addict to poppyseed and waste,
 so you'll start inhaling me some afternoon
 and take me in your arm very soon!
 And once I enter, drip down in your veins,
 your cravings will drive you nearly insane.
 You'll swindle your mother, and just for a buck
 you'll turn into something vile and corrupt.
 You'll mug and steal for my narcotic charm,
 you'll feel contentment when I'm in your arm.
 The day you realize the monster you've grown
 you'll solemnly promise to leave me alone.
 Well, if you think you've got the mystical knack,
 then try getting me, Miss Heroin, off your back.
 You vomit, you cramp, you get tied in a knot,
 your jangling nerves screaming for one more shot.
 The hot sweat, the cold chill, the withdrawing pain
 can only be stopped by my little white grain.
 No other way! There's no need to look;
 for deep down inside, you know you are hooked.
 You desperately run to your pusher, and then
 you welcome me back to your arm once again.
 And once you return, as I have foretold,
 you give me your body, and give up your soul.
 You give up your morals, your conscience, your heart,
 and you will be mine till death do us part!

pp. 14-15

(Counseling for Substance Abuse and Addiction by Stephen Van Cleave, M.D., Walter Byrd, M.D. and Kathy Revell, R.N.)

It has been said that the substance abuser lives in a world with a population of one--one's self. Being inner-directed and virtually absorbed with one's own pain or pleasure makes even the most congenial substance abuser a very self-centered person.

This self-centeredness is not just an unfortunate personality trait. It impairs normal, day-to-day living and interpersonal relationships. A pattern of behavior emerges that is both disruptive and destructive to the entire family. A marriage in which one partner is a drug or alcohol abuser has a one-in-ten chance of survival.

It is estimated that each alcoholic adversely affects four other persons. Most commonly those persons are his or her own family members. Since there are an estimated 12 million alcoholics in the United States, there are approximately 48 million additional victims of alcoholism. This includes 20 million adults who have grown up in alcoholic families and 7 million children who are still being raised in alcoholic families. Millions more are in families of those hooked on other drugs.

Recognizing the problems that the whole family can have because of drug abuse, and getting help for the entire family, not just the user, is crucial to successful treatment.

p. 90

(Principle-Centered Leadership by Stephen R. Covey)

To the degree people recognize and live in harmony with such basic principles as fairness, equity, justice, integrity, honesty, and trust, they move toward either survival and stability on the one hand or disintegration and destruction on the other.

p. 18

(The Making of a Leader by J. Robert Clinton)

He once wrote an excellent article that stressed this whole idea of principles. In it he said,

About the only thing I remember from one of my courses at seminary is a bit of doggerel that the weary professor dropped into a boring lecture:

Methods are many,
Principles are few.
Methods always change,
Principles never do.

That conviction led me into a lifelong search for principles, the foundational truths that never change and yet always have a fresh principle behind them. I learned to evaluate men and ministries on the basis of the principles that motivated them as well as on the basis of the fruit they produced. (Wiersbe 1980:81)
p. 43

Work on submission. I just returned from a seminar in New Zealand. As I was talking about my growth projects, one of the participants gave me these words from Andrew Murray, a great South African Christian.

1. He brought me here. It's by His will I am in this straight place. In that fact I will rest.
 2. He will keep me here in His love and give me grace to behave as His child.
 3. Then He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends for me to learn.
 4. In His good time, He will bring me out again--how and when He knows. So let me say: I am (a) Here by God's appointment. (b) In His keeping. (c) Under His training. (d) For His time.
- p. 36

This is our KEY VERSE in LAW #9: "A Leader Is One of Satan's Primary Targets." The question that comes to us at this time is:

How do we gain the victory?

How do we fight the good fight?

Let me suggest to you 5 WAYS TO VICTORY:

1. WEAR YOUR ARMOR AT ALL TIMES:

Ephesians 6:10-17

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

2. PRAY:

Ephesians 6:18

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

2 Chronicles 20:12

O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.

2 Chronicles 14:11

Then Asa called to the Lord his God and said, "Lord, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast army. O Lord, you are our God; do not let man prevail against you."

1 Chronicles 4:10

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.

The 3rd thing that will lead to the path of victory is:

3. STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD:

2 Timothy 2:3, 4

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

4. MEMORIZE THE WORD OF GOD:

Since the scripture is the "sword of the Spirit" you must have it in your memory so that you can use it at any moment.

Psalm 119:9, 11

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Thy word have I hid in my heart
that I might not sin against Thee.

Jeremiah 15:16

Thy words were found, and I did eat them;
and Thy word was the joy and rejoicing of my
heart,
for I am called by Thy name,
O Lord God of hosts.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

You get a beautiful picture of how the Lord Jesus Christ used the word of God, the sword of the Spirit, to handle Satan in His temptation in Matthew chapter 4. He slashes him 3 times with the "sword of the Spirit" from the book of Deuteronomy. Can you imagine in your wildest thoughts how effective the Lord would have been in that encounter if He would have had to sit down and try to come up with some passage of scripture that would be suitable for the situation? He has it in His mind and He was able to use it to fight the good fight.

5.FOCUS ON OBEDIENCE:

James 1:22

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

Joshua 1:8

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

6.ACCOUNTABILITY:

Accountability--both to the Lord and to your fellow brothers and sisters.

Psalm 26:2, 3

Test me, O Lord, and try me,
 examine my heart and my mind;
 for your love is ever before me,
 and I walk continually in your truth.

Proverbs 3:5-7

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
 and lean not on your own understanding;
 in all your ways acknowledge him,
 and he will make your paths straight.
 do not be wise in your own eyes;
 fear the Lord and shun evil.

Recognizing that "A Leader is One of Satan's Primary Targets," it would be good for us to follow John's advice in:

1 John 4:1-4

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

v. 2 by the hypocritical preaching of liars, seared (with a red hot branding iron) in their own consciences,

The verse begins with the little word "BY" which expresses the instrumental. How does Satan get across his false teachings? It is done by "THE HYPOCRITICAL PREACHING."

Matthew 7:15-20

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.

It is fake and phony preaching.

"In the hypocrisy of one speaking in lies" is the way one of the commentators translated this phrase.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

God's spiritual enemies do not directly confront their victims with error. Instead, they work through hypocritical liars. Men who speak lies in hypocrisy. This is Satan's standard operating procedure. We have seen this already in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. He selects likely representatives and renders their consciences beyond feeling.

DON'T GET HOOKED!

It's a quiet spring morning. The mists are still rising as the fisherman glides to his favorite fishing spot. He's after one of those giant bass that hide among the weeds and sunken logs.

Now, this fisherman is probably an honest man who wouldn't cheat on his taxes. But when he's fishing, he's a cunning deceiver. He is out there to snare and to capture.

To do that, he's not going to throw a bare hook in the water. That wouldn't fool the fish. So he disguises it with an attractive lure. He may even hide it with that old reliable--the night crawler. He wants the fish to take the bait without noticing the hook. By that time it will be too late. A skilled angler will give just the right jerk and set the hook. And that's the end of the fish's freedom.

Satan is also fishing. We are the fish. And the bait is whatever will lure us to take the hook. It usually appeals to a natural desire--such as our need for intimacy or success or security. He uses legitimate needs to hide his real intent, which is to get us to disobey God. He knows that to entice us to take the bait, he has to hide the hook. And he'll make it look as appealing as he can.

Satan is a cunning deceiver. Don't be fooled by his tactics.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

SATANISTS IN MORMON CHURCH

"Not only do the perpetrators represent a cross section of the Mormon culture, but sometimes the abuse has taken place in our own meetinghouses." --LDS official.

Satanists have infiltrated the Mormon church by posing as temple workers, patriarchs, and even a bishop, according to a high-ranking Latter Day Saints official who is conducting an in-house investigation. He thinks there may be as many as 800 Satanists in Mormon churches just in the Salt Lake Valley. He has evidence of at least 60 cases of ritualistic abuse having taken place, with some of them occurring in Mormon buildings. Another LDS spokesman says that these figures are overestimations. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, the long-time cult watchers who uncovered the Mormon memo about the investigation, say they are not sure if the allegations are true but vouch for the authenticity of the memo.

"Satanists in church." Christianity Today, Dec 16, 1991. Page 58.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

King points out:

It is a startling thought that even the keenest Christians off their guard can become the actual tools of the devil. "Get thee behind Me Satan" (Matthew 16:23) was spoken to Peter because he had been temporarily seduced into doing the evil one's work. Poor seesaw Peter, so high one moment, so low the next as to allow himself to be the foul fiend's cat's paw. Writer and reader beware. See then how these wretched agents will go to work.

Hendriksen says:

As Satan made use of a serpent to deceive Eve, and this by means of an insincere utterance (Gen. 3:1-5), he was hiding his real objective. For while he pretended to raise Eve to a higher lever of glory so that she would be like God, his real aim was to dethrone God and enthrone himself. So these seducing spirits, or demons, make use of men who speak lies and who talk piously and learnedly in order to cover up their own arrogance or immorality.

Barclay says:

It came through men whose characteristic was a smooth hypocrisy. It came through men whose consciences had been branded by Satan. The idea behind the brand is this: It sometimes happened that a slave was branded with a mark which identified him as belonging to a certain owner, as cattle are branded nowadays. These false teachers bear upon their consciences the very brand of Satan. They are marked out as his slaves, as his property, as belonging to him.

Now here is the threatening and the terrible thing. We know that God and God's Spirit are everywhere looking for men to use. God is always searching for men who will be his instruments, his weapons, his tools in the world. But here we come face to face with the terrible fact that the forces of evil are also looking for men to use. Just as God seeks men for His purposes, the forces of evil seek men for their purposes. Here is the terrible responsibility of manhood. Man can accept the service of God or the service of the devil. Man can become an instrument of the Supreme Good or the supreme evil. Men are faced with the eternal choice: to whom are we to give our lives? to God or to God's enemy? Are we to decide to be used by God or are we to decide to be used by the devil?

Judas Iscariot certainly forms a perfect illustration of this thought.

John 13:2

And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

1 Samuel 16:14

Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him.

Ephesians 4:18, 19

being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

"BY THE HYPOCRITICAL PREACHING OF LIARS, SEARED (WITH A RED HOT BRANDING IRON) IN THEIR OWN CONSCIENCES."

Sin has CAUTERIZED their CONSCIENCE.

This is the only use of this word in the New Testament.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

It is a word meaning "to brand" or "cauterize." In this condition they are ready to do Satan's bidding.

Barnes says:

The allusion here is doubtless to the effect of applying a hot iron to the skin. The cauterized part becomes rigid and hard, and is dead to sensibility. So with the conscience of those referred to. It has the same relation to a conscience that is sensitive and quick in its decisions, that a cauterized part of the body has to a thin, delicate, and sensitive skin. Such a conscience exists in a mind that will practice delusion without concern; that will carry on a vast system of fraud without wincing; that will incarcerate, scourge, or burn the innocent without compassion; and that will practice gross enormities, and indulge in sensual gratifications under the mask of piety.

Lock says:

It is branded with the brand of slavery to their true master, Satan . . . and contrast this with Galatians 6:17.

Galatians 6:17

From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.

Lenski says:

The demons have "seared" their conscience.

The translation of the AV is correct, "seared with a hot iron," the conscience has been cauterized so that it has lost all sensitiveness and fails to respond. Judas is an example: Satan entered into him, and to the very last every effort on the part of Jesus to reach his seared conscience proved unavailing (see John 13:18), a tremendous effort; already John 6:70; and the final effort of Jesus in Matthew 26:50. These deceivers and hypocritical liars are beyond all deterrents of conscience.
p. 621

Hendriksen says:

By constantly arguing with conscience, stifling its warnings, and muffling its bell, they at last have reached the point where conscience no longer bothers them. Grieving the Holy Spirit has led to resisting Him, and resisting Him to quenching Him. Then, through their own rebellion and obstinacy, their conscience will have been rendered (and thus will be permanently) seared. It will have been made callous. A good example is Balaam in Numbers 22:12.
p. 146

Hiebert says:

They were in a state (perfect tense) of being "branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron." The figure in this translation is derived from the penile practice of branding certain criminals on their forehead. So these hypocrites with their outward show of holiness and extreme aestheticism have the brand of guilt resting on their conscience.

Wiersbe says:

The word "seared" means cauterized. Just as a person's flesh can be branded so that it becomes hard and without feeling, so a person's conscience can be deadened. Whenever we affirm with our lips something that we deny with our lives, whether people know it or not, we deaden our consciences just a little more. Jesus made it clear that it is not religious talk or even performing miracles that qualifies a person for heaven, but doing God's will in everyday life (Matthew 7:21-29). An apostate is not just wrong doctrinally, he is wrong morally. His personal life became wrong before his doctrines were changed. In fact, it is likely that he changed his teaching so that he could continue his sinful living and pacify his conscience. Believing and behaving always go together.

King says:

Their conscience, once so sensitive, is now "seared," as flesh would be by the application of a "hot iron", rendering it almost dead. Time was when they would shrink in horror from the uttering of a "lie", but now that conscience is silenced, they can do it without blushing, with the tongue of "hypocrisy" in their cheek. How, if unchecked, evil grows in a man, on a man!
p. 72

(Success, Motivation, and the Scriptures by William H. Cook)

Dwight L. Moody, the famed evangelist, admitted, "I have more trouble with myself than any other man I've ever met."

Bible characters seem to honestly admit they had trouble with themselves. And they were great men!

Job"Then Job answered the Lord and said, 'Behold I am vile'" (Job 40:4).

David"For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me" (Ps. 51:3).

Ezra"I blush to lift my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head" (Ezra 9:6).

Isaiah"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5).

Paul"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1:15).

If I have trouble with self, and self sits in the control tower, then I have trouble in the control room!

p. 93

(Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks by Steve Brown)

I once visited a friend of mine in the hospital whose honesty was wonderful. Most of the time when I visit hospitalized Christians and ask them if they are worried, they say something spiritual like, "No, Steve, the Lord has given me His peace. I'm trusting in Him, and He has given me the assurance of His love and control." Now I'm not saying that kind of statement is never true. Some Christians (the ones you don't want to ask about worry) have a wonderful gift of trust. They just don't worry. However, I suspect that sometimes those kinds of folks are practicing what the psychologists call "denial." At any rate, I asked my friend if she was worried. She said, "Worried? Are you crazy? Of course I'm worried. People die in this place!"

Isn't that refreshing? And you know, God dealt with her worry because she was honest about it, identified it, and thereby knew how to pray about it.

p. 122

(Temptations Men Face by Tom L. Eisenman)

Men lust, but they know not what for;
 They wander, and lose track of the goal;
 They fight and compete, but they forget the prize;
 They spread seed, but spurn the seasons of growth;
 They chase power and glory, but miss the meaning of life.
 GEORGE GILDER

p. 33

(The Body by Charles Colson with Ellen Santilli Vaughn)

What J. I. Packer calls "hot tub religion" embraces anything that makes us feel better about ourselves. Which is why Tai Collins, the former Miss Virginia who allegedly was involved in a tryst with a U.S. senator and then posed nude for Playboy, can enthuse over the Presbyterian church she has recently joined. Her volunteer work there, she says, is "very fulfilling." When asked if it would affect her nude modeling, she replied, "I don't think so. I mean there's a lot of people in my church that have been in Playboy."

p. 45

Perhaps this is why, while 80 percent of Americans profess to be Christian, about half of all Americans believe in ESP, more than a third in mental telepathy, one-quarter in reincarnation, and one out of five say they have been in touch with the dead!

More than fifteen million Americans find "born-again Christianity too tacky, Protestantism and Judaism too suburban and Catholicism too papal." So instead of flocking to churches, they flee to mountaintop highs, touchy-feely retreats, and healing spas where they discover the mystical power of crystals.

By responding to market pressures, the church forfeits its authority to proclaim truth and loses its ability to call its members to account. In other words, it can no longer disciple and discipline. But as alien and archaic as the idea may seem, the task of the church is not to make men and women happy; it is to make them holy.

p. 46

The world drinks to forget; the Christian drinks to remember.

Steve Brown

p. 127

Their nobility or heroism is established not by what they do, but by whether they are seen as doing what they find meaningful, whether they are doing what is right for them. Utter that phrase on Donahue, and you are guaranteed approval.

This relentless drivel renders viewers incapable of distinguishing between what is important and what isn't. Watch hours of this every week, and one's moral senses can be permanently neutered.

And that is happening to millions of Americans every day. Nielsen estimates that national viewership of each of these talk shows ranges from 2.5 million to 8.6 million--and many people watch more than one. So it is safe to say that each day tens of millions are watching Phil or Oprah or Geraldo or Sally or one of their clones in what passes as moral discourse in American life. While in earlier times the citizenry gathered in town halls, the purest form of democratic discussion, today they lean back in their La-Z-Boys to watch Phil and Oprah preside over the great debates.

Some have actually argued that modern network television is essential for national survival on the grounds that it is the one instrument today that provides national cohesion. If this is so, then television programming could properly be labeled our modern American religion, since the word religion derives from the Latin religiare, meaning "to bind together." While Scripture provided the most cohesive force in culture forty years ago, it seems that the base of common understanding and communication today is the television networks.

p. 167

Filmmaker Woody Allen gives us a chilling answer in his movie Crimes and Misdemeanors.

The story is of Judah Rosenthal, a prosperous ophthalmologist and pillar of the community who happens to be cheating on his wife. He is enjoying his successful double life until one day when he opens a letter meant for his wife. It is from his mistress, and it threatens to unravel everything.

Judah goes first to a rabbi friend who urges him to repent and make a clean break with his past. Then he consults his brother who has ties to the mob and offers a cleaner way out. Murder. Flooded with memories of his religious upbringing, Judah nonetheless tells his brother to go ahead and kill his mistress. Most of the film deals with Judah's subsequent anguish. At first he is ravaged by guilt. Haunted by nightmares, he can talk with no one but his brother. He is close to a nervous breakdown.

Then something marvelous happens. No one discovers his crime! A burglar is blamed for the woman's death.

Judah's guilt fades. His life is rich and full, his business thrives, he lies to his rabbi friend. He feels wonderful, better than ever. The film ends with Judah back on top, at peace with himself and his world.

And the lesson is plain: Judah committed two murders; he killed not only his mistress but his own conscience as well.

In a culture where the tiresome vestiges of guilt still hang on, that's the answer. If there is no one else to blame and you still feel bad, then just kill your conscience. You'll feel so much better in the morning.
p. 179-80

(Welcome to the Family by Stephen W. Brown)

There is no hope for our world if one looks for hope within the bounds of our world. We simply don't have enough solutions to go around. If air pollution doesn't strangle us, the population explosion will crowd us out. If we aren't starved to death because we can't produce enough food for the world, we will blow ourselves up because we can't produce enough understanding for the world. War, poverty, racism, pollution, march by like tin soldiers in review before the world. Most of us just go get a fresh six-pack and change the station.
pp. 148-49

(Mentoring: The Strategy of the Master by Ron Lee Davis
with James D. Denney)

A recent survey of high school students confronts us with some devastating information regarding the ability of the next generation to make wise choices. First, this survey found that 75 percent of all high school students cheat in their schoolwork and feel it is all right to do so. Second, this survey found that 30 percent of all high school seniors had shoplifted within the past thirty days. Third, 50 percent of all teenage pregnancies end in abortion. Fourth, one out of every nine teenagers is an alcoholic. Fifth, 1,100 teenagers attempt suicide every day. Sixth, one-tenth of all high school students actively engage in a homosexual life-style. Seventh--and perhaps the most shocking--65 percent of all high school students who describe themselves as Christians are sexually active.
pp. 133-34

(Rediscovering Holiness by J. I. Packer)

W. H. Auden testified to the paralyzing effect of such fear in his chilling line, "We would rather be ruined than changed."
p. 191

Psalm 51:6

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;
you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

The CONSCIENCE has been a vital part of the teaching of the apostle Paul in this epistle.

1 Timothy 1:5

Now the goal of our instruction is (divine) love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and a genuine faith (without hypocrisy).

1:19

holding faith and a good conscience, which some, having rejected (repudiated), have suffered shipwreck in their faith.

3:9

holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

When a person has fallen prey to a CAUTERIZED CONSCIENCE, he does not even realize that:

HE IS LYING,

or that HE IS A DRUNK,

or that HE IS LIVING AN IMMORAL LIFESTYLE,

or that HE IS GREEDY,

or that HE IS SELFISH.

When you have CAUTERIZED THE CONSCIENCE and CRUCIFIED CHARACTER you have KISSED CHRISTIANITY goodbye.

CHARISMA WITHOUT CHARACTER IS THE SUREST WAY TO CHAOS.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

. . . some will depart from the faith . . ., having their own conscience seared with a hot iron. --1 Tim. 4:1, 2

Dogs are intelligent, but Charles Medley of Rockford, Illinois, had some doubts about his dog Bullet. Whenever Bullet heard a squirrel, a rabbit, or a person, he would take off like a shot in the direction of that sound. It didn't matter that he was tied up. By the time he reached the end of his rope, he'd be traveling at maximum velocity, heading straight for his target. But in an instant, his strong rope would pull taut and jerk Bullet to a jarring, sprawling halt. That beagle never learned his limits.

God has built into us a moral tug on the soul whenever we go beyond what is good for us. It's called conscience. Unlike Bullet's rope, however, it doesn't stop us from going too far. Furthermore, conscience can be deadened when we violate it repeatedly, and it can be programmed with wrong information so that we may feel guilty when no real guilt exists, or we may be guilty and not feel it.

We must learn the moral limits God places on us for our own good and then choose to live within them. By reading God's Word and trusting His Spirit to teach us, our conscience becomes attuned to God's standard of right and wrong. This helps us to know our limits and to experience the freedom and joy that living within them brings.

--D.J.D.

My conscience must be well-informed
From God's own sacred Word;
For conscience may be much deformed
When standards pure are spurned.

--Fraser

CONSCIENCE CAN BE OUR COMPASS
IF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUR CHART.

(From Our Daily Bread, December 19)

MY CONSCIENCE, MY FRIEND

I myself always strive to have a conscience without
offense toward God and men. --Acts 24:16

Paul viewed his conscience as his friend. As he lived before God and his peers, he listened to this inner voice because he knew that a clear conscience is essential to a happy Christian life.

Many people, however, wrongly think of conscience as a fun-killer, a nuisance. That's how Willie in the Moon Mullins comic strip thought of it. In the first picture he is slumped in a chair in front of the TV set, his coffee cup resting on his pot belly, as he says, "You're awful quiet this morning, Mamie." She replies, "I've decided to let your conscience be your guide on your day off, Willie." The next picture shows Willie outside washing a window, the lawnmower and rake in the background. He mutters, "Every time I listen to that blame thing, I end up ruinin' my relaxin'!"

From my own experience, I would say that Willie had a better day than he would have had if he had rejected the message of his conscience.

Paul worked at keeping on good terms with his conscience. In Romans 14:23 he said that whatever is not from faith is sin. This tells us that when we do something we feel is wrong, we sin.

Let's begin seeing our conscience as our friend.

--HVL

The conscience of a Christian man
Can be a guiding light,
Befriending him through life's short span
To stand for truth and right.

--Fraser

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE IS ONE OF
THE BEST FRIENDS YOU WILL EVER HAVE.

(From Our Daily Bread, February 22)

AN INSTRUCTED CONSCIENCE

If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ. --1 Timothy 4:6

Some new Christians feel no guilt about a wrong until their conscience is instructed. For example, two young college students were living together, though they were not married.

When they received Christ as their Savior, they continued their same lifestyle until they learned that it was sinful.

They believed that it's all right to live together if you really care about each other. But when they discovered what the Bible teaches, they got married.

Some believers, on the other hand, live with continual guilt feelings for no good reason. A woman told me she is often miserable after returning from a social gathering. She said, "I wondered, should I have mentioned that about Mary and Bob? Did I tell it right? Was I too outspoken?" This woman isn't dishonest, or rude, or a gossip. She has an overly sensitive conscience. It too needs to be instructed from the Word of God.

In the early church, people with a seared conscience were emphasizing man-made rules instead of God's requirements (1 Tim. 4:2-3). Paul told Timothy to instruct believers with good doctrine so that they could differentiate (v. 6). We need that too--a conscience instructed by the truth of what the Bible says is wrong and what is not wrong. --HVL

My conscience must be well-informed
From God's own sacred Word;
For conscience may be much deformed
When standards pure are spurned.

--Fraser

CONSCIENCE IS A TRUSTWORTHY COMPASS
WHEN GOD'S WORD IS YOUR CHART.

(From Our Daily Bread, February 23)

Acts 24:16

In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.

v. 3 forbidding to marry, to abstain from foods, which God created for reception with thanksgiving by those who believe and who have experiential knowledge of the truth.

Now the apostle Paul points to their practice.

We have seen the PATTERN OF THEIR PREACHING in verse 2, and now their PRACTICE in verse 3.

Colossians 2:16-23

Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day--things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (which all refer to things destined to perish with the using)--in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

These are forerunners of the gnostics. They held to a dualism: the spirit is good and matter is evil. All appetites relating to the body are evil and should be rooted out, including normal desires for sex and food.

Hendriksen says:

Principles bear fruit. The false teachers who are here described probably accept as one of their starting principles the thesis "anything physical or sensuous is contaminating." It is not difficult to see how such a principle would in course of time cause the errorist to frown on marriage. Foods too would be condemned, though, of course, not absolutely. Fasting would be praised.

Guthrie says:

To insist on the reception of God's gifts with thanksgiving is a typically pauline theme. Such a note must never be absent from the believer's attitude, either to material or spiritual realities. As Scott rightly remarks, "The question at stake is that of our whole conception of God. Are we to think of Him as grudging us our earthly life? Or are we to find in it a continual proof of His presence and goodness?"

Lange says:

Whoso will shun false spirits must first beware of his own spirit. False teachers use for their craft hypocrisy and the appearance of sanctity. They go about in sheep's clothing and inwardly are ravening wolves.

It is a sad evidence of the blindness and pride of the sinner that when God has freed him by grace from a law that can only condemn him, he will not rest until he has again put himself under the yoke of a law fashioned by himself. So eager are we to build up a righteousness of our own before God, so loath simply to be blessed by free grace; self-righteousness always remains the fond idol of the natural man, nor does he perceive that he must thus fall into new and worse unrighteousness.

(Success, Motivation, and the Scriptures by William H. Cook)

A spinster was getting up in years, and still she had no boyfriends. One of her friends found her standing beside a well, sobbing her heart out. "Why are you crying?"

"Well, I saw this well and just got to thinking. One day I might get asked for a date. Then I might really like the fellow and we might get engaged. After that we might get married. Then we might buy that house right over there. Then someday we might have children, and they might play out here in this field. One of our kids might come over here to look and he might lean over too far and fall in the well. Boo hoo, Boo hoo, Boo hoo."

p. 63

STUFFED

"One night I dreamed I ate a five-pound marshmallow, and when I woke up the next morning my pillow was gone."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

WHEN DO WE EAT?

She: "It's only six o'clock. I told you to come after dinner."

He: "That's what I came after."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

OVERTAXED

Taxpayer: "I'm so broke after paying my income tax that I'm being supported by an orphan in Vietnam."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

(The Grace Awakening by Charles R. Swindoll)

"[The] moralizing and legalizing of the Gospel of God's grace is a dull heresy peddled to disappointed people who are angry because they have not received what they had no good reason to expect."

--Richard J. Neuhaus

p. XVII

Legalism requires that we all be alike, unified in convictions and uniform in appearance, to which I say, "Let me out!" Grace finds pleasure in differences, encourages individuality, smiles on variety, and leaves plenty of room for disagreement. Remember, it releases others and lets them be, to which I say, "Let me in!" I agree with and often quote the old saying, "Comparisons are odious." Not until we put a stop to them will horizontal grace flourish in the body.

p. 156

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

It is all part of what God created. It is to be received. It is for the partaking.

1 Timothy 6:17

To those who are wealthy in the present age (now generation), charge them not to be proud, neither to have their hope set upon the uncertainty of wealth, but upon God the one who is continually providing us all things abundantly for [our] enjoyment.

(A Pretty Good Person: What It Takes to Live with Courage,
Gratitude and Integrity by Lewis B. Smedes)

Desire is a good friend; desire lights fires in our bellies. It makes us itch for what we've never had enough of, hunger for something better than we have ever tasted, thirst for living waters we've never drunk. Desire adds imagination to our wills and heat to our intentions. T. S. Eliot said, "God exults when a [person] comes through with a wish of his own," and I think he was right.

We need to control desire for the same reason we need to control a thoroughbred. If you want an exciting run for your money, you need the thoroughbred's desire; but if you don't control him you'll never win a race. A person with no desire plods the same route every day, like a working nag. But who wants to be a sparkless plug? Lose the desire, and we lose the fun of living.

But, out of control, desire is trouble.

p. 96

(Simple Faith by Charles R. Swindoll)

Go back three spaces on your monotony board of religious performance. Go back and look at how you have complicated what God said so simply. What is required? Slow down and read the list aloud:

- o To do justice
 - o To love kindness
 - o To walk humbly with your God
- Period.

p. 120

(Looking Back, Moving On: Applying Biblical Principles of
Freedom to Your Life by Boyd Luter)

Frankly, I seriously doubt that any of the Jewish legalists "saw the light" as a result of Paul's argument in this passage. That would have been wonderful, but legalism is an extremely tough nut to crack, especially in tandem with its blind cousin denial. Because legalists are incredibly farsighted (they can see everyone else's problems but not their own), when they team up with deniers on the subject of internal spiritual and emotional reality it becomes a "blind leading the blind" situation.

pp. 116-17

(You Can Make a Difference by Gary R. Collins)

Visionary difference makers are people of prayer, action, perseverance, and excitement--individuals who radiate zeal and a sense of purpose. But visionaries are not always high-profile people who are determined to change the world. p. 247

The 2 KEYS TO VICTORY OVER SATAN in this verse are in the last phrases. These people are those:

1. "WHO BELIEVE,"
2. "WHO HAVE EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH."

These are the ones who are going to be able to be freed from the shackles of performance and legalism and enter into a relationship of grace with the Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 4 Because every created thing of God is good, and nothing is to be thrown away if it is received with thanksgiving.

Here Paul states the reason for his opposition to these teachers who forbid marriage and who teach abstinence from certain foods:

"EVERY CREATED THING OF GOD IS GOOD, AND NOTHING IS TO BE THROWN AWAY IF IT IS RECEIVED WITH THANKSGIVING."

Genesis 1:21

So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Romans 14:14

I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

1 Corinthians 10:30, 31

If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks? Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Barnes says:

It is good in its place; good for the purpose for which he made it. But it should not be inferred that a thing which is poisonous in its nature is good for food, because it is a creation of God. It is good only in its place, and for the ends for which he intended it. Nor should it be inferred that what God has made is necessarily good after it has been perverted by man. As God made it originally, it might have been used without injury.
p. 164

Lange says:

All that God made is in itself good; only through man's distrust it becomes evil. The Christian knows how to sanctify even his own pleasures--the unholy and the holy enjoyment of the gifts of God--the contradiction of all mere outward restraints imposed by man to the witness of the revelation of God in Christ.

Genesis 1:31

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

Adultery and gluttony is an abuse. We are rather to receive things with thanksgiving and not with taboos.

(Success, Motivation, and the Scriptures by William H. Cook)

A cartoon showed a man and a woman at a counter marked "Educational Toys." A clerk was showing them a box filled with odd-shaped fragments. "It's designed to prepare children for today's complex world. No matter how they put it together, it doesn't come out right."
p. 113

Demarest says:

Instead of laying our discoveries one by one on the altar of God to be used for His love and goodness in the world, we have chosen to use them as though they were ours, and we have brought God's good creation to the brink of destruction. It may be that we have just about completed the new tower of Babel only to discover that it doesn't reach God after all. Such is the inevitable product of apostasy. At whatever level it occurs, it is time for a new reformation, it is time for Christians to recover the goodness of all God's creation.

The last phrase in verse 4 says:

"IF IT IS RECEIVED WITH THANKSGIVING."

We certainly have a vindication for grace at meals at this point.

v. 5 For it is consecrated through the word of God and prayer.

Paul is now stating the reason for the expression of thanksgiving mentioned in verse 4. The word "CONSECRATED" is in the emphatic position, stated first in the Greek sentence.

"FOR IT IS CONSECRATED THROUGH":

1. "THE WORD OF GOD,"
2. "PRAYER."

1 Samuel 9:13

As soon as you enter the town, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not begin eating until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward, those who are invited will eat. Go up now; you should find him about this time.

Matthew 14:19

And ordering the multitudes to recline on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave to the multitudes,

Acts 27:35

And having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all; and he broke it and began to eat.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Ordinary becomes extraordinary as they are consecrated by the word and prayer. In the light of the scriptures a Christian recognizes God's good hand behind the things provided and offers thanksgiving to the Lord. In this way the ordinary things, so easily taken for granted, become sanctified as occasions for worship and praise.

These 2 things also form the pattern for protection against a satanic victory. As we are effective to use the word of God in prayer, we will continue to experience God's victory in our pursuit of the path of leadership.

Hiebert says:

With the opening "for" of verse 5, Paul explains what Christian thanksgiving does as these things are thankfully received. They are sanctified through the word of God in prayer. Thanksgiving is not a magical formula which changes the nature of these things but it gives a sacred value to them as gifts whose source might otherwise be overlooked. The additional clause "through the word of God in prayer" defines the two-fold sanctifying medium. By "the word of God," Paul may mean that the scriptures justify our use of these things by direct sanction. Others think the reference is to the use of scriptural language in the expression of our thanks. "Prayer" translated "intercessions" in 2:1 denotes prayer as free and open speech with God. The reference is not to any specific prayer formula but rather to that constant habit of referring everything to God as "the giver of every good and perfect gift."

Barclay says:

It is Christian teaching that the true Christian does not serve God by enslaving himself with rules and regulations and insulting God's creation. He serves God by gratefully accepting God's good gifts, and remembering that he lives in a world where God made all things well, and by never forgetting to share God's gifts with others, and to offer God the thanks of his heart for them.

DO YOU EAT HOLY FOOD?

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving (v. 4).

Two men grew up in rural America side by side. One sold his farm and became a successful businessman. He invited his friend from the farm to dine with him. The farmer bowed his head and thanked God for his food. His friend remarked, "We don't do that."

"I also have some at my place who don't pray before eating," said the farmer.

"Oh," said his friend, "they must be the enlightened ones; who are they?"

"My pigs," replied his friend.

Our giving of thanks to God for our daily food is more than reciting memorized words. It acknowledges God as the giver.

Whatever our food may be, plain or exquisite, if it is received with a thankful heart, it can be "holy food." In a world where hunger and famine strikes millions, the Christian knows that his thanksgiving also calls for giving. Only as we share can the food we eat remain "holy food."

Father in heaven, giver of every good and perfect gift, give me a thankful heart with which to receive--and share--your blessings. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

(From Our Daily Bread, January 10)

(Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks
by Steve Brown)

Did you hear about the archbishop who went to the cathedral for his evening devotions? He knelt down at the foot of the chancel steps and prayed, "Oh, God . . ." A voice said, "Yes, what is it?"

They found the archbishop the next morning. He had died of a coronary.
p. 182

(Looking Back, Moving On: Applying Biblical Principles of
Freedom to Your Life by Boyd Luter)

Many of us have bought an understanding of prayer as some kind of 800 number to God for the purpose of ordering whatever we want, free of charge.

With this prevailing mentality, it's no wonder that some pragmatic people tend to give up on prayer when they don't see immediate dividends from their time investment.
p. 108

However, when you're dialing 911 in the middle of a crisis situation, you don't want to be put on hold or told to find help elsewhere. So, I'm sure Paul was hardly elated when he cried out in pain repeatedly to the Lord and the answer kept coming back, "I'm not going to take the thorn away, Paul. It will teach you invaluable lessons about My power and grace." But God did answer Paul by telling him that the thorn was tolerable because he could spell spiritual "relief" in the midst of painful circumstances G-R-A-C-E.
p. 109

(Growing More Like Jesus by Richard L. Strauss)

A survey among evangelical Christians revealed that the average layman spends about four minutes a day in prayer, including grace before meals. No wonder we don't have time to do what needs to be done.
p. 79

Billy Graham suggested that the three most important elements in preparing for a crusade are: first, prayer; second, prayer; and third, prayer. Jesus prayed in preparation for spiritual service, and we must too if we want our service to count for eternity.
p. 83

Andrew Murray, one of the world's great men of prayer, wrote, "Christlike praying in secret will be the secret of Christlike living in public." If you want to be like Jesus, begin by praying.
p. 85

If we intend to grow in Christ's likeness, we too will need to be people of the Word, committed to building it into our lives, trusting it fully, obeying it unreservedly, and using it faithfully to overcome temptation.
p. 32

Victory over our enemy is only going to come as we become increasingly:

PEOPLE OF THE WORD,

AND PEOPLE WHO PRAY.

(Where Does a Mother Go to Resign? by Barbara Johnson)

I grew up with a lot of scripture in me because it was drilled into me that we had to hide it away to have a big reserve in times of trouble. Knowing the scripture probably was the greatest strength which carried me through the traumas. I had a lot of deposits in my spiritual bank, and the resources from the memory work my parents had built into me as a child were great.
p. 150

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: It is prophetic and pathetic what some people will be swayed to believe.

LESSON #2: Some will fall away and pay attention to seducing spirits.

LESSON #3: Satan is the mastermind behind all of these false teachers.

LESSON #4: "A Leader Is One of Satan's Primary Targets."

LESSON #5: Charisma without character is the surest way to chaos.

LESSON #6: When you have cauterized the conscience and crucified character, you have kissed Christianity goodbye.

LESSON #7: A person who has cauterized his conscience does not even know when he is a liar, a drunk, immoral, greedy, or selfish.

LESSON #8: Everything God has created is good and nothing is to be thrown away.

LESSON #9: Everything is consecrated through the word of God and prayer.

LESSON #10: The 6 keys to victory over Satan are:

1. WEAR YOUR ARMOR
2. PRAY
3. STUDY THE SCRIPTURES
4. MEMORIZE THE SCRIPTURES
5. FOCUS ON OBEDIENCE
6. RUN TO ACCOUNTABILITY

LOOKING FOR THE ESCAPE FROM SIN

Once we are aware that temptation will come and that we're not alone in it, we can draw strength from Paul's encouragement to rely on God's faithfulness.

The promise of 1 Cor. 10:13 is vital for any believer who wants to gain the victory over temptation. The first step is to be alert, realizing that temptation is inevitable, and the second is to not lose hope, knowing that God will be with us. Based on His faithfulness, we can be sure that the temptation will be within the limits of what we can stand. If God's sovereignty does not extend over the temptations we face, then all His promises are meaningless.

We should then face temptation boldly with the assurance that by His grace we can overcome it. God's faithfulness is also demonstrated in His leading us through temptations and providing a way out. Scripture describes several possible escape routes:

(1) Running away--Fleeing is not cowardly, whether it involves changing activities, mentally running away, or physically leaving the source of temptation.

(2) Resisting--The key here is single-mindedness. If you allow no foothold of doubt, the devil will leave.

(3) Rejoicing in the Lord--when tempted to despair the best defense is to sing and pray.

(4) Confronting it head-on--the best weapon we have in this battle is quoting Scripture to Satan just as Jesus did.

(5) Replacing evil with good--In some cases the best defense is to substitute a different activity or thought-pattern. For this to work, the substitute must be something pleasant that takes you away from the temptation, such as praise music, but you have to give it time to work.

(6) Making yourself accountable--Since others experience the same temptations, they can offer support and encouragement when you need it, but in order for that to happen you have to confess your sins as Scripture says. One of Satan's most effective tactics is convincing Christians that they shouldn't confess their sins because they will lose the respect of others.

(7) Calling on the Lord--God promises to answer when we pray for an escape. However, if you choose to sow wild oats and then ask for a crop failure, you can't expect God to honor that request!

"Looking for the escape from sin" by Mark Littleton.
Charisma & Christian Life, Oct 1991. Pages 76-82.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

(The Set of the Sail by A. W. Tozer)

The man God honors will be humble, self-effacing, self-sacrificing, modest, clean living, free from the love of money, eager to promote the honor of God and just as eager to disclaim any credit or praise on his own part. His financial accounts will bear inspection, his ethical standards will be high and his personal life above reproach.
p. 26

(Rediscovering Holiness by J. I. Packer)

Clearer perceptions of God's purity have a reflex effect, as if that purity were a light shining into the recesses of the self and showing up all that has been lurking in the dark there. As a result, Christians come to see in themselves sinful motives and attitudes, failures, shortcomings, and deficiencies, of which they were unaware before, simply because until now their consciences had not assessed their conduct by so bright a light from God. The things they see include:

- o stubborn habits of sin;
 - o chronic patterns of moral evasion;
 - o weaknesses of moral character;
 - o cravings that are really vicious;
 - o attitudes that are really arrogant;
 - o behavioral flaws due to temperament;
 - o inclinations to self-aggrandizement, self-indulgence, and self-pity;
 - o built-in self-protectiveness because of past hurts;
 - o moral quirks due to scars of abuse and layers of fear.
- p. 220

(To the End of the Race by George McDaniel Cole)

Today

With every rising of the Sun
Think of [your] life as just begun.

The Past has cancelled and buried deep
All Yesterdays. There let them sleep.

Concern yourself with but Today.
Grasp it, and teach it to obey

Your will and plan. Since time began
Today has been the friend of man.

You and Today! A soul sublime
And the great heritage of time.

With God Himself to bind the twain,
Go forth, brave heart! Attain! Attain!

p. 74

(Growing More Like Jesus by Richard L. Strauss)

Lord, I want only Your will for my life. I want You to do anything You please with me. Keep me active, or set me aside. Permit me this opportunity, or close the door. Give me prosperity, or give me privation. Allow me health, or put me on a bed of suffering. Let me live, or take me home.

I will accept any circumstance joyfully from Your gracious hand. I will thank You for whatever You allow to invade my life, and I will endeavor to get to know You better through whatever happens." Then we will enjoy our Savior's perfect peace.

p. 113

(Lincoln on Leadership: Executive Strategies for Tough Times
by Donald T. Phillips)

He wanted them all to be like the dog in one of his favorite anecdotes:

A man . . . had a small bull-terrier that could whip all the dogs of the neighborhood. The owner of a large dog which the terrier had whipped asked the owner of the terrier how it happened that the terrier whipped every dog he encountered. "That," said the owner of the terrier, "is no mystery to me; your dog and other dogs get half through a fight before they are ready; now, my dog is always mad!"

Contemporary corporate executives constantly worry about how to keep a fire lit under their employees. They must continually motivate, cajole, and persuade. But no one should have to worry about lighting a fire under great leaders. They don't need it if they are like Lincoln. His fire was always burning.
p. 112

(Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks
by Steve Brown)

But we can convey to pagans what C. S. Lewis is reported to have said: "When Christ returns, how awful to know that all of it was true, and that it is too late to do anything about it."
p. 241

In the words of C. S. Lewis, "Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you will get neither."
p. 245

Someone told me about two planes landing at the Jackson, Mississippi, airport. The tower had radioed to Delta flight 202 that they were cleared for landing on runway B. Then the controller told the pilot of Eastern flight 467 that he was also cleared to land on runway B. The Delta pilot heard the transmission and radioed back to the tower: "Hey, wait a minute, you just told Delta flight 202 and Eastern flight 467 to land on the same runway." The tower was dead silent. Finally, the controller's voice came on the air: "Well, yeah, y'all be careful now."

That's what Christians are telling the world: "You're headed on a collision course of death and destruction. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and there is no way to get to the Father except through Him. Don't land on any other runway. Evil will try to deceive you, but don't listen. If you do, you'll crash and burn."
pp. 71-72

(Success, Motivation, and the Scriptures by William H. Cook)

An unknown author cautioned:

On the plains of hesitation,
Lie the bleached bones of thousands,
Who, on the very threshold of victory,
Sat down to rest,
And while resting, died.

p. 101

STUDY #9 - 1 Timothy 4:1-5

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

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