

## 2 CORINTHIANS, PART II

### STUDY NUMBER TWELVE

2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1

#### TEXT:

- v. 11 Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide.
- v. 12 You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.
- v. 13 Widen your hearts in the same way in exchange --- I am speaking as to children, open wide also to us.
- v. 14 Stop being bound together with unbelievers; for what have righteousness and lawlessness in common, or what fellowship has light with darkness?
- v. 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?
- v. 16 Or what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God and they shall be My people.
- v. 17 Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And stop touching that which is unclean; and I will welcome you.
- v. 18 And I will be to you a father, and you shall be sons and daughters to me," says the Lord Almighty.

#### Chapter Seven:

- v. 1 Therefore having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of body and spirit, bringing about holiness in the fear of God.

#### INTRODUCTION:

(How to really love your child by Dr. Ross Campbell)

The foundation of a solid relationship with our child is unconditional love. Only that type of love relationship can assure a child's growth to his full and total potential. Only this foundation of unconditional love can assure prevention of problems such as feelings of resentment, being unloved, guilt, fear, insecurity.

We can be confident that a child is correctly disciplined only if our primary relationship with him is one of unconditional love it is not possible to understand a child, his behavior, or to know how to deal with misbehavior.

Unconditional love can be viewed as a guiding light in child rearing. Without it, we parents will be operating in the dark with no daily landmarks to tell us where we are and what we should do regarding our child. With it, we have indicators of where we are, where the child is, and what to do in all areas, including discipline. Only with this foundation do we have a cornerstone on which to build our expertise in guiding our child

and filling his needs on a daily basis. Without a foundation of unconditional love, parenting is a confusing and frustrating burden.  
p. 29

Another critical concept for parents to understand is that each child has an emotional tank. This tank is figurative, of course, but very real. Each child has certain emotional needs, and whether these emotional needs are met (through love, understanding, discipline,, etc) determines many things. First of all, how a child feels: whether he is content, angry, depressed, or joyful. Secondly, it affects his behavior: whether he is obedient, disobedient, whiny, perky, playful, or withdrawn. Naturally, the fuller the tank, the more positive the feelings and the better the behavior.

At this point let me make one of the most important statements in this book. Only if the emotional tank is full, can a child be expected to be at his best or to do his best. And whose responsibility is it to keep that emotional tank full? You guessed it, the parents'. A child's behavior indicates the status of the tank. Later we'll talk about how to fill the tank, but now let's understand that this tank has got to be kept full and only we parents can really do it. Only if the tank is kept full, can a child really be happy, reach his potential, and respond appropriately to discipline.  
pp. 32-33

conveying love to a child can be broadly classified into four areas: eye contact, physical contact, focused attention, and discipline. Each area is just as crucial as the other. Many parents (and authorities) will focus on one or two areas and neglect the others. The area most overemphasized today, to the exclusion of the rest, is discipline.  
p. 36

(Discipline Them, Love Them by Betty N. Chase)

Loving your child involves all four of the following concepts:

BE LOYAL TO YOUR CHILD NO MATTER WHAT THE COST.  
ALWAYS BELIEVE IN YOUR CHILD.  
ALWAYS EXPECT THE BEST OF YOUR CHILD.  
ALWAYS PERSEVERE NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOUR LOVE IS TESTED.

p. 96

(Help, I'm having a Baby by H. Norman Wright and Marvin Inmon)

#### Because God Loves Me A Paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13

Because God loves me He is slow to lose patience with me.  
Because God loves me He takes the circumstances of my life and uses them in a constructive way for my growth.  
Because God loves me He does not treat me as an object to be possessed and manipulated.

Because God loves me He has no need to impress me with how great and powerful He is because He is God nor does He belittle me as His child in order to show me how important He is.

Because God loves me He is for me. He wants to see me mature and develop in His love. Because God loves me He does not send down His wrath on every little mistake I make -- - of which there are many.

Because God loves me He does not keep score of all my sins and then beat me over the head with them whenever He gets the chance.

Because God loves me He is deeply grieved when I do not walk in the ways that please Him because He sees this as evidence that I don't trust Him and love Him as I should.

Because God loves me He rejoices when I experience His power and strength and stand up under the pressures of life for His Name's sake.

Because God loves me He keeps on working patiently with me even when I feel like giving up and can't see why He doesn't give up with me, too.

Because God loves me He keeps on trusting me when at times I don't even trust myself.

Because God loves me He never says there is no hope for me; rather, He patiently works with me, loves me and disciplines me in such a way that it is hard for me to understand the depth of His concern for me.

Because God loves me He never forsakes me even though many of my friends might.

Because God loves me He stands with me when I have reached the rock bottom of despair, when I see the real me and compare that with His righteousness, holiness, beauty and love. It is at a moment like this that I can really believe that God loves me.

Yes, the greatest of all gifts is God's perfect love!

pp. 149-50

## **Heaven**

They were 95 years old, and had been married for sixty years. Though they were far from rich, they managed to get by because they watched their pennies. Though not young, they were both in very good health, largely due to the wife's insistence on healthy foods and exercise for the last 2 decades.

One day, their good health didn't help when they went on a rare vacation and their plane unfortunately crashed, sending them off to Heaven.

They reached the pearly gates, and St. Peter escorted them inside. He took them to a beautiful mansion, furnished in gold and fine silks, with a fully stocked kitchen and a waterfall in the master bath. A maid could be seen hanging their favorite clothes in the closet. They gasped in astonishment when he said, "Welcome to Heaven. This will be your home now."

The old man asked Peter how much all this was going to cost. "Why nothing," Peter replied; "remember, this is your reward in Heaven."

The old man looked out the window and right there he saw a championship golf course, finer and more beautiful than any ever-built on Earth. "What are the greens fees?" grumbled the old man.

"This is heaven," St. Peter replied. "You can play for free, every day, any time of day you want."

Next they went to the clubhouse and saw the lavish buffet lunch, with every imaginable cuisine laid out before them, from seafood to steaks to exotic deserts, free flowing beverages. "Don't even ask," said St. Peter to the man. "This is Heaven, it is all free for you to enjoy."

The old man looked around and glanced nervously at his wife. "Well, where are the low fat and low cholesterol foods, and the decaffeinated tea?" he asked.

"That's the best part," St. Peter replied. "You can eat and drink as much as you like of whatever you like, and you will never get fat or sick. This is Heaven!"

The old man inquired, "No gym to work out at?"

"Not unless you want to," was the answer.

"No testing my sugar or blood pressure or..."

"Never again. All you do here is enjoy yourself."

The old man glared at his wife and said, "You and your bran muffins. We could have been here twenty five years ago."

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. The various appliances of old age, particularly canes, walkers and wheelchairs, unfailingly intrigued her. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"

## Opinions

On the first day of school, a first-grader handed his teacher a Note from his mother. The note read, "The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents."

Cowboy Poetry      599-01

The fall run, of course, is a wreck and makes a wreck out of all hands. Everyone, though, eventually gets back to normal – except the boss:

He's been checked into a clinic where they put 'im every year.  
To recover and rejuvenate and let his conscience clear.  
Sort of Jiffy Lube for managers who've lost their sense of place,  
Where they git their eyes reglittered and their memory erased!

p. 101

W. Glyn Evans:

God leads me not in a comfortable way, but in a right way. And the Lord's right way means putting me through experiences that most clearly produce His Son's image in me, many of which will make no sense. Therefore, I must walk like a blind man, trusting the hand and heart of my heavenly Father.

If only I could see the finished product, as God now sees it, I would spend the rest of my days in unceasing, overwhelming praise. I would sing, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." Oh, let me begin, and continue that song by faith!"

(On Being Family by Ray Anderson and Dennis Guernsey)

We learn to identify our neighbor by recognizing the one who limits our own being by his or her own presence within the circle of our existence. "I do love mankind," protest Lucy in the Peanuts comic strip, "it's people I can't stand!"

In our last study with the apostle, he was sharing with us the story of the ministry.

The passage concluded with nine different contrasts, and we had the last three of these in verse 10:

7. As sorrowful yet always rejoicing, 8. as poor yet making many rich, 9. as having nothing yet possessing all things.

Nothing could affect the apostle's internal joy, although there were times when he was sorrowful.

(Choosing Plan A in a Plan B World by Jerry White)

This brings us to Paul's puzzling phrase: "as sorrowful yet always rejoicing" (2 Corinthians 6:10). Such opposite emotions --- sorrow and joy. Can they coexist? Only for a Christian. "Sorrowful" describes Paul's condition at the time of writing --- a product of his circumstances. "Always rejoicing" reflects a decision of his mind --- a determined constant of Paul's life. He chose to rejoice, regardless of his circumstances.

p. 43

“AS POOR YET MAKING MANY RICH” Paul saw himself as a servant who was constantly giving to others.

“AS HAVING NOTHING YET POSSESSING ALL THINGS” He was living for that which is eternal rather than that which is temporal.

As we come to our passage under consideration in this study, the apostle turns from the description of himself in the ministry to the Corinthians once again.

v. 11 Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide.

Here Paul makes reference to the mouth and the heart. He is here talking about words and emotions. His words have been honest communication. His emotions have expressed CARES< COMPASSION, and CONCERN.

“OUR MOUTH HAS SPOKEN FREELY” In other words, we have shared openly and been vulnerable and transparent before you.

We would ask ourselves the question: What would be the OPPOSITE of this? And that of course would be:

Speaking with measured restraint careful about words because they could ultimately be used against us.

The apostle claims before the Corinthians to be a man who is transparent in LIFE and LIP.

“OUR MOUTH HAS SPOKEN FREELY TO YOU, O CORINTHIANS, OUR HEART IS OPENED WIDE.” This means there are no hidden motives, no bitterness, no resentment.

What would be the OPPOSITE? It would be a heart that is closed.

Paul says here in this 11<sup>th</sup> verse: It's not love on the outside and hate on the inside. It is a free and open relationship on Paul's side. He has shared openly and has freely let his love flow to them.

(Expository Studies in 2 Corinthians: Power Out of Weakness by Ray C. Stedman)

That Paul loved these Corinthians is shown by the unmistakable marks of love: “our mouth is open...our heart is wide.” The open mouth is a symbol of full communication. He has opened himself to them; he had hidden nothing. Now he wants them to love him back in the same way --- not for his benefit but for theirs.

“Our heart is wide,” he says. He means there is no favoritism; he included the whole congregation, not merely loving the nice people among them. He loved them all -- - the difficult ones, the ones who were struggling, the hard-to-get-along-with ones. He

demanded that no one meet a certain qualification before he loved them. He accepted them as people. Though he knew their struggles, weaknesses, failures and resistance, still he loved them.

p. 129

v. 12 You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.

There is a negative and a positive here in this verse to demonstrate the reason for the strain in their relationship.

Negatively: “You are not restrained by us”

But on the other hand:

Positively: “you are restrained in your own affections.”

We are not at fault for the strained relationship. We are not at fault for your lack of love toward us.

#### Acts 24:16

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

Paul basically is telling the Corinthians that the ball is in their court, that they don't love them like they should.

#### 1 Peter 1:22

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

How can we be restrained in our affections? I came up with the three S's:

1. SELFISHNESS
2. SCARS from past experiences
3. SIN – Sins of bitterness, hate, unforgiving spirit, jealousy, envy, false assumptions.

These things keep us restrained in our affections.

We cannot truly and freely love others until we learn how first to love ourselves. For many, this is the problem.

(Iceman by Ron Rearick with Doug Murren)

I had one desperate cry I kept burying deeper and deeper in my heart: I wanted so desperately to be loved. But the more trouble I got into, the less Pop would have to do with me. Mom was loving enough towards me --- even more so, it seemed, when I got into trouble. However, a teenage boy hungers to hear his dad say, "I love you, Son."  
p. 51

(The Trauma of Transparency by J. Grant Howard)

Every human being has this deeply rooted tendency to find the focus of life in himself, to trust himself, to love himself more than others. This is what is at the root of all our problems --- even our communication problems. We hide and hurl because we are proud, sinful, self-centered persons.  
p. 40

We hurl in a variety of ways. We act as judge and jury and condemn others. We project our problems on those who live with us. We ridicule. We dominate. We are dogmatic. We are sarcastic, obnoxious, overbearing. We pronounce the final word, when we have no reason nor right to. We cut a person down neatly with a word of criticism. To his face. Or behind his back. We nitpick at someone else's behavior patterns and often fail to acknowledge our own weaknesses. We say, "You never do anything right. You always forget." "Never" and "always" are super-sharp, expertly-barbed arrows from the hurler's communication quiver. We blame God. We blame others. We even blame ourselves.  
p. 32

v. 13 Widen your hearts in the same way in exchange --- I am speaking as to children, open wide also to us.

In these verses we are considering together, the apostle has a series of four commands. The first command has to do with love or compassion. It has to do with affections, for "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

"WIDEN YOUR HEARTS IN THE SAME WAY IN EXCHANGE --- I AM SPEAKING AS TO CHILDREN, OPEN WIDE ALSO TO US." --- even as we have also opened wide our hearts to you.

Do what we have done. Follow our example.

The apostle wants the Corinthians to welcome him back into fellowship, to love him and accept him.

Plummer handles verses 11-13 in the following way:

O men of Corinth, my lips are unlocked to tell you everything about myself. My heart stands wide open to receive you and your confidences. There's no restraint in my feeling toward you. The restraint is in your own affections. But love



should awaken love in return. I appeal to you as my children, let your hearts also be opened wide to receive me.

(How to Be a People-Helper by Dr. Gary Collins)

Many of us are probably guilty of what has been called the gold rush syndrome. In gold-rush the prospector didn't dare stop to help another man who might be having trouble. To do so was to lose time, and then someone else, maybe even the man stopped to help, might beat him out for the best claim. The result was a highly individualized, self-centered, private existence. Like the men who passed by the wounded traveler before the Good Samaritan came along, we hurry on through life, engrossed in our own little worlds and perhaps bearing our own burdens. We push toward our own goals and fail to realize that to help another person has great therapeutic value for ourselves. This isn't the only solution to our problems, but when we help somebody else we often get the greatest benefit ourselves.

p. 156

(Caring Enough to Confront by David Augsberger)

Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher, put this pointedly, saying, "Pride and memory had an argument. Memory said, 'It happened thus and so!' Pride replied, 'Oh, but it couldn't have been like that!' and memory gave in."

p. 80

Repentant vulnerability initiates, I discover, the most consistently beautiful and meaningful experiences in human relationships. People are lovable when vulnerable. People are believable when vulnerable.

People come to life as real, living, breathing, hurting, feeling, laughing, singing, growing beings when they are vulnerable.

p. 105

There is an inviolable principle of human nature: What you really love will ultimately be revealed in your relationships.

(Choosing Plan A in a Plan B World by Jerry White)

Perhaps something similar happened in your courtship. Night after night, day after day for weeks on end you spent your spare time with your loved one --- at great cost. Hobbies languished. Exercise programs floundered. Other friendships were put on hold. Jobs suffered. Your great desire to be together made the sacrifices of no consequence. To say it involved "cost" would be ridiculous. You wanted the relationship more than anything else. Yet an outside observer might not see the great cost you paid in that courtship.

p. 23

Paul is challenging the Corinthians by saying, Come on! Open up your hearts and let your love for us flow freely. They are obviously stifling the fruitage of the Spirit in their lives if their love has become selective.

Reuben Welch in his book We Really Do Need Each Other says,

That deadly spirit of judgment is indeed the plague. But love,  
Jesus' kind of love,  
has the releasing affirming power to stay the plague and heal our lives.

What a handle ---  
I love you  
I release you  
I will not judge you.

We really do need each other.  
All this talk about love is not something ethereal and distant.

It has handles that reach right down to where we are. Let's pray a moment together.

Lord Jesus, help us to learn to show love.  
Help us to take time to listen  
to give our attention to the ones around us  
to be more aware of the sensitivities of others.  
Help us to see people as people ---  
as real live people with feelings and concerns that are just like ours.

Help us Lord not to judge and help us not to allow our cynicism to deprive others of joy. Teach us, Lord to love in deed and in spirit.

Amen.  
pp. 1-3

(Love Is Now by Peter E. Gillquist)

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.  
Where there is hatred let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

pp. 157-58

- v. 14 Stop being bound together with unbelievers; for what have righteousness and lawlessness in common, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

COMMAND #1 says: "WIDEN HEARTS IN THE SAME WAY IN EXCHANGE"

COMMAND #2 says: "STOP BEING BOUND TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS"

The fruition of wrong love will be wrong commitments in relationships. Remember what we said earlier: what you really love will ultimately be revealed in your relationships.

Whereas in command #1 we are concerned about AFFECTIONS and COMPASSION,  
In command #2 we are concerned about ASSOCIATIONS and COMPANIONSHIP.

Plummer calls this section: "A warning against intimacy with the heathen."

"STOP BEING BOUND TOGETHER" The question that comes before us is: What does this mean?

The word Paul chooses to use in the Greek text is the word that could be translated "YOKED."

#### Deut. 11:16

Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them.

#### Deut. 22:10

Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together.

When our love flows in wrong channels, we end up with friendships, commitments, and associates that are not a part of God's ultimate plan for our lives.

It is really good for us to remember that what we love and who we spend our time with will have a powerful influence on the direction of our lives.

#### 1 Cor. 15:33

Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

The focus in the passage is on the false teachers with whom the Corinthians have had some associations and have experienced companionship with them.

(II Corinthians by J. Vernon McGee)

We come now to an important passage of Scripture. It is a section which has been often abused and misinterpreted. Some folk try to make it hard as nails, unyielding and unloving. Yet what Paul is saying here is coming from the tender heart of a man whose heart was almost breaking because of his great concern for the Corinthian believers.  
p. 80

(The Quest for Character by Charles R. Swindoll)

So be on guard! When push comes to shove, think independently. Think biblically. Do everything possible to lead with your head rather than your feelings. If you fail to do this, you'll lose your ethical compass somewhere between longing to be liked and desiring to do what is right.

"Do not be misled," warns the apostle who often stood alone, "Bad company corrupts good character" (1 Corinthians 15:33 NIV). Group numbing has the possibility of hovering almost indefinitely in a conscienceless and evil holding pattern.

You question that? Consider Jonestown. Or Watergate. Or the LSD experiments conducted by the CIA. Or the Holocaust. Or the Inquisition. Or the group that screamed, "Crucify Him."

Tell me, is some group numbing you?  
p. 34

(William Barclay: A Spiritual Autobiography by William Barclay)

Surely the greatest kind of friendship is when you can differ with some one to the point of violence and yet remain united in heart.  
p. 9

(The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians by Charles R. Erdman)

Paul enforces his warning by five argumentative questions, designed to show how unnatural, how incongruous, how unsafe such alliances should be considered.

The first four questions are united in pairs. The fifth, which mounts to the highest designation of Christian holiness, stands alone.  
p. 75

Paul follows his second command with a reason --- a reason that is stated in a series of five questions.

THE COMMAND: “Stop being bound together with unbelievers”

THE REASON: “For what have righteousness and lawlessness in common, or what fellowship has light with darkness?”

The questions continue on down through to verse 16.

These five questions have to do with:

1. OUR DEEDS
2. OUR DESTINY
3. OUR DECISION
4. OUR DECLARATION
5. OUR DEVOTION

Let's look at each of them a little more closely:

QUESTION #1: “FOR WHAT HAVE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LAWLESSNESS IN COMMON?”

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Isaiah 64:6

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;

Romans 1:16-18

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.” For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

1 John 3:4

Every one who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

The first question focuses upon our deeds.

The second question is in the next phrase:

QUESTION #2:      “OR WHAT FELLOWSHIP HAS LIGHT WITH DARKNESS?”

Whereas the first focus is on DEEDS, the second is upon DESTINY.

The ultimate domain of those who refuse to receive Jesus Christ as Savior; their destiny will be outer darkness.

Isaiah 9:2

The people walking in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
On those living in the land of the shadow of death  
A light has dawned.

Jesus called himself “the light of the world.”

John 3:19-21

“And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

(Close to His Majesty by David C. Needham with Larry Libby)

Yet as I stood by the seashore that night so many years ago, I could have chosen to stand with my back to the sea. I could have said, “But God, it’s so dark!” And all the while missing the glory. God would say to me, “Turn around! I’m looking toward you; why aren’t you looking toward Me?”

Turn around! That’s exactly what repentance is. It’s changing the direction of your mind --- your focus. It’s realigning your thoughts to look His way. How often have we found ourselves overwhelmed by the darkness of our circumstances when all the glory of God is shining on our backs!

Drink in His forgiveness. Affirm His love before all the principalities and powers of the universe. Rest in His presence. Fill your heart with His loving gaze. God’s face is your way --- and always will be.

p. 60

The first two questions have had to do with our DEEDS and our DESTINY.

v. 15    Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

The third question has to do with a decision that we must make:

QUESTION #3:      “OR WHA HARMONY HAS CHRIST WITH BELIAL?”

Matt. 16:23

But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”

Matt. 4:10, 11

Then Jesus said to him, “Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

The decision has to be made as to who is going to be our leader: Christ or satan.

There is no harmony between the two whatsoever.

(Expository Studies in 2 Corinthians: Power Out of Weakness)

Then the apostle goes further: “What accord has Christ with Belial?” Belial is another name for Satan, a word meaning “worthlessness,” referring to Satan and his activities. What he does is always worthless, with no enduring value; it disappears; it is a froth, it is gone in an instant. Here then are the two great captains of the opposing philosophies of life, Jesus Christ and Satan or Belial.

p. 133

(Acceptance: Loosing the Webs of Personal Insecurity by Don Baker)

It’s interesting to note right here that the same Satan who works overtime to convince spiritually dead people that they are alive also expends a similar amount of demonic energy to convince spiritually alive people that they are still dead.

p. 73

(The Seduction of Christianity by Dave Hunt & T. A. McMahon)

The many gurus who have invaded the West are actively converting millions to this satanic religion of Antichrist with a missionary zeal and success that is a new phenomenon for Eastern religions. Each claiming to be God himself, the gurus have opened the Western world to the belief and practice of worshipping a man as God, and to the idea that each person can realize his own godhood through following his guru. It will not seem strange, therefore, when Antichrist claims to be God; and the millions who have been worshipping gurus such as Rajneesh and Muktananda will easily worship the Antichrist. The hundreds of Eastern gurus are preparing us for the ultimate Guru; the many false Christs are paving the way for the Antichrist. San Diego psychiatrist Samuel H. Sandweiss is one example of the millions of Westerners who have been converted by

one guru or another. The following are excerpts from a letter he wrote to his wife in May 1972 from India, where he had gone to investigate a miracle-working guru known as Sai Baba, who has about 20 million devoted followers:

There is no doubt in my mind that Sai Baba is divine. I astound myself...a rational, scientific man, to say such a thing.

I believe Baba to be an incarnation of God...How strange, when just a few days ago I was such a skeptic. Yesterday I experienced more miracles...Baba is allowing me to see this wonderful power close-up....

I am witnessing in live color and in the flesh an experience a million times more astonishing than the fairy-tale stories I have been telling my four sweet children...after witnessing Baba's greatness, I can do nothing but accept fully what he says.

Yesterday...a very well known nuclear physicist with an international reputation came here...I saw this man live face-down at Baba's feet...

#### John 8:44

"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

#### Acts 10:38

"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him.

(Spiritual Awakening, Sherwood Eliot Wirt, editor)

Self-will is the ever-flowing fountain of all the evil tempers which deform our hearts, of all the boiling passions which inflame and disorder society, the root of bitterness on which all its corrupt fruits grow. We set up our own understanding against the wisdom of God, and our passions against the will of God. If we could ascertain the precise period when sensuality ceased to govern in the animal part of our nature, and pride in the intellectual, that period would form the most memorable era of the Christian's life. From that moment he begins a new date of liberty and happiness; from that stage he sets out on a new career of peace, liberty, and virtue.

p. 63

#### Joshua 24:14, 15

"Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve,



whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

(Expository Studies in 2 Corinthians: Power Out of Weakness by Ray C. Stedman)

Some years ago I read a prayer addressed to God that a young woman had written in her diary on her wedding day:

Dear God, I can hardly believe that this is my wedding day. I know I haven't been able to spend much time with you lately with all the rush of getting ready for today, and I'm sorry. I guess, too, I feel a little guilty when I try to pray about all this, since Larry still isn't a Christian. But, oh! Father, I love him so much. What else can I do? I just couldn't give him up. Oh! You must save him some way, somehow. You know how much I have prayed for him and the way we've discussed the gospel together. I've tried not to appear too religious, I know, but that's because I didn't want to scare him off. Yet he isn't antagonistic, and I don't understand why he hasn't responded. Oh! If only he were a Christian. Dear Father, please bless our marriage. I don't want to disobey you, but I do love him, and I want to be his wife. So please be with us, and please don't spoil my wedding day.

It was a sincere prayer, but it was a sadly mistaken prayer. Though she did not realize it, what she was really praying was something like this:

Dear Father, I don't want to disobey you, but I must have my own way at all costs. For I love what you do not love, and I want what you do not want. So please be a good God and deny yourself and move off your throne and let me take over. If you don't like this, all I ask is that you bite your lip and say nothing and don't spoil my wedding day. Let me have my evil.  
pp. 135-36

Whereas Question #1 focused on our DEEDS,  
Question #2 focused on our DESTINY,  
Question #3 focused upon a DECISION --- a decision whether or not to follow  
Jesus Christ or Satan.

QUESTION #4:       “OR WHAT HAS A BELIEVER IN COMMON WITH AN  
UNBELIEVER?”

In this 4<sup>th</sup> question we have the need for a DECLARATION.

THE DEEDS  
THE DESTINY  
THE DESIRE  
& THE DEVOTION of the unbeliever are all different

The unbeliever will not take our course so we must take theirs.

In Our Daily Bread booklet for May 20 there was the following:

Olivia Langdon came from a Christian home. She fell in love with Mark Twain, a man who made no profession of faith in Christ. In spite of this, she married him. At first, her life made a deep impression upon him, and he regularly asked the blessing at mealtime and joined her in worship. But gradually this practice fell by the wayside, until one day he announced, "Livy, I don't believe in the Bible." In the months that followed, his unbelief subtly eroded her confidence in God. Later during a period of pressing sorrow, he tried to encourage her by saying, "Livy, if it comforts you to lean on the Christian faith, do so." But she could only reply, "Mark, I can't." Her former vibrant faith had become too weak.

--- D. J. D.

By the words you use and the friends you choose  
You are made for the years to be;  
You may think they'll not, but they'll leave their blot  
For the rest of the world to see.

--- Anon.

## 2 Thess. 1:8, 9

Dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

- v. 16 Or what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God and they shall be My people.

The 5<sup>th</sup> and final question in the series has to do with our DEVOTION.

QUESTION #5: "WHAT AGREEMENT IS THERE BETWEEN THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND IDOLS?"

There is no agreement:

but one is LIVING and the other is DEAD.  
The one focuses on WORSHIP and the other on WORKS.  
The one focuses on SALVATION and the other on SACRIFICE.

## 1 John 5:21

Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

Psalm 115:2-8

Why do the nations say,  
    “Where is their God?”  
Our God is in heaven;  
    he does whatever pleases him.  
But their idols are silver and gold,  
    made by the hands of men.  
They have mouths, but cannot speak,  
    eyes, but they cannot see;  
they have ears, but cannot hear,  
    noses, but they cannot smell;  
they have hands, but cannot feel,  
    feet, but they cannot walk;  
    nor can they utter a sound with their throats.  
Those who make them will be like them,  
    and so will all who trust in them.

The focus of the five questions has been upon the difference in:

DEEDS  
DESTINY  
DECISION  
DECLARATION and  
DEVOTION

Five are negative and five are positive.

On the NEGATIVE side is:

1. LAWLESSNESS
2. DARKNESS
3. BELIAL
4. UNBELIEVER
5. IDOLS

On the POSITIVE side there is:

1. RIGHTEOUSNESS
2. LIGHT
3. CHRIST
4. BELIEVER
5. TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD

1 John 5:11, 12

And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

The next phrase in our verse says: “FOR WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD.” The important phrase is:

“THE LIVING GOD”

Not “the dead idols.”

Ephesians 2:21, 22

In whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

1 Cor. 6:19, 20

Or do you not know your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

“JUST AS GOD SAID, ‘I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.’”

The apostle concludes this second command with some words from God himself. The command said: “Stop being bound together with unbelievers.” And the inconsistency of that binding together with unbelievers in this way is given now in this verse:

1. I will dwell in them
2. I will walk among them.
3. I will be their God.
4. They shall be My people.

James 4:4

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world make himself an enemy of God.

- v. 17 Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord. “And stop touching that which is unclean; and I will welcome you.

We now come to Command #3 and it follows a “therefore.”

Therefore, because we do belong to God and we are His people and He's going to dwell in us and walk among us, it is our responsibility to make a decision of commitment --- a decision to separate ourselves from those things which do not bring pleasure to the One to whom we belong.

COMMAND #1 was "WIDEN YOUR HEARTS IN THE SAME WAY IN EXCHANGE"

COMMAND #2: "STOP BEING BOUND TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS"

And now:

COMMAND #3: "COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE"

The first had to do with AFFECTIONS AND COMPASSION, the second with ASSOCIATES AND COMPANIONSHIP, now the third with ACTION OR COURAGE.

2 Cor. 6:3, 4

giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry might not have fault found with it. But in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in calamities, in difficulties.

"THEREFORE, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,"

This is an aorist imperative, and it's a "once-for-all" separation.

Plummer translates it:

Therefore, come out from the midst of them and sever yourselves," saith the Lord.

Matt. 5:29, 30

"And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for the whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.

1 John 2:15-17

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

Romans 12:1, 2 (Phillips translation)

With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould you minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.

If we are going to be pleasing to the Lord, there are some things that are just going to have to go. If we don't come out, they will destroy us.

Genesis 19:15-17

With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished."

When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the Lord was merciful to them. As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, "Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!"

You cannot be double-minded or "on again---off again" in this kind of situation. A choice has to be made. A separation has to take place. "A double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways."

The prodigal son had to arise from the pigpen and act upon what he knew, and that was to go home to his father.

Our next phrase in the command continues by saying: "AND STOP TOUCHING THAT WHICH IS UNCLEAN"

1. First we are to separate, then
2. we are to stop touching that which is unclean or that which defiles us.

In DANIEL and JOSEPH we see the right response:

Daniel 1:8

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

Genesis 39:10

And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

On the other side of the picture we can see DAVID and JUDAS:

Psalm 32:3, 4

When I kept silent,  
my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night  
your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was sapped  
as in the heat of summer.

Matt. 27:3-5

Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!" And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

Command #3: "COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE says the Lord, and stop touching that which is unclean; and I will welcome you.

Luke 15:22-24

"But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to be merry.

I am resolved no longer to linger,  
Charmed by the world's delight;  
Things that are higher, things that are nobler,  
These have allured my sight.

Get right with God and do it now,  
Get right with God, he tells you how.  
O come to Christ, who shed His blood,  
And at the cross get right with God.

(Choosing Plan A in a Plan B World by Jerry White)

Confessing Christ as Lord means much more than repeating a few words or singing spiritual-sounding phrases, even with feeling. It is more than admitting to a fact. It is to admit and submit. We admit that Christ is Lord and submit our lives to His lordship.

p. 15

Remember, what you really love will ultimately be revealed in your relationships.

#### Genesis 35:2

So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes.

#### Acts 19:18-20

Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of all; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.

(Stormie by Stormie Omartian)

As I threw the clothes, books, magazines, records, and art in the trash, I knew I had to do the same with certain habits and relationships. I stopped watching offensive TV shows and became very selective about what movies I went to see. Filling my mind with violence, foul language, disrespectful use of God's name, and other people's sex acts did not make me feel good in my spirit, and I knew I didn't feel good in God's Spirit either. The Bible said I was the temple of the Holy Spirit of God, so how could I enjoy the fullness of His presence if He was being crowded out by all that was opposed to His ways? As I separated myself from these things, I felt more and more fulfilled and happy.

p. 131

(Make Haste My Beloved by Francis J. Roberts)

My Spirit will not always strive. If by rebellion you resist My overtures, I will release you to your own way and you may walk alone if that is your choice. I have made free will a gift, and I will not violate your right to follow your own desires.

p. 31

v. 18 And I will be to you a father, and you shall be sons and daughters to me," says the Lord Almighty.

The result of heeding this third command (coming out and being separate, and to stop touching that which is unclean) will be threefold:



1. I will welcome you.
2. I will be to you a father.
3. You shall be sons and daughters to me.

1. The first focus is on His UNCONDITIONAL LOVE for us:

“I will welcome you.”

He never gives up on us. He loves us eternally.

2. The second focuses on the RELATIONSHIP:

“I will be to you a father.”

He wants the responsibility in this relationship to meet all of our needs.

3. “You shall be sons and daughters” focuses on our FUTURE INHERITANCE.

#### Romans 8:16, 17

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

These statements are made by the Lord Almighty. He is the covenant-keeping God. He's the God of all power and strength. He is El Shaddai.

He indeed is the one who is having his hands on everything.

(Helping Those Who Don't Want Help by Marshall Shelley)

One does not surrender a life in an instant. That which is lifelong can only be surrendered in a lifetime.

Jim Elliot  
p. 175

Chapter 6 opens and closes with a real sense of urgency.

#### 2 Cor. 6:1

And working together with Him, we also are urging you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

#### 2 Cor. 6:17

Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord. “And stop touching that which is unclean; and I will welcome you.

(Keep the Fire Glowing by Pat and Jill Williams with Jerry Jenkins)

We love birds and have close to fifty of varying sizes and species. One of our boys was assigned the chore of feeding our new canaries, a couple of very expensive little beauties. When we questioned him about it, he kept saying, “Yes, yes, I will. Don’t worry about it. I won’t forget.”

The birds were able to go without seed for a while, but they could last only a few hours without water. When we returned home from our outing late that night, Jill checked on the birds. All were fine except the two canaries. They were on their backs in the cage with their feet up. Dead.

The next morning, we had to break the news to the family, including the offender. We might have wished the lesson weren’t so expensive and painful, but it certainly brought home the truth that when someone doesn’t follow through on his commitments, there is a price. The price in this case included remorseful tears.

p. 116

7:v. 1 Therefore having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of body and spirit, bringing about holiness in the fear of God.

Once again we are faced with the word “THEREFORE,” which points us back to the promises in the previous verses.

“THEREFORE HAVING THESE PROMISES” What promises?

2 Cor. 6:16-18

“I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord. “And stop touching that which is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I will be to you a father, and you shall be sons and daughters to me,” says the Lord Almighty.

“THEREFORE HAVING THESE PROMISES, BELOVED,”

In the passage he calls them “Corinthians”; he calls them “children.” And now in this final verse, he calls them “beloved.”

The fourth and final command in the passage follows:

COMMAND #4: “LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL DEFILEMENT OF BODY AND SPIRIT.”

1. The first command had to do with our AFFECTIONS or COMPASSION.

2. The second with our ASSOCIATIONS or COMPANIONSHIPS.
3. The third has to do with our ACTION. He tells us to COME.
4. In the fourth it has to do with our ACKNOWLEDGMENT, our ADMISSION, our CONFESSION and CLEANSING.

This command is different than the other three because the apostle joins the Corinthians when he says, "Let us."

Back in verse 16 of chap. 6 he says, "For we are the temple of the living God."

"LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL DEFILEMENT OF BODY AND SPIRIT."

Compromise here will lead to lack of love for those who love the truth.

"LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES" is an aorist tense and makes reference to a "once for all" action.

#### 1 Cor. 11:28

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

#### 1 Cor. 11:31, 32

But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world.

(II Corinthians by J. Vernon McGee)

What promises is he talking about? He is referring to those at the end of chapter 6. God has said that if we will obey Him, He will be a real Father to us, we will be real sons and daughters to Him, and He can deal with us in that relationship. This does not say that if we don't come out and be separate, we will lose our salvation. It does mean that if we do not lead a clean life, God can't treat us as a Father. I gave the illustration of the father of a wayward son who said, "I'd like to treat him like my son but I cannot. He is alienated from me and he is in trouble and difficulty. He resents me and I can't be a father to him." He was the father of the boy, but he couldn't act like a father. God wants to treat us as a Father. A great many of us do not know by experiences what a wonderful Father we have.

p. 85

(Second Corinthians: Where Life Endures by Roy L. Laurin)

This filthiness of the spirit refers to hatred malice, jealousy, animosity, ill-temper, pride and a host of companion evils.

It is not enough to cleanse ourselves of defiling habits. There are defiling traits of character. One can defile and soil home life by a selfish disposition. He can spoil the lives and peace of other people by a contentious and troublesome spirit.  
p. 146

(Make Haste My Beloved by Francis J. Roberts)

Obedience is the fabric of happiness. To rebel is to seek sorrow. Only a yielded heart can find rest in Me; and to know contentment there must be resignation of personal rights in favor of My will.  
p. 38

Let Me melt your heart anew, and let Me restore you spiritual vitality.

I have waited for you with patience, but I beg you to turn to Me speedily, for truly the hour is late and much remains unfinished. Make a new commitment, and I will bestow a fresh anointing and we shall rejoice together beyond anything in the past.

Rise up! For the labourers are few.  
p. 32

(Birthright by David C. Needham)

These questions have returned to plague me --- and I'm sure, many of you --- year after year. The roads are well-worn with our hopeful footsteps. We've tried the seven-step plan to full assurance, the five steps to total maturity. We've enlisted in the latest workshops, subscribed to that aggressive organization, tuned in that dynamic speaker. We've memorized the pious technique of "accepting it by faith even though it doesn't make any sense." And we're getting tired. Tired enough and radical enough to question it all. We ask, Is that what the Bible really says?  
p. 13

Shouldn't we begin to wonder how the early church ever made it? How could they have possibly turned the world upside down without cassette albums and three-ring binders?  
p. 14

(Birthright by David C. Needham)

It might be suggested that the Christian's sin not only arises from his flesh, but also from his spirit because of Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 7:1, "let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (Out of a desire to keep Paul from identifying the source of sin as being the spirit, Nestle suggested that the grammar would allow for the following translation, "from all defilement of the flesh; in spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Augustine considered this to be a possibility although not acceptable to him. See Alfred Plummer, Second Epistle of St.

Paul to the Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956], p. 212. But since such a translation would be abnormal, we should look for an explanation of the passage elsewhere.) I believe the context provides an adequate explanation. Paul is in no way suggesting that the source of sin is one's spirit (or for that matter in this case, one's flesh). The entire issue has to do with the defilement that can take place because of the association of something holy with something that is unholy. To say that one's spirit could possibly be defiled is to say something very different from the thought that one's spirit is the source of sin. It is significant that L. S. Chafer believed that it was impossible for the new nature to be the source of sin. See L. S. Chafer, He That is Spiritual, p. 148; see Paxson, Life on the Highest Plain, p. 293. Also Craig Massey, Adjust or Self-Destruct, A Study of the Believer's Two Natures, p. 91. Nor can 1 Thessalonians 5:23 demand the idea that one's spirit can be "with blame" when Christ returns. One final factor has to do with the fact that we cannot always be sure when Paul is using the term "spirit" in the sense of deepest being and when is using it simply to express the non-material aspect of humanness which would then make it parallel to similar usages of the word "soul."  
pp. 262-63

#### Galatians 5:19-21

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envyings, drunkenness, carousings, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

(Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do by Franklin Graham and Jeanette Lockerbie)

From that time at age twelve, I've sinned, I've quit, I've failed, I've stumbled, I've fallen, I've landed in the mud puddle and come out drenched with mud. But one thing has been true: God set me apart and there's no way that I could run away from God. I have tried. I dropped out for two and a half years one time; went into shipyards and worked and told the Lord, I won't do another thing! I won't even go to church. I resign, I give up, I quit, I don't have what it takes, I refuse. God just sat on the sidelines and twiddled His thumbs and said, "Well, when you get ready, what I've planned is going to come about and when you get through kickin' and stompin' and wailin' and feelin' sorry for yourself and blaming everybody else, we'll start where we left off," and that's the way it's been for all these years.

My life verse has been Philippians 2:13, "It is God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure."  
pp. 40-41

**"LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL DEFILEMENT OF BODY AND SPIRIT, BRINGING ABOUT HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD."**

The goal of it all in the chapter is to be “BRINGING ABOUT HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD.”

“Fear of God” refers to RESPECT, REVERENCE and RESPONSIBILITY to our heavenly Father.

#### 1 Peter 1:15, 16

But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

#### 1 Thess. 5:24

Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

#### Jude 24, 25

Now unto Him who is able to guard you against stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forevermore.

#### Ephesians 5:26, 27

That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

#### **John Owen on the Inner Life**

However strong a castle may be, if a treacherous party resides inside (ready to betray at the first opportunity possible), the castle cannot be kept safe from the enemy. Traitors occupy our own hearts, ready to side with every temptation and to surrender to them all.

- Theologian John Owen (1616-1683)

#### CONCLUSION:

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

LESSON #1: What you love and who you spend your time with will have a powerful influence on the direction of your life.

LESSON #2: Are your words and emotions able to flow freely to others because you are transparent?

LESSON #3: Are you restrained in your affections because of SELFISHNESS, SCARS, and SIN?

LESSON #4: Has the Spirit of God convicted you about some alliances with unbelievers that need to be terminated?

LESSON #5: What you really love will ultimately be revealed in your relationships.

LESSON #6: There are some things we must cut out of our lives if we are going to continue to make progress in Christlikeness.

LESSON #7: When we are cooperative and take the initiative in cutting things out of our lives that must go, we avoid the Father's heavy hand of discipline and doing it later.

LESSON #8: Is the longing of your heart to bring about holiness in the fear of God?

LESSON #9: Are you obedient to the four commands in the passage?

1. STIFLED LOVE
2. THE BONDAGE OF A RELATIONSHIP
3. THE SEVERING OF THINGS FROM YOUR LIFE THAT ARE NOT PLEASING TO HIM
4. CLEANSING YOURSELF FROM ALL DEFILEMENT

Robert G. Lee said it well,

Just here let me, with compassionate insistence, urge you to believe that Time is making haste – and will soon be gone. And the years are making haste – passing so quickly. And Satan is making haste – seeking your ruin. And the World is making haste – making efforts to cheat you. And the Judgment is making haste – since “it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment. And Death is making haste – mocking our human hopes and frailties.

Oh! Make haste to make ready to meet God.

Acquaint now thyself with him. (Job 22:21).

Behold, now is the accepted time (II Cor. 6:2).

Come now, let us reason together (Isa. 1:18).

(Close to His Majesty by David C. Needham with Larry Libby)

When I was a boy, our family moved to a ranch in southern California, where we had acres of rolling hills to explore. My big dream was to get a dog. But not just a dog. I had my heart set on an English setter. I can't begin to calculate all the time I spent reading about English setters --- studying their pictures down to the smallest detail. To me, there was no dog like setter anywhere in the world.

One day my dad gave me the word I'd been waiting for. "Okay, son," he said, "you can get your setter."

Together, Dad and I went down to the kennel. I spent the better part of an hour examining a litter of fine English setter pups. I tried to be objective --- to look for all the qualities the books tell you to look for in a champion setter. The right ears and eyes and bones and tail and all that. When I walked out with that little fellow in my arms, I was sure I had the pick of the litter --- the most beautiful pup I had ever seen. I called him "Mike."

In the months that followed he received the best care I knew how to give. A solid redwood doghouse with a cedar-shake roof. The best food. But most of all, the best of my love. Yet as the months went by, one fact --- one terrible fact --- became all too clear. Mike didn't want me. He didn't want my love. After a time, he didn't even want my food. I'd put out the dish for him and call, "Here, Mike! Here, Mike!" But Mike would not come. Or if he did, he would slink around the side of the house, pedigreed tail between his legs, work his way up to the dish, wolf down his food, and then slink away again.

When the cold winter nights came I used to long for him to sit by the fire with me. I just wanted him to lie beside me near the hearth so I could scratch under his neck and give him a big hug and let him lick my face.

But he never came when I called. And winter went by.

He may have been a good watchdog; he may have chased away the rabbits from our garden --- I really don't if he ran full speed into the wire mesh surrounding our chicken pen, the chickens would become a squawking brown cloud piling up against the far side of the pen. And once in awhile, one of those terrified hens would just manage to clear the top of the fence --- and Mike would kill it and carry it away.

We tried everything to get him to stop. Yelling at him. Beating him (with a rolled up newspaper). Providing him more than enough to eat. My dad even suggested tying a dead chicken right up close under his jaw and letting it rot there. Perhaps that might cure him. But nothing worked. Mike simply didn't care.

Finally one day --- a day I knew eventually had to come --- one of the hired hands followed my dog over a hill on the far side of the ranch, while I waited behind. I knew what was going to happen. And it did. I winced as a single shot echoed back through the hills. Mike was dead...and rightly so.

Undaunted, a few days later---it didn't take me long---I asked, "Dad, can I try again?" And Dad said yes. Off we went to the kennel to look at a whole new litter of setter puppies. But this time I didn't look for the finest pup. Instead, I waited for one of the to come running to me. And one did. I picked him up --- a little ball of silky speckled black and white fur, his heart racing like a motor---and he slobbered all over my face. I took him home with me and named him Mike. (I was stubborn.)

Maybe you can guess the rest of the story. Mike became everything I had ever dreamed of in a dog. He wanted my love. He lived for my love. I wanted Mike, and Mike wanted me.

On winter nights, Mike waited eagerly to be invited in. Pressing against the big chair in front of the fireplace, as close to me as he could be, Mike relished every touch of love. In the spring, out on the hills with the tractor, Mike would run circles around me all day long. And every time I'd stop and climb down, Mike would be there to receive a big



hug or to rest his big head on my knee. When water came running down the irrigation furrows close to where I stood. And then get up and shake that muddy water all over me. Of course he meant it to cool me off!

When I went away to college a couple of hundred miles away, I would try to get home whenever I could. It would usually be late at night when I started up that long, curving road to the ranch house on top of the hill. Mom and Dad would be sound asleep, but Mike heard the sound of my car long before I came around the last bend. Coming to a stop, I could see him dancing in the headlights. A moment later, Mike would crash into the driver's seat and let me hug him and love him to my heart's content.

Years later, sitting on the edge of my bunk in a small, stark seminary dorm room down in Dallas, Texas, I opened a letter from Mom. "We did everything we could do," she wrote, "but Mike had got fox fever. The veterinarian tried too, but he told us there wasn't any cure. We loved him as you would have done. We made him as comfortable as we could. But yesterday, Mike died." I remember falling back on my bunk in that lonely dorm room and crying and crying until the ink was all smeared.

Mike had let me love him.

He had received my self-giving with pleasure. His greatest delight was to be close to me. I had lost a friend who had never wearied of receiving my love.

What can we say then about our infinitely self-giving God? Some of us have developed such unbalanced concepts of God. The awesome supreme Judge of the universe before whom all heaven trembles? Yes, He is all of that. But first...He is love. He is the God who longs to fill our lives and our days with the wealth of His presence. A God who cherishes our companionship.

How do I, as a born-again child of God, respond to my Father's self-giving? By offering myself as a gift to Him.

With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice.  
(Romans 12:1, Phillips)

It's like lifting an empty cup --- a cup that God continues to fill with Himself. From the overflow, I give myself to others. And in so doing, "the love of God has truly been perfected" (1 John 2:5).  
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#### Matt. 11:28-30

"Come unto me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. For I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Death – 591-04

I think of the end of the movie *Apollo 13*, based on the true story of the mission to the moon that fell to pieces, and the battle against all odds to bring those three astronauts

home safely. Unknown damage has been done to the space capsule in an explosion. Their guidance system could be malfunctioning; they might miss the earth entirely. Power has been lost; their parachutes might be three blocks of ice. The heat shield that protects the men from the inferno of reentry might be cracked. Will their little ark get them home?

The world has gathered in front of televisions in homes, offices, storefronts, and schools to witness one of the greatest dramas of the twentieth century. All radio contact is lost during the “blackout” as the command module plunges into the earth’s atmosphere, hurling homeward at a speed of 35,245 feet per second. It is the final moment of their ordeal. The world is holding its collective breath, watching the sky as the news announcer states,

No reentering ship has ever taken longer than three minutes to emerge from blackout. This is the critical moment. Will the heat shield hold? Will the command module survive the intense heat of reentry? If not...there’ll only be...silence.

Men on the deck of the USS *Iwo Jima* sent to the South Pacific to rendezvous with the capsule desperately search the horizon with binoculars. In faith, navy recovery and rescue helicopters are launched. At Mission Control in Houston, all is silent. Seconds tick by like hours as the blackout continues. There is no word from the astronauts. All eyes remain fixed on the vacant sky. Flight Monitor in Houston announces the end of the blackout:

That’s three minutes. Standing by for acquisition.  
Mission control attempts to contact the lost men.

Odyssey, this is Houston. Do you read me?  
Silence. Only the crackling static of the radio.

Odyssey, Houston. Do you read?  
Still nothing. The news anchor admits,  
The expected time of reentry has come...and gone.  
About all any of us can do now is just listen and hope.

The families of the three men are quietly holding hands. Tears begin to run down their cheeks. A few turn their eyes away, as if to avoid the inevitable. In Houston men hang their heads; they did all they could possibly do. Another full minute passes. Still nothing. The capsule is way, way beyond the point of return. The rescue has apparently failed.

Silence.

Odyssey...uh...Houston...do you read?

The radio begins to crackle as the television screen reveals a tiny speck emerging from the clouds. Red parachutes burst open, and we hear reply from the command module:

Hello, Houston...this is Odyssey. It's good to see you again!

Cheers. Shouts of joy. Hugs all around. Tears, of happiness and relief. Our boys have made it home. Flight Contact – a dear friend of the men on board – is barely able to speak.

Odyssey...Houston. Welcome home...we're glad to see you.  
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