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God's So Great Salvation -Teaching Guide

Overview

In the [Discussion Guide](#) there are 22 topics that comprise “God’s So Great Salvation” teaching program. Each topic includes several questions, for student discussion, which lead to a greater understanding of the topic. This [Teaching Guide](#) provides the answers to those questions and can be shared with the student.

All the questions and answers are derived from the books, *Finding the Reality of God* and *Evidences of Eternal Life*, by Paris Reidhead. Greater study of these topics may also be gained from listening to the Paris Reidhead sermon series “God’s So Great Salvation” on the LLG website under Master Sermons/Salvation (www.llgmin.com).

The class leader may at his discretion, with consideration of the needs of his or her students, figure out the frequency of classes and length of each class. You may decide to review multiple topics in one class session, whereas other sessions may deal with just one topic in the Discussion Guide.

This program can be very emotional for some people. As a result of receiving this teaching one of two things will happen: Either the person will say, “Praise God! I know that I have passed from death to life!” Or the person will say, “On the basis of this, I haven’t passed from death to life.”

Those that thought themselves Christian, even though having been a church member for many years, but now come under the conviction they are not born of God, must be given God’s Word on what they must do to fellowship with the Lord. That is the purpose of this teaching program, to bring light into dark places so that some may be saved for the glory of God.

Students who are assured they are in union with Christ Jesus, will learn how to grow into the fullness of Christ; to gain victory over themselves, the Devil and the world. And how to enforce the victory gained at Calvary, and make disciples of the nations. We now fulfill the primary purpose of the Church of Jesus Christ, to perfect (develop) and equip the saints for the work of the ministry in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Introduction by Paris Reidhead

[Excerpted from Evidences of Eternal Life]

God's So Great Salvation is the result of teaching on the First Epistle of John, which points to the unmistakable hallmarks to be found in the life of a genuine Christian.

To use the term “genuine” suggests its opposite, counterfeit. Indeed, I have felt it necessary in recent years to warn those who will listen that there are people practiced in the art of feigning true Christianity mingling every day with the company of true believers in our churches. Some of these are messengers of Satan, but the majority of them have been misinformed.

Much of my ministry, especially in these later years, have been to churches, because I have sensed that people have joined congregations without a clear understanding of biblical salvation. Overzealous “soul winners” have, with the best of intentions, reduced to a formula what should be an ongoing conversation between the human heart and the Holy Spirit.

They encouraged those seeking to know God to repeat words comprising a “plan of salvation,” and then they told those people that they had been saved. It happened to me as a young boy. From my personal experience I know that simply repeating words, belonging to a church, and even the act of baptism are not enough to impart the Christ life to a dying soul.

Christian workers have presumed to know what they cannot know, that which is taking place in a person's' spirit. To tell a person that he is saved when he is, perhaps, only awakened causes confusion. It leads the seeking heart into a false sense of security because the person erroneously believes a spiritual transformation has taken place when in fact it might not have taken place at all!

That person, believing that she is now a member of God's family, is set up for failure because one cannot live according to the principles of Christ without the power of the Holy Spirit, and He only dwells in the regenerated heart. It is no wonder that the church is so ineffectual. Therefore the appeal that comes so clearly through John's first letter has to be directed to evangelical congregations.

I have been spreading everywhere the message that only God who created you has the right to tell you that you have been born again. Many of this generation of church-goers have been raised with a wrong concept of what it means to worship a Holy God.

Are we saying that God is demanding changes in church people? Yes, indeed! The Lord Jesus made His last appeal to the churches. He is seen, in the Book of Revelation, standing outside the Church, knocking on its door. “If any man hear My voice...,” says the Lord of Glory (Revelation 3:20).

The call, through *God's So Great Salvation*, is for God's people to examine their hearts and to ask the Lord to show them anything and everything in their lives that may be keeping them from enjoying His fullness.

Those of us who call ourselves Christian are obligated to look into the Word of God and cleanse the temples of our hearts. If we would do that we could make a house for Him, a place of prayer, where the Holy One will abide. This is the first step toward becoming a praying people, and it will kindle revival fire, for we know that nothing is wrought in the life of a Christian except through prayer.

Have you questions concerning your relationship to God the Father through Jesus the Son? Does the Holy Spirit direct and empower your life? The principles set forth in the book of 1 John are examined in the pages that follow, presenting a clear picture of the evidences of eternal life that must be present in the lives of God's children. It is my prayer that by careful examination, seeking people may become sure of their standing before a Holy God.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

BEFORE THE BEGINNING

❖ **What was the purpose of the Apostle John in writing this epistle (1 John)?**

- John wrote his brief letter to assure us and to demonstrate to us that real salvation works. He wrote it to answer the calumnies (slander, lies) and the accusations of the skeptics feigning to be brothers in the faith. These people's accusations were fostered by Satan, God's ancient foe.

❖ **Who is Satan? Why was he cast out of heaven?**

- Isaiah 14:12-20 gives the account of an event that occurred before the creation of man. God created Lucifer, the brightest of God's angelic beings. He had intelligence, imagination, creativity, great wisdom and beauty. His gradual decline is recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14. His rebellion reached completion when he declared, "I will be like the Most High!"
- Lucifer became Satan, the adversary. Adversary means opponent, foe, and enemy. He still is the enemy of God, and therefore, of God's people. He is God's ancient foe. He is the liar and deceiver who had challenged God in the beginning

❖ **God is light, love, truth and life. What did Satan become as a result of his rebellion against the Most High?**

- To understand what Satan became one must first take a look at what God is. God is light and love and truth and life, all of which are positive attributes. Now you can't out love God. You can't have more life, truth, and light than God.
- Satan couldn't be better than God. He realized that he would have to concentrate on being the opposite of God and he knowingly willed to be all things negative.
- The negative of light is darkness. The negative of love is hatred. The negative of truth is the lie. The negative of life is death. None of these attributes were from God.
- Anything that is not of God is sin, and the essence of sin is selfishness. Satan chose to become egocentric, and in so doing his rebellion against God became complete.
- To summarize, in Satan we have one who would seek to set his throne above the throne of the Most High, whose nature is selfishness expressed as darkness and hatred and lying and death. For this rebellion God cast him away.

COMMENTARY

In Luke 10:18 the Lord Jesus gives us an eyewitness account of a fierce battle that took place in heaven. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." If Satan could corrupt the human race, then God would be forced by His own Holy nature to destroy His special creation. Mankind came under attack.

IN THE BEGINNING

❖ What is the difference between temptation and sin?

- Temptation is the proposition presented to the mind to gratify a good appetite in a bad way. We may be tempted to sin, however we do not have to sin
- Sin is the decision to satisfy a good appetite in ways forbidden by God. Emphasis on decision. Although the event may not have had time to happen, the fact you've decided to do it already constitutes sin as Jesus indicates in Matthew 5:27-28.
- All sin falls into 3 categories: lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life (1 John 2:16)

❖ Adam and Eve were commanded not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Why?

- They would die

❖ What outward change did disobedience bring into the lives of Adam & Eve?

- After breaking God's law and introducing sin into the world, Adam & Eve hid from God.
- Adam demonstrated hatred in his heart toward Eve, the wife God had given him (Genesis 3:12)
- Eve followed Adam's example by blaming the serpent. Neither took responsibility for their own actions.

❖ Why was Abel's offering acceptable to God?

- Abel's offering is a slain lamb, a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. His heart is moved by penitence. He followed the principle spoken of in Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (forgiveness of sin).

❖ Why was Cain's offering unacceptable?

- Cain's offering is a display of the work of his own hands. His heart is moved by pride. He did not follow the principle in Hebrew 9:22.

COMMENTARY

Because of the relationship Abel had with God, Cain hated his brother, and he beat his brother to death with a stone. For the Christian, a great gulf is fixed between love and hatred. These two cannot come together. John shows us there is a definite distinction between the children of light and the children of darkness. Those who are born of God have no room in their being for bitterness, hatred, anger and malice. To God, hatred is murder.

If you can suppose for a moment that hatred is compatible with light and life and love, you must still be dead in your trespasses and sins.

CONVERSION

❖ In your own words, define what it means to repent

- This new way of entering the life of the Spirit is called *repentance*. It is ceasing from trying to earn salvation man's way, and learning how to please God daily. In Luke 13:3-5, He says "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
- Repentance is defined in Scriptures as a change of mind, turning away from the intention and purpose of pleasing self, and choosing to please God.

❖ Why is it essential for conversion?

- The seed of all righteousness and holiness is in repentance. Man's desire is to please himself, but when he repents he must make an about-face. This is a complete turnabout.
- From that moment on, the intention of this man is to please and glorify GOD – to satisfy only Him.

❖ What part does our human will play in repentance?

- The righteousness which prepares you for heaven is not produced with your own energy, it must be from another source entirely.
- Our Lord Jesus could not have made it clearer. What prepares us for salvation, he says is not some action or movement we make towards God, but an action God has made toward us. His initial call to us, through the Holy Spirit, is a love gift
- Following the wooing of the Holy Spirit, we must repent. We must believe. And the evidence of the genuineness of repentance and faith is this: when you repent and believe, God regenerates you by his Spirit within your heart and gives the witness of the Spirit within your heart that you have passed from death to life. He lets us know, without a shadow of a doubt, that we have been born again.
- You must turn away constantly from the righteousness that is produced from human effort, and turn toward the righteousness produced by God through the sovereign and supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

❖ Is repentance a one-time act, or is it something we do continually? Explain

- (Matthew 5:20) – "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." What was the righteousness of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law? It was a righteousness which the most dedicated mind and consecrated intellect could produce without the Holy Spirit.
- The Scribes and Pharisees fasted, tithed, prayed, abstained from eating meat, observed holy days, and memorized scriptures. Anyone can do all these things without the enablement of the Holy Spirit.

- We can be orthodox in our theology, evangelistic in our zeal, missionary in our fervor and devout in the practice of our religion; we can fast, tithe, and pray – all with our natural energy. But that is the same energy with which you previously served the Devil.
 - The salvation of which Jesus speaks is not our being satisfied with Him, rather it is his being satisfied with us. Can you see how fatal it is to neglect the salvation that comes in repentance?
 - The word for change in the King James Bible is “converted” which means “turn again.”
 - The evidence of the genuineness of conversion, in your heart, is that every time your mind is in conflict with the Lord’s mind it must be His mind that prevails, just as little children must accept the will of their parents.
 - The manifestation of conversion is an attitude of constant correction from our will to the will of God, a continuous concern that we will please Him in all we do. This is the attitude of our heart: I want to please God
- ❖ **What does it mean to eat Christ’s flesh and drink His blood? Does the explanation given in this chapter differ with your previous understanding of this command?**
- “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:48-54)
 - It is He becoming so united with the believer that it is as if we have eaten his flesh and drunk his blood. He has become bone of our bone and life of our life.
 - He has joined himself to us, and we have received him. Salvation is not from Him; salvation is in Him. He wants to be in you –to be your life. This is the testimony of the Word.
- ❖ **Has the Lord given you an awareness of any areas of your life – inner attitudes or outward actions – that are not pleasing to Him?**
- (each student may answer)
- ❖ **What is your understanding about Jesus’ exhortation, “Take up your cross daily and follow me?”**
- This so great salvation which He purchased for us at such a great price, insists on our following Him. Where did Lord Jesus go for us? He went to the cross and was crucified in our place.
 - The Lord mentioned the word “cross” only four times in his earthly ministry and it was always mentioned in reference to his disciples.
 - Matthew 10:38 – to the twelve he said “and he that taketh not his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.”
 - Mark 10:21 – to the rich young ruler he said “...come, take up the cross and follow me.”
 - Luke 14:27 – on two other occasions he said, “whosoever does not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

- In this context, taking up the cross means daily identifying with His death – we are not only delivered from sin and hell, but it also means being delivered from the bondage of the world in which we live.
- Taking up the cross includes salvation (deliverance) from our own personality, nature, traits and habits – and from those fleshly attitudes we’ve developed that make our hearts cold and dead to God’s Spirit.
- When we live in Christ, we also experience deliverance from the Devil. We were his bond slaves, since he was given control of our lives – first, by the father of the race and later confirmed by our own choice when you and I reached the age of accountability.
- As children of the Devil, we exhibited his nature, performed his acts and accepted his government
- But now we have come to Jesus Christ, whose purpose is also to save us from the Devil, with all his power and cunning and craftiness. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36)
- Awakening is, itself the first step in the spiritual pilgrimage. And it’s to this subject we must direct our attention as we go step by step in our look at the “so great salvation” that Jesus offers.

COMMENTARY

The Lord speaks to us of His so great salvation in John chapter 3. Three times he says “except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God (v3). And “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter in the Kingdom of God” (v5). And again, “Ye must be born again” (v7)

So salvation is not just Christ on the cross, or Christ in the tomb, but Christ raised from the dead, ascended to the throne, and pouring His eternal life back in to you and me. It is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

If Christianity has not been meeting your high expectations, I encourage you to investigate your own heart. Is it possible you have neglected something God has been trying to have you know? Can you say, “Christ the Lord is my salvation?” Christ is not our savior because he is in heaven. He is our salvation when He lives in us.

AWAKENING

❖ What is “easy believism,” and what has caused its growth?

- Easy believism describes the situation where a person intellectually assents that the basic doctrinal propositions of Christianity are true – and therefore they assume they are saved – that they are assured a place in heaven.
- What we find today in Christian circles is this: If you say, “Uh-huh,” to these few questions, you are hereby declared “saved.” Consequently, many people in the churches of America have everything but life. A beautiful “plan of salvation” is being presented, but it is built upon sand – not upon the Rock, which is Christ Jesus.
- This practice led the pastor of a large church to declare that based on his forty years of close observation in the churches, probably no more than one out of ten of the Southern Baptists experientially knew anything about the new birth.
- In the book *Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, edited by Carl F. Henry, it is reported that among one evangelical denomination 20% of the members never prayed, 25% never read the Bible, 30% never attended the church school, 90% never had family prayers, 95% never gave tithe and 95% never invited a person to become Christian.
- A.W. Tozer made the observation: “among evangelical churches – including the society of which I am part – probably no more than one out of ten know anything about the new birth.”
- An Episcopal professor of theology wrote in a popular periodical, after a survey of church conditions across the country, “...it would not be far wrong to say that perhaps 5% of the 70 or 80 million church members among the 150 million Americans have some real grasp of what their faith means; and that appears to be a generous estimate.”

❖ If you are a Christian, what was your salvation experience like? How did your life change?

- (each student may answer)
- (some may not have a testimony – which should alert them to self-examination)

❖ What does a sinner need to know before he is taught *how* to be saved? How is this accomplished? Which type of Scripture passages should you memorize?

- Before we come to God the Scriptures describe the sinner as traitors, rebels, anarchists, transgressors and enemies. This is because, according to the Scriptures, “The god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- These have a darkened mind, they are blind to the truth
- “You who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). Not only blind, but dead. There’s no interest in the things of God – no sensitivity to the work and Word of God. And that’s why the sinner has to be awakened.

- The Lord says: “awake to righteousness” (1 Corinthians 15:34) and again we read “Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead” (Ephesians 5:14)
- Please **don’t use** John 3:16 with an unawakened sinner. Because if you tell a sinner *how* to be saved before he knows he *needs* to be saved, you only succeed in *hardening* him toward the gospel.
- Paul and Silas did not begin preaching until the jailer asked “What must I do to be saved?” He had been awakened. Then Paul responded to his question: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31)
- We have gospel hardened a generation of sinners by telling them how to be saved before they have any understanding why they need to be saved.
- Here is a verse worth memorizing: “surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction” (Psalm 73:18). This is what the Word says about the wicked. Do you think a sinner believes he is standing in slippery places?
- Consider the next verse: “wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein; for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation” (Jeremiah 23:12)
- That scripture could have the effect of causing a person – one complacent in sin and unawakened – to give his condition a little bit of thought.

❖ **What does it mean to intercede on behalf of sinners? Who is given this responsibility?**

- For some people the best Christian they know is you. God not only wants you to be a living example, but he will burden you to intercede for the lost individual he puts you next to.
- If God is going to start working in the sinner’s heart, it seems He will always have someone praying for his lost condition. And so intercession is a vital part of evangelism and will become vital in your continuing walk with the Lord.
- God yearns for sinners to be saved, but he gives them the right to choose to die and end up in hell, because it was their own decision to have “walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) (same choice given Adam & Eve)
- They have chosen to serve the Devil and live under his government. Sinners do what they want to do by choice, and God respects that right. He will not interfere – until the sinner or until the sinner’s representative asks Him to intervene.
- The believer’s privilege of prayer is extraordinary (intercessor). “Hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father” (Revelation 1:5, 6). It is a priest’s responsibility and privilege to intercede. The priest-intercessor goes into the presence of God on behalf of the sinner. He confesses what the sinner ought to confess, and accepts the sinner’s condemnation and guilt. He is the court-appointed, legal representative for the sinner, pleading with God to begin a work of grace in the sinner’s heart.

❖ What does it mean to be a *witness*?

- Another thing God does for the lost individual is to get somebody to witness to him. A witness is someone who tells what he has seen, heard and experienced –nothing more! How do you know whether or not you are a valid witness?
- Have you heard God speak his word concerning holiness and righteousness? Have you ever caught a glimpse of your own heart and seen yourself as God declares you to be – a traitor, a rebel, an anarchist, a transgressor, an enemy of the cause of Christ?
- Have you ever heard Jesus say to you, “Come unto me and rest?” Have you come?
- Did you find cleansing? Did you find forgiveness?
- Did you experience the new birth? Have you heard the witness of the Spirit inviting you to call Almighty God, “Abba, Father?”
- Then you are a witness. We don’t need to know all the answers. All we need to do is tell what God has done in and for us. That’s all!
- When you have done all that, you have done all you are able to do. Live Christ; intercede, witness to sinners. From that moment on, it up to God to act. It is God’s work to awaken the sinner.

❖ What does it mean to “believe *on* the Lord Jesus Christ?”

- (Acts 16:31) In this verse the Philippian jailer asks Paul and Silas, “What must I do to be saved?” he had been awakened. Then Paul responded to his question: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”
- When we “believe” on the Lord Jesus it means we commit ourselves to him. It means we are going to live in accordance with his will as long as we live. We’re going all to him, just as Abraham committed his all to God.
- To believe in or on the Lord Jesus means to trust His Word and obey His commandments. And the commandment the Lord gave sinners everywhere was to repent and to love the Lord thy God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

COMMENTARY

The message of salvation must not be addressed only to the “world” but to members of America’s evangelical churches also. The greatest field for evangelism today, and in the days ahead, is among church members. If you are unsure whether you have experienced the new birth – or if you are sure you have *not* – examine carefully what I am about to tell you.

Some who begin their walk with the Lord in good faith have become lethargic and fallen asleep. Many true believers need to be awakened by the Holy Spirit. It may be, before you attempt to awaken sinners, you have to examine yourself.

If you have been unconcerned about the lost, you can ask the Lord to forgive you of the terrible sin of neglect. (Have you prayed and asked the Lord to give you the burden of the heart of Christ? A heart for the lost. He will then equip you for the task ahead.)

If the saints are not awakened to their condition it will be difficult for the church to carry out the work Christ has given us to do. Whether it is a friend, neighbor, loved one – anyone who does not know the Lord – you and I need to be intensely interested in their lost estate. For centuries David's prayer as recorded in Psalm 51:10 has been a pattern of true humility and penitence before God: "Create in me a clean heart Oh God." And he was forgiven.

We have this assurance from God's Word: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:19). God longs for you to come to him.

CONVICTION

❖ What does it mean when a sinner is convicted?

- Everything that follows in our spiritual life is built upon all that has preceded. After a man or woman is awakened to their lost state, God does have a second crucial step which cannot be avoided if you want to enter His great salvation.
- The second phase of the divine operations is conviction. If it is not clear what sin is, how will it be possible for there to be sincere conviction?
- Most people you meet have already accepted their own plan of salvation – a plan which excludes the principles of God’s so great salvation.
- Conviction is a legal term. In a court of law, the offender is convicted when he has been found guilty of his crimes. Spiritually, conviction is the process the Holy Spirit uses in dealing with the awakened soul.

❖ Why does a sinner need to be convicted? What is he convicted of?

- Man has climbed onto the throne of his own heart – a place only God can be. And there he sits as a sinner, determined to do only what he wants to. But all the while, he is utterly dependent upon God for his very life and breath.
- Until we discover what our sins are, we are not candidates to be saved from them.
- Because the law of God stands between man and his selfish appetites, the result of anarchic self-government is transgression of God’s Law. The sinner is God’s enemy (Romans 8:7) and that’s why he must be convicted of sin.
- “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Conviction is the work of the Spirit of God in the human heart that causes the person to realize something of the enormity of the crime that he has committed against God.
- In the story of Joseph (Genesis 42:21), his brothers were convicted, not only of their sin, but of the fact that they deserved to be punished for what they had done. They had taken sides with God against themselves. “We are guilty.” This is accepting conviction. The sinner finally understands he deserves judgment.

❖ Who brings conviction upon the sinner? What is His instrument of conviction?

- The Holy Spirit is the only authority in the world designated by God to say to the sinner, “You’re guilty!” this is an important point. Evangelicals anxious to bring large numbers of people into the church have often usurped the authority of the Holy Spirit.
- It is his task to use whomever or whatever He wills as He wills and when he wills to woo the sinner to come to God through Jesus Christ, who himself says it is the Holy Spirit’s task to convict one of sin. (John 16:8)
- This is a mysterious process, the working of which is known only to God.

- Conviction, then is God's unique way of revealing to the awakened sinner all that lies deep within. The sinner, knowing he stands guilty before God, does not like what he sees.

COMMENTARY

The Lord patiently works his grace and love to produce the miracle of the new birth in that individual. He turns sinners into seekers after truth.

The process of conviction is important because he wants men and women who, from the heart, will worship only him. When someone has become awakened, it is not wise to rush in with a "plan of salvation," which will only lead him to a premature assumption that he is a Christian. Our prayer should be that God will help us use Scripture in such a way as to bring the individual to conviction.

If someone is brought under conviction those of us who are Christian need to understand something about sin. Sin in its essence is a committal of the will to the principle and practice of pleasing self as the end of one's being. Man has determined he is going to defy the only One in the universe who is wise enough, big enough and good enough to govern and rule men's lives.

This gives many "New Testament Christians" a problem who don't want to talk about judgment, just God's grace. They only want to talk to sinners about the love of God. If that is true, then how is it that we read: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in [God's] sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin?" (Romans 3:20). And what about this statement: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith?" (Galatians 3:24).

We cannot accept certain preachers who think that God's holiness is a mere blemish on his escutcheon. They pick and choose from the Word whatever will fit their dogma, thus passing on to their followers their own distortions. "By the law is the knowledge of sin," declares the Bible and that Law has been written in the fabric of nature (See Psalm 19, Romans 1) and even in our own hearts.

It is imperative for us, therefore to understand that God has not changed – nor has his Law. It is his millstone, which he uses to cause the *human ego* to undergo this work of being shredded, ripped, crushed and pulverized (the old man must die). Some of the effects when the law is applied to the human conscience are these: unrest, distress, concern, unhappiness. The convicted individual says, "Something's the matter! I don't get any pleasure out of this thing anymore. Unrest gives way to a burden on the mind and on the spirit. The Spirit of God is dealing with the person about their sin.

For instance, David talked about his "misery" in Psalm 51. He cried, "My sin is ever before me." He had God's misery in his heart. In Acts 2:37 it says: "They were pricked in their heart" when they heard the apostle's preaching because they felt conviction. Conviction strikes deep resounding chords of sorrow in the soul. Until we discover what our sins are, we are not candidates to be saved from them.

The Lord says the Holy Spirit will convict of sin because His purpose is not just to save us from hell, but to save us from our sins. How can you be saved if you've never been lost? The only kind of

people God saves are lost people (convicted people). If you are truly Christian it should not be too difficult for you to remember when you were lost.

No one can be forgiven (of sin) as long as he justifies himself. Self-justification – the tendency to call a wrong thing right is always strong. It is an ancient bent in human nature. Adam readily justified himself and put the blame on God for giving him a woman like Eve. Eve too passes on the blame: “The serpent deceived me and I ate.”

We cannot justify ourselves. In evangelical circles we find a variety of popular teachers who espouse programs based on a “love” gospel, which is not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must train our spiritual senses to detect the false from the true worked in the church. Through reading of the Word, through prayer and through fellowship with mature Christians we are able to train our eyes to see clearly. “My sheep know my voice.” This is why Jesus emphasized, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 11:15).

REPENTANCE

❖ What is the essence of repentance?

- The lost condition leads into a state we call repentance. “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
- Repentance is not being “sorry for sin.” The Greek for repentance means “to change one’s mind” from one type of thinking to another.
- John MacArthur: “No evangelism that omits the message of repentance can properly be called the gospel, for sinners cannot come to Jesus Christ apart from a radical change of heart, mind and will. That demands a spiritual crisis leading to a complete turnaround and ultimately a wholesale transformation. It is the only kind of conversion Scripture recognizes.”
- Repentance means making a 180 degree turn. Changing from “I’m going to do what I want to do,” to “Lord I’m going to please you as long as I live.” It is a change of mind, a change of intention, a change of purpose, and a change of practice.

❖ Why is it necessary?

- The Scriptures tell us “all have sinned.” Men must be convicted of sin. We must repent. Christ said “Unless you repent, you will perish.”
- Repentance is a committal of the will to the principle and practice of pleasing God in everything. This means from today on, the Lord is going to be King and Sovereign. You do as he tells you, because, out of love, he deserves to be obeyed and served. We need to understand this ourselves in order to proclaim it to others.
- Repentance is not merely “accepting Christ”

❖ Is repentance still necessary today?

- At any point in your Christian pilgrimage when you discover that your mind is not in accord with His mind, the issue has to be settled immediately. You must conform to His mind, as he reveals it.
- Repentance leads to a living faith – not just the hope of an afterlife. This type of faith is the next step we must make as we move deeper into God and the life he plans for us.

COMMENTARY

Repentance, it must be stated, doesn’t earn us anything. A man is not doing any works. All he is doing when he repents is to realize the enormity of his crime in living to please himself and to gratify his appetites. He is not striking a deal with God.

Spurgeon: “Repentance to be real has to be hearty and not reluctant. It has to be voluntary – not induced or coerced.” He added that if a person had a thousand sins and repented of only 999 there is no real repentance. You are merely trying to strike a bargain with God.

The whole “Accept Christ” attitude is likely to be wrong says Tozer: It makes Him stand hat-in-hand awaiting our verdict on Him, instead of our kneeling with troubled hearts awaiting His verdict on us. It may even permit us to accept Christ by an impulse of mind or emotions, painlessly, at no loss to our ego and no inconvenience to our usual way of life.

It’s possible, having just “accepted Christ,” to say “Well, I did that once. But some things have come along and...” Friend if repentance is past-tense for you it’s time to bring everything up-to-date. For without repentance you cannot begin to know God’s so great salvation. Charles Finney: “repentance always implies hatred of sin. It is feeling toward sin exactly as God feels. It always implies forsaking sin.”

Perhaps you’ve heard people say, “I accepted Jesus as Savior six years ago. This year at a summer conference, I accepted Jesus as Lord.” That simply is not Biblical. The Word says, “If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus.” Literally it is, “If you accept Jesus as Lord.” That means allowing him to be Lord in all things *today*.

FAITH

❖ What is a simple definition of faith? Faith cannot be separated from behavior. Why?

- Hebrews 11:1-6 offers us the only definition of faith in the Scripture.
“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”
- A simple definition is “faith is the sight of the soul.” In Scripture faith is also defined as the “persuasion of God,” something that the Lord gives to them that commit themselves to Him, so that they may follow, trust, obey and have comfort, joy and peace in God.
- God chose to illustrate the meaning of faith in the story of Isaac and Abraham. The Lord told Abraham “Take Isaac down there and offer him to the Lord.” Now Abraham was a man of faith and he obeyed. Faith and obedience always are the same thing. Two sides of the same coin.
- Abraham had resurrection faith. He said, “I’ll do this. But God has promised he would bring me a seed from this lad. And if God wants Isaac, well and good. He gave him to me in the first place. He’ll give him back to me again.” That’s faith.
- Faith says, God is able to do what he has promised.

❖ How do you go about turning “head faith” – or any of the other types of faith described in this chapter – into “heart faith?”

- Saving faith, or heart faith, happens in response to repentance. That’s why Paul said to the people of Ephesus: “and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:20, 21)
- It must be in that order. For in that way heart faith is released.

❖ Christians talk about living or “walking” by faith. What does the “walk” of faith mean to you?

- As God’s new creation in Christ Jesus his likeness must be reflected in the characteristics of our daily lives. We must bring God into every facet of our living and trust him wholly. That’s what it means “to live by faith.”

- Christians are to be like Christ in their habits, their conversation, and in all the pursuits of life.
- The Christian life is a walk of faith. Step by step, day by day we discover that the Lord is conforming us more and more to his will.
- His purpose is to make us vessels he can use for his glory

COMMENTARY

Romans 4: “Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” And then in verses 8, 9 we read: “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin... for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.”

Why is Abraham’s faith important to us? Because it is this kind of faith that must be exercised to bring us into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Also the promise God made to Abraham – that he would be the father of many nations – was not only to Abraham and the seed of his body, but to everyone who savingly embraces God’s dear Son – the gift of his love.

In other words, everyone born into the family of God through faith in Christ receives the promise of salvation. Now we can better understand Acts 1:8: “...After that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

We’re talking about a faith that not only savingly unites us to Christ, but brings us into a relationship where the promise that was made to Abraham long ago can be fulfilled now – today – in those who believe in Jesus Christ.

- There are several kinds of faith I have discovered that need to be clearly identified:
 - *Head faith* – this is an intellectual assent to what is written in the Word. There are multitudes of people in the churches who think themselves to be born of God because they intellectually or mentally have assented to what they read on the page.
 - We need to distinguish between what our minds perceive and what our hearts have received. There’s a great deal of difference.
 - *Dead faith* – this is equally devastating. I found “dead faith” among our Muslim friend when we were in the Sudan. There are multitudes who name the name of Christ and who are associated with Christian groups but have accepted only rituals and taboos. They abstain from this and observe that. They have been baptized and catechized. But they are unaware that salvation is not a system of doctrines, taboos and rituals.
 - They do not know that salvation means having the life of Christ in you. “He that has the Son has life.” They have everything but Christ, and so they have a dead faith.
 - *Devil’s faith* - this is an emotional response to the horrors of hell and the beauties of heaven. It is the kind of faith that the demon expressed the day he cried out, “Have you come to judge us before the time?” He had faith that Jesus Christ was God – that he was going to be judged by Him. But he remained a devil.

- We read in James, “The devils believe and tremble.” But they remain impenitent and are devils nonetheless. Their emotional response is: “I don’t want to go to that horrible place. So I’ll believe anything I need to believe in order to escape the one place (hell) and gain the other (heaven). That is a devil’s faith.
- *Heart faith* - Is described in Romans 10 as “the word of faith” that is in the heart and near the mouth that causes one to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and master and brings salvation. In other words it is a “saving faith.”

When we “believe” on the Lord Jesus it means we commit ourselves to him. It means we are going to live in accordance with his will as long as we live. We’re going all to him, just as Abraham committed his all to God.

Having given ourselves to him, that principle of giving must continue moment by moment. Everything the Christian is and has belongs to God. Keep this point clear: A Christian is merely a custodian of what God has given him.

THE NEW BIRTH

❖ What happens at the “new birth”

- “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)
- In response to heart faith a marvelous thing happens. In heaven we are justified: the record against us has changed; that is to say, our standing before God has changed.
- Justified means it is as though I had never sinned. Our sins have been laid on Christ. They were accounted to him. We have been forgiven, pardoned. Our sins have been washed away never again to be held against us. It is a legal matter, decided eternally once and for all.
- We are born again. God, the Holy Spirit has quickened us. Our spirit has been joined to Him by that life-giving touch. We become new creations. He has restored contact with us who were once separated from Him by our sins.

❖ Why is it necessary?

- John Wesley: “The new birth is that great change which God works in the soul, when he brings it into life and raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. The new birth is the change wrought in the soul by the almighty Spirit of God, when that soul is created anew in Christ Jesus. The Spirit renews the soul of man after the image of God and adds to it righteousness and true holiness.”
- John Wesley: “You must be born again. Because without the new birth, all the good you do does not help your poor, sinful, polluted soul.”

❖ What are some evidences of the new birth?

- The new birth is a mystery. Those who are truly born from above will continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In doing so, it is not possible for them to miss the further blessings of God’s so great salvation, which we must now consider.

❖ Is it possible to be holy without it?

- No one can be holy until he is born again. Holiness is the pre-requisite to knowing God’s so great salvation.

COMMENTARY

John 3:3 – “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” The tragedy of today’s “easy believism” is that the products of it do not get their assurance from God Himself. And so many people say, “Oh I’ve tried to be a Christian. It just doesn’t work.” It doesn’t work because their broken connection was never repaired.

It has been reported that in present-day evangelism, only one person of out two hundred first-time “decisions” for Christ continues to live as a Christian two years later. They go back to what they were before their decisions. In effect, they wash the whole thing off. Nothing is real.

A.W. Tozer in *When He Is Come*, wrote: “So it is that a human being can know about God, he can know about Christ’s dying for him, he can even write songs and books, be the head of religious organizations and hold important church office and still never have come to a vital, personal knowledge of God at all. Only by the Holy Ghost can he know God.”

No one in the universe has the right to tell a person he is born of God, except the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of adoption. He has never relinquished that right to anyone. That is His sovereign prerogative.

John Wesley: “So desperately wicked and so deceitful are the hearts of men that they flatter themselves by living in their sins until they come to their last breath. Thousands really believe they have found a way to live. But it is a broad way and will lead them to destruction.”

Some people consider themselves honest and of such strict morality that they cannot see how they can miss heaven. But when John Wesley encountered such people in his day he never failed to warn them of God’s wrath against those who live a self-righteous life.

He would say: “It may be that you are doing just as well as your unholy neighbors. But you, like them will die in your sins. You shall drop into the pit together. All of you will lie together in the lake of fire – the fire that burns with brimstone.”

Our evangelists talk in dulcet tones only of love and the result is that people are won to themselves instead of to God. Can this be the reason we see so few honest decisions for Jesus Christ? Just as in Wesley’s time, today we find many people hiding behind their good standing in the local church. They are the very pillars of the church. Such people must be met with hard words.

“Go to church twice a day. Go to the Lord’s Table every week. Say as many prayers in private as you can pray. And then listen to all the sermons you care to hear. Read all the books you can read about Christ. Still you must be born again.” John Wesley

Wesley left a prayer you should make your own: “Lord, add this to all thy blessings. Let me be born again. Deny me whatever pleases you, but don’t deny me this. Let me be born from above. Take away whatever seems good to you. Take my reputation, my fortune, my friends and my health. But give me the privilege of being born of the Spirit. Let me be received among the children of God.”

WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

- ❖ **What are some of the evidences that a person has been born of God?**
 - (covered on page 56)
- ❖ **Who is the only one capable of telling a person whether or not he's been born again? What happens when we assume this role?**
 - No one has the right to think himself a child of God unless he has the witness of the Spirit to the new birth!
 - God the Holy Spirit is the only one who has the right to give you assurance that you are born from above.
 - If we meet someone who says, "Well, I hope to go to heaven when I die," or if they say, "I said the sinner's prayer one time, and I didn't feel anything at all." It is NOT our place to pour assurances into them. The fact that they doubt their salvation is enough for them to be fearful. We are doing them a great disservice to give them false hope.
 - The church world is teeming with people who are actively engaged in programs they believe are earning them salvation. But the sad truth is, they have no peace with God. It is not our place to coddle or comfort these people. Rather they need to be stirred into seeking after Christ as Lord and Savior.
- ❖ **In light of the Holy Spirit's path into the heart of a sinner – awakening, conviction, repentance, and heart faith – how would you determine whether or not someone you know is ready to pray and give his or her life to God?**
 - Pastor Reidhead: "I try to tell people how holy God is. Using the Word, I try to get them to see how sinful they are. Then I try to show them what God has done in love and grace for them, and what they must do in response to him. Then I tell them, "When you do what God's Word commands you to do, you will be born again. And when you are born again, you will have the witness of the Spirit. When you know you have passed from death to life, you come and tell me."
- ❖ **What is the difference between "feeling" either excited or saddened by a gospel message, and "knowing" that you are a child of God?**
 - John Wesley: "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). And then he would quote: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" (1 Corinthians 2:11)
 - The spirit is the part of you that knows you are here and not somewhere else. It is the part of you that knows you are married and not single, or single and not married. It's the part of you that knows you're a man and not a woman, or a woman and not a man. It is the part of you that God joins in the new birth – that part of you which, as God quickens your heart in this new creation, He tells you and you alone. Because then you know that you know! That is what the witness of the Spirit is.

❖ Read Galatians 5:16-25. Are there areas of your life that the Holy Spirit is speaking to you about when you read this passage?

- “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”
- (each student may answer)

❖ How does Horatius Bonar describe “the witness of the Spirit?”

- “I lay great stress on this in dealing with inquirers that they hear about faith from the lips of God Himself. For the more we can fix the sinner’s eye and conscience upon God’s own words, the more likely shall we be to lead him a right, and to secure the quickening presence of that Almighty Spirit who alone can give sight to the blind.” – Horatio Bonar
- If a person is not aware that he has received the Spirit of God he is not going to have any understanding about how to get acquainted with these marvelous things which God has prepared for them that love him. (Isaiah 64:4; 1 Corinthians 2:9).
- God brooding over the sinner’s heart must awaken that man to his fate if he chooses to continue as a rebel. It is God who convicts. It is the Holy Spirit who moves a man to repent. God the Holy Spirit is the one who communicates with the human spirit.

❖ What reason does the Bible give for our redemption?

- “...Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” [“Peculiar,” as used in the text does not mean strange or odd. It means purchased.] – Titus 2:11-14
- Galatians 4:4-6 “...to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive adoption as sons.”

❖ What gives man true understanding?

- Every human being is body, soul and spirit. The part of man that knows the things of a man is the spirit of man that is in him. The body will return to the dust from which it was made. The person that thinks and feels and wills and knows will continue to exist. That’s the spirit of man that is in him.
- We read “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11).

- “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Corinthians 2:12).
- Understanding comes to a man when God breathes upon and into him. Job 32:8 says, “There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the almighty giveth them understanding.”
- ❖ **What is it within our hearts that can truly say “Abba Father?” See Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:15-16; Mark 14:36; 1 John 4:13.**
 - It is the spirit of man which savingly receives the Son of God by faith. It is the Holy Spirit witnessing to our spirit, who tells us that we are the children of God.
 - “...God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying ‘Abba, Father.’ Galatians 4:4-6
- ❖ **How do we certify the evidence of eternal life?**
 - John in his epistle wants us to be certain that we belong to God. How can we know that we are sons and daughters of God? “Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” (1 John 4:13).
 - This statement is the foundation of our relationship with God. We are born of His Spirit, by His Spirit, and it is our spirit that is regenerated.
 - Because our attitude toward the world has been transformed by the power of God, we bear in ourselves another evidence of eternal life.
 - You certify the genuineness of your faith in Christ by your continuing to purify yourself, even as the Lord Jesus Christ is pure. You purify yourself by obeying the Word.
 - The part of us that is the partaker of the divine nature is the human spirit. In Romans 8:16 we read “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”
 - We should never tell people that they are saved! We must tell them how holy God is. We can show them from the Word how sinful sin is. We can tell them what God did to achieve their salvation. We can tell them what they must do to be saved. But we must never tell them that they are saved. Only God knows the hearts of people.
 - The only one in the universe who has the right to tell a person that she has been brought out of death into life is God the Holy Ghost. This is an important truth.
 - Doing good things or having church membership does not necessarily mean vital fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - People cannot “go on with the Lord” if they have never begun with Him.
 - Without the witness of the Spirit that you are a child of God, how can you be led by the Spirit?

COMMENTARY

Our Lord did offer the promise of comfort and assurance – but not to sinners. “Another Comforter,” the Holy Spirit, he said would come to his followers – to those who would be like orphans – after he left the earth to go to the Father. The sinner knows absolutely nothing about this.

Through his gracious work of regeneration, he seals us with the witness of his Spirit, he has brought us out of death into life. This is how we know that he is in us, “by the Spirit which he has given us.”

The earnest servant of God should be totally familiar with 1 John which was written “that we might know we have eternal life.” The human spirit is dead to heavenly things. We are born of the Spirit only as the Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are born of God. Life in God comes to every believer only in this way – though we may not even be aware of the process or know there is a Holy Spirit! (See also Romans 8:16, 17:1; 1 John 5:6)

One of the best means of evangelism is the living room, and the best text is Scripture. Does the text say “Christ gave himself for us that he might save us from hell and take us to heaven when we die?” No! Not in my Bible. The Scripture reads this way, “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a purchased people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14)

Is it hard to hear the Holy Spirit say, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15)? Can you say that your love is toward him and not toward the world?

God condescends to use us in the building of His kingdom on this earth. He could have used millions of angels. Instead in his wisdom, he has turned enforcement of his victory over to those of us who once were slaves of Satan.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

❖ What are the four distinct definitions of the term “the world”

- *Cosmos* – taken from this Greek term, it pertains to the physical earth, to the planet spinning in space.
- *Human race* – this definition describes the inhabitants of the earth. “For God so loved the world.” (John 3:16). When Jesus encourages us to love one another he said this was so “...that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21).
- *Enemies of God* – this definition describes those who are alienated from God and are against the cause of Christ. For example, Hebrews 11:38 says, “Of whom the world was not worthy.” When Jesus said, “If the world hate you,” (John 15:18) He was pointing to those who despise Him and His people.
- *World System* – this can mean all the objects, people, advantages, fleeting pleasures and everything else that entices our desires. Spiritually it refers to all that attracted you, engaged you, and held you prior to your coming to Christ. Ultimately the world, in this sense, would seduce us from Christ and His love.

❖ With which definition is the Apostle John concerned?

- World System. “...the things that are in the world,” (1 John 2:15)
- The Lord Jesus meant the political and social philosophy that controls the entire world system when he said, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26)
- Moral values of the world are included as well. 1 Corinthians 2:17 talks about “the wisdom of the world.”
- The Christian is exhorted to “keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)
- The Lord Jesus would have us be alert to the fact that ever since Adam made it possible for evil to enter God’s creation, all that is in the world – its entire system- has been only always against God. We are speaking of a domain governed and controlled by Satan who is the mind behind the world system.

❖ In 1 John 2:16 how is the world described? How do these three categories relate to ancient idol worship? How do they relate to current philosophies?

- The nature of this world reflects the characteristics (character) of Satan: “for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16)
- These three categories have been used by Satan for thousands of years to entice men and women away from God, and he has been phenomenally successful!
 - *Worship of Ashtoreth* – worship based on sexual indulgences, the lust of the flesh (Judges 2:13, 1 Samuel 7:3)

- *Worship of Baal* – satisfied the lust of the eyes. Baal was worshipped for the purpose of acquiring possessions.
- *Worship of Moloch* – the desire for power, described as “the pride of life” led to Israelites sacrificing the lives of their children to Moloch to gain position, power and influence over people. (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2, 1 Kings 11:7; 11:11, Kings 23:10)
- John wrote this epistle to believers in Jesus Christ, to alert them that people had come into the church who did not believe the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ although they professed to be Christians. John’s letter reminds us that the ancient lies Satan perpetrated from the beginning were manifested in the heresy of his day.

❖ **What is Gnosticism?**

- A belief system that attempts to separate God from His creation, especially from man, and to erase man’s responsibility to act in a morally rational manner toward God and other people.
- It leaves the door wide open for people to gratify any physical desire they can think of
- It is espoused by people who say that they have a higher knowledge, another revelation above and beyond and “other than” the revelation of Scripture. Gnostics in the Apostle John’s day were influenced by popular philosophers and scientists, as it is today.
- There is no revelation higher than God. He is the only source of understanding. There is no revelation higher than Jesus Christ.

❖ **Define Dualism**

- A basic tenet of Gnosticism, is the Satanic doctrine that says all matter was created by Satan and only spirit was created by God. Therefore, only spirit is good. All matter is bad. The earth is bad, the body is bad, the appetites are bad, and so on. But God, you will recall, pronounced His creation, including the body, good (Genesis 1:31).
- Gnostics claim since man is in a body, and the body is matter, it doesn’t make any difference what man does in that body because the body has no moral significance at all. Therefore, a person can go right on living in darkness and still claim to be a follower of Christ, claiming to have fellowship with God.

❖ **What is one of the tenets of Antinomianism?**

- Antinomianism means “against law.” This faulty doctrine says man in the body does the sinning and not the spirit. God gets grace by forgiving sinners. Therefore, the more a Christian sins, the more glory God gets in forgiving sin because there are more sins to forgive. Can you detect Satan’s twisting of the truth?
- To combat this heresy which had infiltrated the early church John says, “this then is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3)

❖ How do these heresies manifest themselves today?

- Today counterfeits of the truth are everywhere. The aim of heresy is to deny the sovereignty of God, to exalt man and to glorify Satan who works through self-centered man. Satan has not changed his plan of attack. It is the same as it was from the beginning.
- How can believers identify these heresies? In Matthew 7:15-20: “wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” If what you say does not line up with what you do, there is a problem.
- The Christian must ask himself daily, “What motivates me in relation to the world?”
- The election to grace is an election (calling) unto holiness. If we have fellowship with darkness it excludes the possibility of fellowship with God.

CHRISTIANS DO NOT WALK IN DARKNESS

❖ What does it mean to “walk in darkness?”

- “Walk” has to do with the entire life, not just where the feet go. To walk in darkness is to habitually practice sin. It means to choose, to prefer, if you please, to do those things, which grieve the heart of God.
- Folks who walk in darkness are convinced they can have fellowship with God and walk in darkness at the same time. These are alienated from the life of God. They have chosen uncleanness. Sad to say, you can find this kind of person in the church.
- If you permit the thought patterns that the Word of God condemns, and you follow through and walk in them, you have real reason to be seriously concerned about the genuineness of your profession of faith in Christ.
- Can you say that you delight to do His will, that you do only those things that please the Father? Would the Father say of you “I am well pleased?”

❖ What Scripture reinforces this statement: There is no state of grace that you will ever attain where you are immune to the possibility of sinning.

- 1 John 2:1
- All believers experience temptation. All believers are always capable of falling into sin.
- While there is the possibility of sinning, and even the likelihood of sinning, there is not the necessity of sinning. God can give you victory over sin.

❖ How can we know victory in Christ?

- When the angels announced our Lord’s birth they said, “Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). The angel said “FROM their sins,” not IN their sins.
- The Apostle points us to Jesus who is Himself the Way of escape.
 - 1 Corinthians 10:13: “there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”
 - The Spirit of God through John says “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not” (1 John 2:1)
- When you are tempted, God, the Holy Spirit is going to remind you that you were crucified with Christ. He is going to implement the principle found in Romans 6:11. He is going to stir your heart to say, “Father just now I reckon myself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- When we do sin, when we are led aside in a fault, we must judge that sin, forsake it and confess it. Then we will know the covering, the propitiation.

❖ What is the ultimate evidence of our Christianity?

- If you have been born of God and have partaken of His nature and of His Spirit, the Scripture says you are going to feel the same way toward darkness that the Lord Jesus Christ did.
- A child of God may fall in to sin, but he can't make peace with it because there has been a commitment to have fellowship with God. He hates sin.
- The Scripture is clear "...neither give place to the devil..." (Ephesians 4:27) if you give part of an inch to Satan, you open the door to attacks and disaster against you and your family.

COMMENTARY

Because of Satan's lies and the hardness of people's hearts, error abounds. Everyone has his own plan of salvation, either invented or inherited. Some say, "I don't think there is a heaven or a hell. When you die, you're dead. That's it. There isn't anything else."

Other say, "Somebody up there is keeping track of my good and bad deeds. They are all weighed on a scale. If my good deeds outweigh my bad deeds, I'll get in." Such people engage in enthusiastic volunteerism in their church and community. They work very hard. Yet they still walk in darkness.

OBEDIENCE IS THE TEST

- ❖ **What does E.M. Bounds say about God’s commandments?**
 - “Does God give commandments which men cannot obey?”
 - “In all the Holy Scripture, not a single instance is recorded of God having commanded any man to do anything which was beyond his power.”
- ❖ **Explain Wesley’s statement: “The commandment to the sinner “Thou shalt not’ becomes the promise to the saint, “Thou shalt not.’**
 - Saints want to obey God, and the sinner hates the infringement of his rights and privileges, as he views them, that God’s commandments impose upon him.
 - We are to live Christ before the world and we are to be in fellowship with other Christians. If we claim to be a child of God, the evidence of that fact is that we obey God – not the profession of what we say with words. Obedience not words or feelings is the test of union with Christ
 - It is not how skillfully we learn to repeat words we’ve learned in religious circles, or in the things we’ve acquired by osmosis though close contact with religious people.
 - It is not even in doing good deeds unless those actions are inspired by the Holy Spirit and carried out selflessly.
- ❖ **According to the Bible what does the word “death” imply?**
 - *A state of darkness* characterized by trespasses and sins. Those who are dead in trespasses and sin have committed their will to please themselves. As long as that choice prevails, God can not reveal Himself to them.
 - *A kingdom* (kingdom of death) and all who dwell there live in sin. A kingdom controlled by Satan. All in this kingdom walk according to the prince and the power of the air (Satan)
 - *Death implies separation*, not annihilation. The person who lives in the kingdom of death is separated from God, and the separation is so great only the cross of Christ could span the gap.
 - In the church we see people still under the control of Satan claiming to be the children of God. The Lord is concerned and we ought to be as well because God has chosen His people to be living examples of His power to change lives. How can any seeking heart see the power of a loving holy God at work in the human heart if there is no difference in word or deed between the Christian and the person who lives a life of sin and selfishness?
 - Against the kingdom of darkness is the kingdom of light. In repentance and in saving faith a person’s “receiving set” is reconnected, and the first broadcast that one receives from the antenna of Calvary is that you can call Almighty God, “Abba, Father!”

- This is the witness of the Spirit. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;” (Colossians 1:12,13)
- ❖ Explain the difference between “walking in darkness” and falling into sin.”
- Walking in darkness is the habitual practice of sin. When one “falls into sin,” it is not intended and the Christian will hate it, confess it, and forsake it.

SALVATION IS A PERSON

- ❖ **What significance does the Apostle John assign to how we walk?**
 - John strikes at the heart of the matter by stating unequivocally that fellowship with darkness excludes fellowship with God. Everyone who is in Him, who abides in Him does not go on sinning. “If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth” (1 John 1:6)
 - Christians do not walk in darkness
- ❖ **List three Scriptures that support the statement: “Salvation is a Person”**
 - “I am the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me” (John 14:6). The Lord is saying here that he was salvation
 - Psalm 27:1 – David says “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; whom shall I be afraid?” Salvation is a person
 - Exodus 15:2 “The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.”
 - Acts 28:28 “Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.”
- ❖ **How was Satan vanquished through the power of the cross?**
 - The Father saw Christ on the cross as the sinner you once were and his wrath was poured upon his beloved Son. In that hour every arrow in Satan’s quiver was loosed at the Son of God. Jesus was severely buffeted. Everything that could be done by the god of this world against the God of heaven and earth was done to the Son of God. When nothing more could be done, the Lord Jesus declared that the justice and righteousness of God had been vindicated! Satan’s power had been broken. Then our Lord Jesus thundered from the cross, “It is finished!” and He died.
 - Jesus was taken down from the cross and he was buried. On the third day the Godlife that could not die returned to the Father. Jesus came forth from the grave, alive again and He “led captivity captive.”
- ❖ **What is the contract God has with his children?**
 - You cannot walk in the light and in the darkness at the same time. In other words, you cannot love the commandments of God and hate the commandments of God at the same time. You either love God or love the world. You either seek to please God or you seek to please the world, but no one can love both at the same time. “He that doeth the will of God abideth forever,” (1 John 2:17)
- ❖ **How are you to know the will of God for your life?**
 - You have to commit yourself to the will of God before you will know it.

❖ What did John Wesley declare about God's commandments?

- “Do all diligence to walk according to the light you have received! Be zealous to receive more light daily – use all the knowledge and love and life and power – so shall you daily go on from faith and daily increase in holy love.”

❖ What is your attitude toward God's commandments?

- The person who is truly a believer has determined to love God and his neighbor. This love is to will the highest good and well-being for God and all people with no thought of compensation.
- The things you do, you do because you love Christ, because he has spoken to your heart, because he has moved upon you. There is an inner reality, a dynamic relationship with the living God. We want to know his will. We have already settled the matter of doing his will.

LOVING ONE'S BROTHER

❖ What does the Book of Job prove?

- It proves that God's grace is sufficient for every human need in all circumstances. God has not changed. Our Lord is able to help his children in times of trial, no matter what the test.

❖ What is the evidence of eternal life spoken of in this chapter?

- You love the brethren in Christ

❖ What is the Christian's response to injury and hurt?

- "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (1 John 2:10). John tells us it is possible for us to walk in the light without stumbling, even though a brother may hurt us, injure us or cause us pain.
- The Christian response to such things is never vengeance. The Christian never tries "to get even" with anyone who has betrayed or hurt him.
- True believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have chosen to leave the realm of darkness.

❖ How are we to deal with conflicts with a brother?

- We must use discernment. Only God knows why people do what they do. From Scripture we have been given instruction on ways to deal with conflicts with a brother. "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25). The first step is to forgive our brother.
- "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained a brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matthew 18:15-17)
- REMEMBER what we are to do concerning the heathen. We are to pray for them that they will turn to God and be saved.
- Does this mean the Christian cannot be forthright (outspoken, direct, blunt)? No. It means that we are to always walk in the Spirit.

❖ What message does God send to us in 1 John 3:14?

- "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14)
- John wants believers to know that Christians love those whom they once hated. Because they love Christ they do good to those who treat them with disdain (Matthew 5:44)

- The history lesson from the past is this; you cannot love God and have in your heart the intention to hurt your brother. It is impossible. This is an old truth, but in Christ it has been made brand new. (In you!)
- If you find someone who names the name of Christ – and I do not care how much theology he can recite – who does not have a heart of compassion for the lost and those who have never heard the name of Christ, how does the love of God dwell in such a person?
- He that hates his brother is a murderer, and to see a brother's need, and not to care, is to designate one to be dead in trespasses and sin.
- If the Spirit of God has come into your life to bring life, that life is going to be consistent with the Lord Jesus and it is going to be manifest in you.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

❖ **How would you define the following:**

- **DESERTER** (1 John 2:19) – the deserters of Christ are those whom John says “went out from us, but they are not of us.” John portrays them in the Book of Revelation. They are found in the “synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 2:9) and they have “a name to live, but are dead” (Revelation 3:1). This marks the period of time in which apostasy occurs; a turning away from Christ on the part of many who professed to follow Him.
- The antichrists will say that Jesus was a great teacher, or that he was one of the prophets, but they will not consent to the fact that Jesus is, indeed, the Christ – the Son of the living God. They will absolutely reject that Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh.
- The person who refuses to recognize and enthrone Christ as God the Son is antichrist. Everyone who opposes the Gospel, as our Lord delivered it; every teacher and writer who lowers the Gospel standard to the spirit and taste of the world, is an antichrist.
- **DENIER** (1 John 2:22, 23) – these are the deniers of the truth. John writes, “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son has the Father also”
- Antichrists deny that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the anointed of the Father: they deny that our Lord and Savior is both God and man. Please be aware that John is talking about people who once made a profession of faith in Christ, but they have forsaken of The Way of truth.
- It is very possible that antichrists can and do exist in the church, but they have no spiritual affinity to the company of true believers.
- Deniers stand on the traditions of men rather than on the Word of God. “Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such things ye do. And he said unto them, full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.” (Mark 7:6-9)
- Part of this company of Deniers are those who consider themselves safe because they are resting in their baptism as infants. They assume themselves to be acceptable to God. This belief is not Scriptural, and these people are in danger of being eternally lost.
- Then there are multitudes of people who have followed the instructions of some religious leader and they have assumed themselves to be righteous. This is a dangerous thing to do. We do not follow a man. We put our trust in God
- The effect of Denial is there is no personal revelation of God, neither any message of love from the eternal throne; no redemption, no savior to the person in denial. He is lost in darkness.

- The tradition of the elders or the practices of the people make the Word of God of no effect, it is the denial of the truth.
 - Believers in every age must recognize that there will be a falling away.
 - **DISCERNER** - The unction from the Holy Spirit enables those of us who are believers to clearly understand what is true and what is false in the religious field around us. Our spiritual eyes have been opened. This was done when we were born again, but more particularly when we were baptized (immersed) with the Holy Spirit.
 - “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Psalm 45:7). The anointing is upon those who are born of God: they are taught by God to know the difference between truth and error.
 - **DEFENDER** – By our attitudes, actions and words, we are to defend the truth of Jesus the Christ. While the antichrists are everywhere around us in this final hour, we who have been born into the Father’s family await the appearing of our Redeemer Lord. Of these who are not defiled by the world the Lord says, “They shall walk with me in white” for they are worthy” (Revelation 3:4)
 - **DESERVER** – These are the true believers that abide in Christ. They are justified before the Lord, not for what they have done, but because of what Christ has done, and they abide in Him. “If ye know that he is righteousness, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.” (1 John 2:28-29)
 - Most of us, in the early days of our Christians lives, did not have too much fellowship with God. For the most part we had fellowship with other people about God. Then, as we walked with the Lord and were nourished in the Word and learned some things of the Christ life, we began to have fellowship with the Lord. If we are going to have fellowship with God, we must learn all we can about Him.
 - God is righteous and everyone who is born of Him has been made a partaker of the divine nature. Therefore, if someone says that he is a child of God and has been born again, and he doesn’t practice righteousness, this person is not telling the truth because God is righteous.
 - “...when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). Every person who has been born of God has this hope within. They long to be like Him. Relationship is the reward that the Lord Jesus seeks and for which the Father waits. He wants a people to praise Him.
 - “...Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure,” (1 John 3:3), by taking heed according to the Word, by reading it and studying it.
- ❖ **The last times, end times, the last days, the final hour all refer to what period of time? What are the characteristics of this period of time? List Scriptures that support these characteristics.**
- It denotes the beginning of that period which will ultimately conclude all things. It was “the last times” for the entire period since the Apostle John was alive. We are still in that period centuries later.

- It marks a period of time, long or short, in which apostasy will occur. It marks the beginning of a crisis of enormous significance, that is the emergence of antichrists. This time has been marked by a turning away from Christ on the part of many who professed to follow Him
- (1 Timothy 4:1,2) – “now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron”
- (2 Timothy 3:8) – “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith”
- (2 Timothy 4:3) - “for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” It is the people, not the teachers who have itching ears: they select teachers who are going to scratch their ears and make them feel comfortable by telling them what they want to hear.
- (Matthew 24:24) – “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”
- (2 Timothy 3:1) - “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come”

❖ **How can the antichrists be identified?**

- The person who refuses to recognize and enthrone Christ as God the Son is antichrist.
- John notified us that there are many antichrists. The antichrist went out (from the saints) and sought to induce others to go out with him. To remain steadfast and loyal to Christ requires that we recognize truth, that we remain faithful to truth, that we rejoice in the prospect of His coming and that we resist the seducers.
- There are people who are in good standing as a member of their church. They never miss a service. They participate in every church program; they are extremely active. All these “credentials” do not necessarily mean they are in spiritual fellowship with the true believers in the congregation. They are filled with pride based on their affiliation. Their allegiance is not to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The effect of this is the church will be filled with socially minded heathen unable to access the power of God because they are not His people. The church becomes spiritually ineffective, filled with strife and factions that war against one another.
- How can one who has only learned to parrot a few religious words, but has not inwardly changed, honestly demonstrate true holiness? Only God’s love can transform the treasonous heart.

❖ **What is the result of mixing pagan philosophies and Bible teaching? Give illustrations.**

- Teachers of pagan philosophies, heresies like Gnosticism and Antinomianism had crept into the church thus disgracing the Gospel and confusing people. The Word of God becomes of no effect in these scenarios.

- Therefore, a person can go right on living in darkness and still claim to be a follower of Christ, claiming to have fellowship with God
- The aim of heresy is to deny the sovereignty of God, to exalt man and to glorify Satan who works through self-centered man. The end result is the damnation of these followers of the lie.
- The Apostle John declared that these were not their fellow believers. He says, “They went out from us, but they were not of us...but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” (1 John 2:19)
- ❖ **Define unction. What is the purpose of the “unction from the Holy One” in our lives? How does the unction protect us daily? What is the main purpose of John’s first epistle?**
 - “Ye have an unction from the Holy one, and ye know all things” (1 John 2:20). Unction literally means “ointment,” that which was used when the High Priest was anointed.
 - The unction from the Holy Spirit enables those of us who are believers to clearly understand what is true and what is false in the religious field around us.
 - This unction will preserve us against the antichrists that are operating now, and there are many. They call their teachings atheism, and pantheism and deism and anti-supernaturalism to name a few... and I have to include dispensationalism of which I was part of for many years.
 - The Spirit of God wants us to be equipped so we will not be misled and captured by the antichrist. The Holy unction will help you withstand seducing, lying spirits. Then you will not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14).
 - **It is the responsibility of every believer, therefore, to search the Scriptures and to know what truth is.** We are not to give undue loyalty to one particular preacher or to idolize his teaching. Our dedication and consecration is always and only to be true to the Living Word – Jesus Christ – our Redeemer.
 - “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:24-27)
 - Isn’t it interesting to realize that in the New Testament all believers are Spirit baptized people? All of the teachings given in the New Testament were given to people who had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. All the exhortations in the New Testament were given to people who had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. All of the warnings in the New Testament were given to believers who had been baptized in the Holy Ghost. Do you know why? That is the **only kind of believers there were** in the New Testament!
 - The main idea of John’s first epistle, especially chapter 2, verses 18-29, is fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. To remain in fellowship with God is salvation; to go out of fellowship is damnation. Its’ purpose is to make certain we abide in Christ: crucified with Him, buried with Him, quickened with him, raised with Him and seated with him. And then he said that he would abide in us. He lives in us to make real his presence and to minister through us. This is the abiding relationship.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

❖ What is “the way of escape?”

- According to 1 Corinthians 10:13 there is no temptation that we have to yield to because with every temptation that comes to us He has made a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. There is protection provided. The way of escape is to reckon yourself dead to the thing that tempts to you.
- If we fall into sin, we must deal with the sin immediately. Acknowledge the sin to be what the Word of God declares it to be, confess it, forsake it, mortify (kill) that which is unclean (Colossians 3:5), put off that which is of the Devil (Colossians 3:8) and put on the cloak of Christ (Colossians 3:12-13). This is how we purify ourselves when there comes to light in our lives that which grieves God. People that have this hope in Jesus, of seeing him and being like him will purify themselves. They hope for the soon coming of the Lord.
- Examine your own heart. Go through all of these Scripture verses. Make sure that the Spirit of God bears witness with your spirit that you are not what you once were, but now you are light in the Lord.

❖ What does the Scripture command us to do?

- The laws says that thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind and soul and strength. That is the first and great commandment.

❖ What is the nature of the law? How did their attitudes toward the law differ between David and Saul? What was the end result?

- The nature of the law is God’s nature. The law is the revelation of the will of God. The laws says that thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind and soul and strength. That is the first and great commandment. The love in that commandment signifies the intention to please God, not yourself. We are to do only that which will bring joy and satisfaction and gladness and happiness to the heart of God.
- When a sinner repents he is acting responsibly. In effect he is saying, “The law was right; I was wrong. What I did was sinful. Therefore, from this moment on I purpose to obey the law of God.”
- The one who truly repents of his sin commits himself totally and entirely to conform to the will of God. The Scriptural language for this process is called “regeneration.” This is what produces a child of God – someone who is born from above.
- The evidence that you were born of God is this continuous desire in every relationship, in every aspiration, in all of your motivation, in all your plans, in all your words to bring your life into accord with the Word of God. You are to purify yourself by the Word.
- “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9)

- Both David and Saul had transgressed the law of God, but their attitude toward the law was totally different. Saul hid the results of his disobedience. He cried out against the punishment that God said he deserved. Saul said, “I did it, but I had my reasons for doing it” (1 Samuel 16). When Nathan the prophet confronted David with his sin with Bathsheba, David broke. He gave no excuses, no justification, and no self-vindication (2 Samuel chapters 12, 13).
- David was forgiven, however Saul met his death
- ❖ According to Matthew 1:21 what was the purpose of Christ’s coming to earth? (See 1 Peter 3:15)
 - To save His people from their sins.
 - Do you believe that He could love the world and give His life for it, die and be raised from the dead, and not accomplish what He came for? Make no doubt **He accomplished what he came for.**
 - There is no assurance of salvation for those who are living in known, unforsaken, unconfessed, and unforgiven sin. Either you practice sin or you practice righteousness. There is no exception. You cannot have it both ways.
 - Let me repeat; temptation is not sin. Temptation is the proposition presented to the mind to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. Sin is the decision to do it. If the child of God is going to sin he must allow his mind to dwell on the proposition offered. Temptation savored leads to sin.
 - (2 Corinthians 13:5) “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates (rejected, not approved by God)?” This is a continual practice. No matter what calling God may give to His own, the central focal point of the believer’s life is going to be the relationship with God.

TEMPTATION AND SIN

- **Are our desires sinful in and of themselves?**
 - We carry with us into the Christian life the same body we had before we were born again. We have been given the sure promise that we will have a glorified body when we see Him face to face – unfortunately we have not received it yet.
 - There are “old” things with us as we enter the Christian life, including our appetites, drives, urges and old attitudes.
 - Many Christians have the wrong idea that we are supposed to look, act, and think “gray” and that is holiness. But God looked at the being he had made and to whom he had given all these appetites and urges and said, “It is good!”
 - When we repented of our sin and savingly received Jesus Christ, we entered into the Christian life AND have brought with us our appetites for food, knowledge, pleasure, status and for sex. All the appetites we had before professing Christ, we have carried with us. We also brought along all of our learned ways of responding.
- **What is the difference between sin and temptation? Does sin always involve the “act?”**
 - Temptation is not sin. Temptation is the proposition presented to the mind that you can satisfy a good appetite in a forbidden way. Temptation leads to sin.
 - Sin is the decision of the will. It is not the gratifying of an appetite. Sin is the decision to do it. He that hates his brother is already a murderer, says Jesus (Matthew 5:22). Hatred is the intention to hurt and harm. The one who hates has decided to hurt.
 - Sin is the decision to gratify a good appetite in a bad way.
- **What five things happen when a child of God sins?**
 - *The first thing* that happens when a child of God sins is that our fellowship with God is broken. If we are merely the product of “easy believism” – you are never going to know whether or not fellowship with God has been interrupted. We can’t know, because we never had any fellowship. A leper can put his hand in the fire and never flinch, because his nerves are dead. But when we have God’s Spirit alive within, we know when fellowship is broken and the Spirit is grieved.
 - *The second thing* that happens when a child of God sins is this: prayers are not answered. In Psalm 66:18 David said: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me...” Peter said to husbands and wives not to fuss with one another. Don’t argue. Live together in peace, “so that your prayers won’t be hindered.” How many families get to fussing and then wonder why their children have gotten all torn up by the Devil. The parents wonder why their prayers for their children are not answered.
 - *Third*, when a child of God sins, God won’t use him. “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord” (Isaiah 52:11). When we tolerate in our heart and life anything that grieves God, whose name is holy, then we can be certain He won’t use us. God never uses the

life that gets him dirty. This is hard saying, but one we must take to heart. God receives no glory from those whose lives are soiled by sin.

- *Fourth*, the believer who sins against God is described in Ephesians 4:27: Give no place to the Devil. If you give place to the Devil he will take it. And you will become more prone to Satan’s attacks. How do believers give place to the Devil? “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.” (Psalm 34:7) The angel of the Lord makes a fence around the believer, his family and his loved ones as well as the work of the ministry. When we give place to the Devil it’s as if we tear loose the fence allowing the dogs to enter.
- *Note the Scripture*: it is because of the “fear of the Lord” in our lives that his angel encamps about us. To fear the Lord is to hate evil. If we have come to the place where we no longer hate evil, if it is easy to tolerate in our lives anything that grieves God, then we can be certain the Devil’s dogs will sneak in and tear up everything that’s precious in our home and family.
- Does that sound as though we have nothing to worry about until we get “over there?” It sounds like we’re in trouble if we permit unconfessed and unforsaken sin in our lives.
- *The fifth thing* that happens to a child of God when he permits sin in his life is he falls into the chastening hands of God. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). I’ve heard people say “I know some Christians who are living in sin and they’re not being chastened by the Lord.” Oh no you don’t! All you know are those who profess faith in Christ. God never lays a finger on the Devil’s family. But he chastens every child and scourges every son (Hebrews 12:6). Because for God’s children this place, earth, is the only hell we shall ever know. When we die it will be heaven forever. But with the Devil’s family, this world is all the heaven they are ever going to have. When they die, it will be hell forever.
- Chastening is not pleasant, however it is much more frightening to have God disown you, saying “You’re not mine.”
- **What is the “mirror” that believers should go to for cleansing?**
 - “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3)
 - I sense he is referring to the laver (large wash bowl) in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Between the altar of burnt offering and the holy place was the laver. It was made of brass and the inside was flat and lined with mirrors. Then it was filled with water for the cleansing of the priests’ hands and feet. The mirrors showed the Levites and the priests where the soot and dirt was on their faces.
 - (Exodus 30:18-21) “When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the LORD, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die. They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations.”

- The Lord Jesus said, “You are already clean because of the Word.” Thus we expect the Word to have a two-fold function: to be a mirror to the soul that we may know what in us is grieving God; and to show us how to deal with that sin.
- **What are the three possible attitudes toward sin?**
 - The first is choosing to walk in darkness. He who walks in darkness has no fellowship with God.
 - The second is viewing oneself as having no sin; of having reached a state in which it is no longer possible to sin. If a person tells you that he has no sin, he’s lying.
 - The third attitude toward sin addresses being overtaken in a fault as spoken of in Galatians 6:1. Overtaken, as described by Matthew Henry commentary, means to “be brought to sin by the surprise of temptation.” What happens when a child of God falls into sin? 1 Corinthians 11:23-31 describes the process.
- **According to 2 Corinthians 13:15, how are you as a Christian to deal with sin?**
 - “Examine yourselves...” (2 Corinthians 13:5). Judge yourselves; prove yourselves immediately. Don’t wait for someone else to find out.
 - If the child of God falls into sin that person has done something he really does not want to do. The purpose of his heart is to please God and he done something he hates.
 - “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Hebrews 12:6)
- **According to Titus 2:11-14 what lifestyle are we to have in the world? How can we maintain this standard?**
 - “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”
[“Peculiar,” as used in the text does not mean strange or odd. It means purchased.]
 - Understand this: the grace of God that brings salvation teaches all to whom salvation is brought identically the same thing, regardless of what their culture, their background, or their language may be.
- **By what means has victory been provided?**
 - We have been made free of the bondage of sin through the redemption purchased for us by the Lord Jesus. Christ will keep us safe and free because only He has provided this complete victory for us.
 - Everything the Father purposed, the Son provided; all of this has been made available to His children. Everything the Son provided, God the Holy Spirit is ready to make real and effective and operative in the lives of the children of God.

- But first we must have victory over ourselves. This is possible through our union with Christ in His death. We are crucified with Him. Knowing this, that we are crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin (Romans 6:6).
- Victory over yourself comes in seeing your person crucified on the cross with Christ. In that moment of temptation see yourself as dead to that thing that would ensnare you.
- In John 15:4 Jesus said: “Abide in Me.” It is your choice. We must consciously do for ourselves to abide or live in Him
- God’s way of dealing with us and the world is this: Abide in Christ.
- Let this be your daily affirmation, “Father, for this day I see myself, by faith, in union with Christ on the cross. I have been crucified with Him and buried with Him. I am risen with Him, and I am seated with Him in heavenly places.” In this way it is possible to walk through this world, which is governed by our ancient foe, and not be susceptible to his enticements.
- **What do you think of the statement below?**
 - R.A. Torrey wrote, “To abide in Christ is to renounce any independent life of our own, to give up trying to think our thoughts, or form our resolutions or cultivate our feelings and simply and constantly look to Christ to think His thoughts in us, to form His purposes in us, to feel his emotions and affections in us. It is to renounce all life independent of Christ, and constantly to look to Him for the inflow of His life into us, and the outworking of His life through us.”

COMMENTARY

So now we have been born of God, we have resolved to please the Lord in everything, and the first thing we encounter is temptation. We make habitual responses, learned responses that we had before coming to Christ. But we just repented. You were not aware that you have carried those old traits, tendencies and habituated responses with you.

The difference between sin in the life of a believer – one who is born again – and the individual who is a counterfeit, giving mere lip-service to Christianity, is a child of God who sins did something he hates, he has done something he did not want to do. He was overtaken in the fog and led aside by his appetite. Nevertheless he did it.

Once we have discovered what it is God is dealing with, the Word tells us how to deal with what is wrong: “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” (1 Corinthians 11:31, 32).

Judge yourself against what the Word says: “According to the Word of God, this is what I did.” Your response must be: “I was wrong. And I’ll never do it again. I’m done.” Once you have judged yourself and have decided to forsake your wicked ways then “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

True confession is NOT: “Dear Lord if I’ve done anything wrong, please forgive me.” That is not confession. To confess means to say with God what God says about our actions. Call the thing by its name – sin. Whenever he shows you there is a need, judge it, confess it, forsake it and know the cleansing of the precious blood of Jesus.

VICTORY

- **What are the three major enemies that confront and attack us?**
 - There are three major enemies that confront and attack us. They are “self,” the “world,” and “Satan.”
 - *Self* – this is called the “old man” your self is your worst enemy
 - *The world* is the system in which we live and move and it is organized by its own god. It has put forth every effort so that the gratifying of our appetites by evil means will look attractive, desirable and beautiful. All the world systems are against the will of God and totally arrayed against the purposes you have formed in your heart to please God.
 - *Satan* – he is an ancient foe of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus called him the “prince of this world.” He is also described as “the god of this world.”
 - These three enemies assault us and give us problems.
- **Will we ever be so spiritual that we cannot be tempted?**
 - If you ever come to the place where you are not subject to temptation, then you’ll be holier than our wonderful Lord, because He was “in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Therefore, we need to be aware that as long as we live we are going to be capable of yielding to temptation.
- **How do you “reckon” or consider yourself “dead” to sin? What does it mean to be “alive to God?”**
 - Is there victory over temptation? Yes! We read, “You shall call him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” He saves not just from hell, which is the penalty of sin – he saves his people from the power of sin.
 - When we are under temptation, we are to go back to the cross and see ourselves crucified with Christ. Your victory comes by reckoning yourself to be dead, indeed, to sin. “Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11).
 - If you exchange the word “reckon” for the word “consider” it may be more understandable. Consider yourself dead to sin. Now a dead person can neither see, hear, feel, nor think. Things may occur around him, but for the dead person they no longer exist.
 - See yourself on the back of the cross, with Christ. See yourself dead to the temptation and sin.
 - We are “alive to God” through Jesus Christ our Lord. Plain and simply, for the Christian, Christ is his life. He (Christ) is the power who overcomes our trials and temptations in and around us, whatever the thing may be, it is powerless before the powerful One who is the Way for us to victory.

- These times of temptation and the testing of your faith are the preparation God has designed for you, so that you may go on to experience God's so great salvation.
- What is the difference between "truth in the abstract" and truth that has become "real" in your life? How do you go about making the truths in God's Word "real" in your life?
 - You have to make a clear distinction between what your mind perceives and what your heart has received.
 - When you know you have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, when you know by the assurance He gives by His Spirit to your spirit that you are born again – then you may know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are safe in Him. And then He will do all that is needed to protect and keep you in your new life.

OVERCOMERS

❖ Identify the world we are to overcome

- The world is any person, any companionship, any group, any philosophy or any writing or conversation that makes you feel that the commandments of God are grievous, a weight too heavy to bear.
- I repeat again, anything that makes the Word of God, the will of God, or the commandments of God to seem grievous to you is the world. This is practical common sense.
- The application of the law is personal. Actions and attitudes that distress you might not have the same effect on someone else.

❖ How does the Scripture say we are to overcome the world?

- “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world...” (1 John 5:4). Born of God; here is where the seed and the source of our victory begins. There is in the new birth that which secures our overcoming the world. That is the point when we make the supreme, sovereign choice of life, when we choose to please God in everything.
- God insists that there be a change of purpose from pleasing ourselves to pleasing Him. If we are to overcome the world it will be the removal of anything and everything in our lives that grieves God.
- The first thing we must overcome in this world is what the Bible calls “the flesh.” That is you and I, what we are by nature. The second thing we must overcome is the Devil, the god of this world. The third thing we must overcome is the world itself.
- The world is overcome when we are **awakened** by the Spirit of God, **convicted** by the Spirit of God and brought to **repentance** by the Spirit of God.
- In the new birth, preceded by the work of repentance, the groundwork is laid to the direction of the life to please God, to glorify Him and to serve Him.
- How tragic when Christ has been presented as a “hell insurance scheme” without the prerequisites of awakening, conviction, repentance, and faith. How can a person who has no such requirement be expected to overcome the world?
- By the same token, the person who has not experienced awakening, conviction, and repentance does not meet the definition of having been born of God.
- You cannot be an **overcomer** until you have **come over** from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

❖ Victory in overcoming the world begins with a choice. Explain that choice. Give examples

- We choose to please God in everything
- If we are to overcome the world it will be the removal of anything and everything in our lives that grieves God.

❖ Does Satan tempt us in the same way he tempted Adam and Eve? Did he tempt Jesus in the same way? Explain why Jesus did not yield to temptation. Explain why Adam and Eve did yield to temptation

- Yes. Satan tempts us in the same way he tempted Adam and Eve and the Lord Jesus. He tempts us by saying God's commandments, his Word, will keep you from pleasure, from realizing the desires of your heart – and that God's Word is of no effect; there will be no consequence to disobedience. Satan's purpose is to get you to no longer trust God, and therefore to commit the will to sin.
- All sin falls into three categories; lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Satan tempts us to commit sin by appealing to the desires of the eyes, things that seem attractive and appealing; the sensuous desires of the body; and the desires of the ego for power, control, exaltation, adulation and independence; and he tempts us to disobey God's Word and abandon trust in God, through fear.
- In the Garden of Eden the fruit was beautiful and delicious; it represented the lust of the flesh. Satan told Eve that by partaking of the fruit her eyes would be opened; this represents the lust of the eyes. Satan then told Adam and Eve that they would be like God; this represents the third category of sin, the pride of life.
- Jesus did not yield to temptation because he **trusted in the Word of God**. (Matthew 4:3)
- "And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "**It is written**, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "**Again it is written**, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For **it is written**, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him."
- Adam and Eve yielded to temptation because they **did not trust** in the Word of God. In the Garden of Eden the serpent lied and the lie had the effect Satan desired. It caused Adam and Eve to feel that God's commandments were grievous; that God lied, and there would be no consequence to disobeying his commandment. The serpent insinuated that God was withholding from them the privilege and great benefits of eating the forbidden fruit. Adam and Eve had to make their own decision, God couldn't be trusted.
- "And the Lord God commanded man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16, 17)

- “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)
- ❖ **The world thinks in instant terms. Is salvation instantaneous? Explain your answer.**
 - God can bring a person through awakening, conviction, repentance and faith in a minute, an hour, a week, a month, or a year. There is no set period of time or pattern. It is the individual’s own confrontation with the Holy God. The time involved is not the issue. The issue is the reality!
- ❖ **Is overcoming instantaneous? Explain your answer.**
 - It is a life long struggle. Victory must be exercised. We still have to work day by day overcoming the world, and we overcome it by exercising faith.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

❖ What is the test of union with Christ? What Scriptures support this test?

- This is how you test whether the claim you or I, or others make – that we are a part of the Kingdom of Christ – is true: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” (1 John 3:14)
- “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples” (John 13:34-35).
- Our concern for our brethren in Christ has to be real, practical as well as emotional.

❖ On what two commandments hang all the law and the prophets?

- “Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37, 40)
- When He said this, our Lord repeated the great commandment which God gave to Moses to give to Israel (Deuteronomy 6:5)

❖ What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? What Scripture supports your answer?

- Love as defined by the Scriptures has nothing at all to do with **feeling**. It is a matter of the **will**, of choosing to love. The Lord commands the committal of the entire person, mind, heart, soul and spirit to want for your neighbor the highest good, joy, blessedness, happiness and well-being, even as God loves you.
- What you want to have for yourself, you must also want for your neighbor (James 2:15-17)

❖ Give an illustration of this kind of love.

- Luke 10: 29-37, the story of a wounded man lying on the side of the road. In this illustration Jesus says, your neighbor is the person whose need you know. Your brother and your neighbor are one and the same person.

❖ Who is your neighbor? What is the test of love for your neighbor?

- Who is your neighbor? Who are our brothers? They are the people we see who have needs. We are neighbor to everyone who breathes the breath of human life.
- The person of God who has passed from death to life is going to feel the same way about those who are in distant lands as he feels about his brother in the flesh, and his neighbors, and those who are one with him in Christ. Jesus loved the world and gave Himself for it, therefore so should we.

❖ **Comment on the quote of A.W. Tozer** “God does not love populations. He loves people.”

- Salvation is about a personal relationship with the Lord. The Lord does not save nations, but translates individuals, one at a time, from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life.
- He says “I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me” (Proverbs 8:17)

❖ **How are we to know how to respond to the over-powering human need in the world today?**

- The Word declares: “Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:17). Human need requires human concern. Real love, then must be manifest in real service.
- This does not mean that a Christian is to give general power of attorney to anyone and everyone who wants to draw checks on his account. What the Lord Jesus asks us to do is to give everything we have to Him. The Lord will advise you what to do and how to do it. Then you won’t need to feel guilty about not having answered every request for help. That is the protection the Lord has built into this matter of loving those who are in need.
- Sometimes, when faced with pressures of enormous needs and opportunities to help, it is more that we can bear and our hearts condemn us. We have seen great needs but we just cannot meet them. God knows our hearts. He never asked us to do what we cannot do. In these circumstances He gives us peace. “Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” (1 John 3:22)

THE HALLMARK OF A CHRISTIAN

❖ What is the hallmark of true Christianity?

- A hallmark is that mark of genuineness that cannot be imitated. True Christianity, says John, has certain hallmarks – certain evidences of eternal life. He lists them in 1 John: walk in the light, keep His commandments, love your brother, love not the world, abide in Him, do not commit sin, love one another, receive the witness of the Spirit, overcome the world, dwell in the life that is in the Son.

❖ What is a witness?

- Many of us were taught that Christians are to be soul winners. This is an erroneous conception. Soul winning is mentioned only once in the Bible. “He that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). Christians do **not** need to sell Jesus.
- He said, “Ye shall be witnesses unto me.” He never asked us to proselytize people. That was the chief strategy of the Pharisees, whose chief aim was to win people to their religion. Jesus has commanded us only to witness to His power and glory in our lives.
- Our task is not to convert people to the faith. Rather we have a duty to obey the Holy Spirit. He tells us what to say to those that He sends our way.
- We don’t have to “sell” Jesus to others. We only have to witness to His grace in our lives. That means living your commitment to Christ and telling others of your personal experience with Jesus Christ as He grants the opportunity to do so.
- Having known the Lord experientially we have power to witness to others of His love and grace. How useless it is if all we do is heap up piles of verses to use as arguments in discussions about these matters! If we have not become a “living epistle” in our homes and in our community, of what use is it to quote Bible verses?

❖ What is the work of the Spirit of God in the life of a sinner? (Romans 8:16)

- God the Holy Spirit is the only one in the universe that has the right to tell a person that she has been brought out of death to life.
- John Wesley in describing his conversion states: “The Spirit himself bore witness to my spirit that I was a child of God and gave me evidence hereof, and I immediately cried, Abba Father! And this I did before I reflected on, or was conscious of any fruit of the Spirit...I listened and heaven sprung up in my heart” (Wesley, John Vol. 1, Sermon XI, pp. 87,89,95,96)

❖ Define the following: Awakening, Conviction, Brood over

- **Awakening:** that state wherein the Holy Spirit makes the sinner aware of his standing before a holy God and reveals the truth in the Word of God. Prior, the sinner had no interest in the things of God and was spiritually blind to truth.
- **Conviction:** spiritually, conviction is the process the Holy Spirit uses in dealing with an awakened soul. The awakened sinner is made aware of all that lies deep within his soul.

The sinner, knowing he stands guilty before God, does not like what he sees. In summary, conviction is the work of the Spirit of God in the human heart that causes the individual to realize something of the enormity of the crime that he has committed against God.

- **Brood over:** the Spirit of God is as close to the sinner as He is to the believing saint because “in Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). God hovering over, if you will, the sinners’ heart begins to peel back spiritual blindness and awaken or arouse the person’s understanding to the truth of the Gospel and the individual’s standing and fate if he chooses to continue as a rebel. It is God who convicts and moves a man to repent.

❖ **What was David Brainerd’s grave concern about his ministry among the American Indians?**

- Brainerd had been rejoicing at the numbers who had been added to the church rolls through his preaching. Then it dawned on him that perhaps some of those people had only been “awakened” and had not come to full assurance of salvation. Brainerd felt that maybe they had mistaken the comforts of God’s grace for assurance. Maybe they had not really been born into the heavenly Father’s family.
- His worst fears were realized, of the several who had made professions of faith in Christ during church services only one individual had given evidence of having passed from death to life.
- “To think that I had presumed them to be born again,” wrote Brainerd. “In that day a number of them appearing before the Lord would hear him say, “Away with you. I never knew you.” Then those people would single me out as one of the servants of God who had given them assurance that they were safely in the Ark of Salvation. They would curse me as an unfaithful servant because I was the one who had deceived them in the most important thing in all the world – the destiny of their never-dying soul.”

❖ **Why should we have the same concern today?**

- In many evangelical churches, salvation is presented as a formula. “Just say this prayer after me, and you will be born again.” These well-meaning personal workers, evangelists, pastors and parents practice “spiritual abortion.” They take people out from the womb of the Spirit of God before the person is ready to be born from above.
- As a consequence the “awakened” people may call themselves Christians, but they have no “unction of the Holy One” as described by John in his epistle. Let me repeat: **Never tell anyone that he is saved!**

“GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD”

❖ **What is an intercessor?**

- God gives the sinner the right to go to hell, and He doesn't interfere until either the sinner or his representative asks Him to. To intercede is to legally represent the sinner before God, to be as a court appointed lawyer, going into the presence of the judge on behalf of his client. You are a heaven appointed representative of the sinner to go into the presence of God, the Father, to represent the sinner before God, to acknowledge his guilt, to accept the justice of God's condemnation.
- There you are to cry out to God for mercy. Remember you are a neighbor to the person whose need you know. Since you are a neighbor of the sinner, your intercession in a sense releases God to begin work in the heart of that one that is dead in sin.

❖ **What are the results of intercession, witnessing and the work of the Holy Spirit?**

- The next thing we can do, as an intercessor, is to witness to sinners, to give them the Word of God applied to their hearts and to their consciences. We can tell sinners how holy God is. We can tell them how sinful they are. We can tell sinners what this holy God did in love by sending His Son. We can tell them what God's Son did in love; dying, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. We can tell them what they must do.
- When God begins to work in their heart because you brought that neighbor up against the Word, you have performed the greatest service you can.
- One of two things is going to happen. Either the person will say, “Praise God! I know that I have passed from death to life!” Or the person will say, “On the basis of this, I haven't passed from death to life.”

❖ **Who is the judge of the result?**

- Now when we do all that, then it is God's turn to act. He is the only one who can save a soul. We can observe actions and words, but God looks on the heart. **Therefore, the only one in the universe who has the right to tell a person that she has been brought out of death into life is God the Holy Spirit.**

❖ **If the result leads to salvation, what is the proof?**

- Now if a person comes to you and says, “I'm not sure that I have been born again. Please can you help me?” what are you going to do? Usually what he wants is for you to give him assurance of his salvation. **You cannot do that!**
- You bring that person to the Word, open it, and let him read it, talk about it and trust the Spirit of God to work the Word into his heart. Trust God to show her where she is and what her true spiritual condition is. The Spirit of God has to do the work.
- Those who have been born of God love him and out of love they keep his commandments. That is a demonstration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of God unto salvation.

- ❖ Why can't we humans be the judge of the results in a person's life?
 - We can observe actions and words, but only God looks on the heart.
- ❖ What is God's purpose for His people, the church?
 - "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar (purchased) people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter 2:9,10)
 - "And Jesus said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)
 - "Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which has sent me" (John 14:23-24)
- ❖ Why were the efforts of pioneer missionaries and a pioneer church successful?
 - They made their homes and trading places a field for sowing the seed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The commandment of the Holy Ghost was real (Mark 16:15). Because they loved God and obeyed Him, thousands were won out of darkness into God's marvelous light.
- ❖ According to following Scriptures what are the evidences of eternal life? Why has God given us these evidences?
 - *1 John 1:7* - But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin
 - *1 John 2:3* - And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments
 - *1 John 3:14* - We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death
 - *1 John 2:15-17* - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him
 - *1 John 2:24* - Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father
 - *1 John 3:10* - By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother
 - *1 John 3:24* - Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us

- *1 John 4:13* - By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit
- *1 John 5:16* - If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death
- *1 John 5:4-5* - For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
- John says: “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13)

END