

A Regular Person

by Tricia Berg

*Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor man. **Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?** James 2:5-7*

The context of the above passage is how honor was being shown to wealthy people when they attended worship gatherings and the poor were being treated as second-class members of the Body of Christ. However, I would like us to consider how the majority of Hollywood is antagonistic toward God and yet Christians support them with their dollars and even idolize celebrities. Why?

*Little children, **keep yourselves from idols.** 1 John 5:21*

How many times have you heard people say of celebrities they met, they acted "just like a regular person"? I know it's meant as a compliment, but have you ever thought much about it? Isn't everyone a "regular person?" If someone isn't "regular," then what are they? Almost like a god? Whoa! That is dangerous territory, my friend. There is only ONE God and He gives His praise and glory to NO ONE else.

*I am the LORD; that is My name; **My glory I give to no other, nor My praise to idols.** Isaiah 42:8*

But since celebrities of all kinds (movie stars, musicians, sports heroes, politicians and the like) ARE "regular people," they should be worshiping God just as the rest of us should be. He made everything and it all belongs to Him including the people. He ALONE is worthy of worship, praise, honor and glory.

***The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.** Selah Psalm 24:1-6*

All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship Him, all you gods! Psalm 9:7

God detests when people exalt themselves. He esteems the humble person. Jesus humbled Himself to leave His glorious place in heaven to come to earth as a man and die on a cross for us! (*John 17:5, 24*)

*So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in **Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. *Philippians 2:1-11**

And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. And the idols shall utterly pass away. *Isaiah 2:17-18*

*Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with **humility** toward one another, for "**God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.**" **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you**, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. *1 Peter 5:5-8**

*Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, "**When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when***

your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 14:7-11

Live in harmony with one another. **Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.** Romans 12:16

Whoever **humbles himself** like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:4

The greatest among you shall be your servant. **Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.** Matthew 23:11-12

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called**, with all **humility** and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-3

Whoever makes themselves out to be not only better than others, but even to the point that they think of themselves as being almost like a god will be brought low. Better not to go there...

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your heart is proud, and you have said, '**I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods**, in the heart of the seas,' yet **you are but a man, and no god, though you make your heart like the heart of a god**— you are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you; by your wisdom and your understanding **you have made wealth for yourself, and have gathered gold and silver into your treasuries**; by your great wisdom in your trade you have increased your wealth, and **your heart has become proud in your wealth**— therefore thus says the Lord GOD: **Because you make your heart like the heart of a god**, therefore, behold, I will bring foreigners upon you, the most ruthless of the nations; and **they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor**. They shall thrust you down into the pit, and you shall die the death of the slain in the heart of the seas. Will you still say, 'I am a god,' in the presence of those who kill you, though **you are but a man, and no god**, in the hands of those who slay you? You shall die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of foreigners; for I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD." Ezekiel 28:1-10

Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind flour, put off your veil, strip off your robe, uncover your legs, pass through the rivers. **Your nakedness shall be uncovered, and your disgrace shall be seen.** I will take vengeance, and I will spare no one. Our Redeemer—the LORD of hosts is his name— is the Holy One of Israel. Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for **you shall no more be called the mistress of kingdoms.** I was angry with my people; I profaned my heritage; I gave them into your hand; you showed them no mercy; on the aged you made your yoke exceedingly heavy. You said, "I shall be mistress forever," so that you did not lay these things to heart or remember their end. **Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children":** These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, **in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments. You felt secure in your wickedness, you said, "No one sees me"; your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me."** But evil shall come upon you, which you will not know how to charm away; disaster shall fall upon you, for which you will not be able to atone; and ruin shall come upon you suddenly, of which you know nothing. Stand fast in your enchantments and your many sorceries, with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you may be able to succeed; perhaps you may inspire terror. **You are wearied with your many counsels; let them stand forth and save you, those who divide the heavens, who gaze at the stars, who at the new moons make known what shall come upon you. Behold, they are like stubble; the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame.** No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before! Such to you are those with whom you have labored, who have done business with you from your youth; they wander about, each in his own direction; there is no one to save you. Isaiah 47:1-15

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become **a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her**

luxurious living. "Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, **"Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.'**" For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her." And **the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. They will stand far off, in fear of her torment,** and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." And **the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.** "The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and **all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!**" The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, **"Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!** For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste." And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste. Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!" Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and **all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the**

blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.” Revelation 18:1-24

We don't think we're worshiping idols today because we don't pray to statues and such things, but in reality, it is idolatry to put anything or anyone in front of God in our esteem, affection, reverence, placement of priority and value, respect, obedience, devotion, trust, hope and faith. The list could go on and on, but it comes down to one thing - God is always to be first and foremost. Since even our own family members come after God, then most certainly perfect strangers, no matter how famous they may be, also come after God. Yet how often do we hear people say they LOVE their favorite celebrities (whom most of the time they have never even met)? How many of these same “adoring” people say they LOVE GOD? If they do, how often do they tell Him and show it? If you think about it, it's pretty nery of any of us to expect God to hear and answer our prayers if He comes after celebrities or anyone or anything else in our affections, and the only time we ever bother to consult Him is when we want or need something.

Whom did you dread and fear, so that you lied, and did not remember Me, did not lay it to heart? Have I not held My peace, even for a long time, and you do not fear Me? I will declare your righteousness and your deeds, but they will not profit you. When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you! The wind will carry them all off, a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge in Me shall possess the land and shall inherit My holy mountain. Isaiah 57:11-13

*"Son of man, **these men have taken their idols into their hearts**, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I indeed let myself be consulted by them? 6 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: **Repent and turn away from your idols**, and turn away your faces from all your abominations. Ezekiel 14:3, 6*

During Jesus' ministry on earth, huge crowds followed Him wherever He went. (Matt. 4:23-25, Matt. 7:28-29, Matt. 14:13-21, Matt. 15:32-39, Mark. 3:7-10, Mark 5:21-43, Luke 8:40-56, John 6) They were drawn to Him because of the miracles He performed, news of which traveled fast. Today, huge crowds gather to see every sort of celebrity imaginable. Fans are willing to stand in long lines and they “love” these “stars” who have gotten filthy rich by charging them exorbitant ticket prices and selling them merchandise.

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am **gentle and lowly in heart**,*

and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

We are to give honor and respect where it is due (*Rom.13:7*), but not to seek glory for ourselves. That goes for everyone. What’s amazing is the kind of adoration that is often given to complete strangers who haven’t done anything noble whatsoever to even deserve respect, let alone devotion. Many of them have practically no morals and seem to think that those are for the “little people” to live by. Most of the familiarity and affinity people feel for them has been professionally created by paid staff.

*For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think**, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. Romans 12:3*

*Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. **So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.** James 1:9-11*

*My brothers, **show no partiality** as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” **have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?** Listen, my beloved brothers, **has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?** If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. But **if you show partiality, you are committing sin** and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. James 2:1-10*

*I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions **without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.***
1 Timothy 5:21

During Jesus' time on earth, the Pharisees and Scribes demanded undue honor from the masses. Jesus was VERY critical of them. He was impartial and judged rightly instead of by appearances. No one should get a "free pass" because they're rich or famous. We will all be judged by the same impartial God.

*And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and **have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts**, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation." Mark 12:38-40*

*"They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and **they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues** and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others." Matthew 23:5-7*

*And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and **you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances.**"*
Matthew 22:16

*"Do not judge by **appearances**, but judge with **right judgment.**" John 7:24*

*For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but **they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.** 1 Peter 4:3-5*

*And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes **of him to whom we must give account.** Hebrews 4:13*

Many celebrities think that because of the over-the-top, often undeserved respect they have received, that they actually know more than everyone else and are somehow better. They are happy to share their opinions and have people imitate them, oftentimes including their particular style of sin, but God tells us to imitate those who live in such a way as to please HIM. (1Cor. 4:16,

11:1, Eph. 5:1, Philip. 3:17, 2Thess. 3:7-9, Heb. 6:11-12, 13:7, 3John 1:11)
Those who lead others into sin will have to answer to Him for that—especially those who teach children to sin (and a lot of media these days is aimed at profiting from kids and has a corrupting influence). As I finish this article I started weeks ago, one celebrity has used the platform of her acceptance speech of a music award to receive applause for holding up the lives of many celebrities who died of drug overdoses to her young daughter as role models. This “loving message” was shared by both unsaved and professing “Christians” alike. But people who do not know God are NOT our authority on right and wrong, ever. Not all celebrities are amoral and evil, but NO celebrities should be idolized.

*For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, **he deceives himself.** Galatians 6:3*

*“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but **whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.** Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For **it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!**” Matthew 18:5-7*

*And **since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.** They were filled with all manner of **unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.** Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, **they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.** Romans 1:28-32*

*For, **speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error.** They promise them **freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption.** For **whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.** 2 Peter 2:18-19*

*Who is **wise and understanding** among you? By his good conduct let him show his works **in the meekness of wisdom.** But if you have **bitter jealousy and selfish ambition** in your hearts, **do not boast** and be false to the truth. **This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.** For where **jealousy and selfish ambition exist,***

there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. James 3:13-17

Boasting comes with the territory with celebrities. They need to prove how successful they are in order to convince their fans they are worthy of their attention and dollars. They pursue awards and publicity, make plans far in advance, and most of them credit their success to their own hard work. They are very proud of themselves and also of their sin, which they parade before everyone. As I said earlier, many of them use their award acceptance speeches to further their evil (according to the Bible) favored agendas.

*God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that **no human being might boast in the presence of God.** 1 Corinthians 1:28-29*

"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." For it is not the one who ***commends himself*** who is approved, but the one ***whom the Lord commends.*** 2 Corinthians 10:17-18

*Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—**yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.** Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." **As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.** James 4:13-16*

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud. Proverbs 16:18-19

Many celebrities are so full of themselves that they have tantrums whenever they don't get their way. "Don't you know who I am?" is a phrase often heard from them when they are unexpectedly treated like a "regular" person. They claim to love the "little people," but in reality, they don't remember what it was even like to be one (if they ever were, since many of them have long family lines of performers, inherited wealth, etc.)

*Love is patient and kind; love does not **envy or boast**; it is not **arrogant or rude.** It does not **insist on its own way**; it is not **irritable or resentful**; it does not rejoice at **wrongdoing**, but rejoices with the truth. 1 Corinthians 13:4-6*

*But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be **lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,** having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 2 Timothy 3:1-5*

*It was of these also that Enoch in the seventh generation from Adam prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment on all, and **to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness which they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.**" These are grumblers, malcontents, **following their own passions, loud-mouthed boasters, flattering people to gain advantage.** Jude 1:14-16*

We should not only refrain from showing devotion to celebrities, but it should distress us when we see others doing it. The point of relying on God for our strength and every other good thing is that He receives the glory. He gets the credit for what He has done, because apart from Him, there would be NOTHING. I'm not suggesting we should show hatred for ANYONE, but we should NOT join in. Lost, deceived people are to be pitied, not admired—prayed for, not idolized.

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for **my power is made perfect in weakness.**" Therefore **I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** For the sake of Christ, then, **I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities.** For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10*

***Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,** coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17*

*For who sees anything different in you? **What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?** 1 Corinthians 4:7*

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
Galatians 6:14

*First of all, then, I urge **that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people**, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. **This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should **adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.** 1 Timothy 2:1-10*

None of us chose what we would look like—hair, skin or eye color, height, considered attractive or not, how affluent our family is, or which country we were born in, whether we were healthy or sickly, what opportunities we would have for education, or even our intelligence. Since we didn't do these things then we have nothing to be proud of by having them. Celebrities look like “regular people” without the professional services of their make-up and hair artists, wardrobe stylists, personal trainers, etc. (and plastic surgery is almost a requirement to be a celebrity these days). Whatever can't be “fixed” in “real” life is edited digitally to give the illusion of perfection, causing fans to feel they themselves, in their unedited bodies, fall short. But God is not interested in superficial things at all, but in true substance, in a worthy character evidenced, for example, by our humility, caring for orphans and the elderly, and our faithfulness to Him. Showing disdain for God is not a virtue and we should not look up to anyone who does so. (And there is ONE true God, so honoring any “god” that has been invented in someone's imagination is idolatry. Deu. 32:16-21, Isa. 45:5-6)

*All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But **this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.** Isaiah 66:2*

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. **For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.**" 1 Samuel 16:7

Thus says the LORD: "**Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me,** that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD." Jeremiah 9:23-24

Let no one deceive himself. **If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God.** For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." 1 Corinthians 3:18-20

For **our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God,** and supremely so toward you. 2 Corinthians 1:12

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for **the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.** Therefore **put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and **perseveres,** being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be **blessed** in his doing. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. **Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.** James 1:19-27

We need to choose who it is we love and give honor to. We can't "worship" godless celebrities (or any, really, even if they claim to believe) AND God. Many very popular celebrities have decided they know better than the Bible and they promote their own brand of spirituality and "morals." If we are listening to

someone like that and respect them just because they're rich and famous, aren't we choosing to "serve" money instead of God?

*You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. **Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy?** Are we stronger than he? 1 Corinthians 10:21-22*

*You must not make a covenant with them **or their gods**. They must not remain in your land, or else they will make you sin against Me. **If you worship their gods, it will be a snare for you.**" Exodus 23:32-33*

"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. Matthew 6:24

*But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But **those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. But as for you, O man of God, **flee these things**. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. 1 Timothy 6:6-11***

i-dol·ize: admire, revere, or love greatly or excessively.

People freely admit that they "idolize" celebrities and that they want to be like their "idols." They imitate their style of dress, hairstyles, personal tastes such as where and what they like to eat, listen to, do for entertainment, buy, etc. They even quote favorite things their idol said, and yet some very sad polls have shown that the typical American does not know much at all about the Word of God. When God said not to be a respecter of persons, what did He mean? Doesn't that mean "don't give anyone a 'free pass' just because they are rich, famous, attractive" or whatever? So why are we listening to and following along with the opinions of celebrities who DO NOT KNOW GOD? That is called "the blind leading the blind."

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinthians 2:14

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was **full of idols**. Acts 17:16

Let them alone; they are blind guides. And **if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.**" Matthew 15:14

We are meant to be separate from the world, honoring Jesus as our Lord and being conformed to HIS image—not joining in with the sick world and doing our best to "conformed to the image" of any idol! We should not be wanting what they have, either (that's coveting). God actually likens greed and covetousness to idolatry! When we are not content with how God made us and with what He gave us, it's not only ungrateful, but it's rejecting His sovereign reign over us. We are meant to be thankful in all things and shine as lights in the dark, lost world, not to go along with it—which includes idolizing celebrities, things and experiences.

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 2 Corinthians 6:16

You people, how long will you malign my reputation? How long will you love what is vain and what is false? But understand this: **the LORD has set apart the godly for himself!** The LORD will hear me when I cry out to him! Psalm 4:2-3

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Romans 8:29

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

[Jesus said] They are **not of the world**, just as I am not of the world. John 17:16

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.** For all that is in the world—the **desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life**—is not from the Father but is **from the world.** 1 John 2:15-16

We know that we are of God, and **the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.** 1 John 5:19

You adulterous people! **Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "**God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**" Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.** James 4:4-10

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the **light of the world.** Whoever follows me will not walk in **darkness,** but will have the light of life." John 8:12

"You are the **light of the world.** A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16

Put to **death** therefore what is **earthly** in you: **sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness,** which is **idolatry.** **On account of these the wrath of God is coming.** In these you too **once** walked, when you **were** living in them. But **now** you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have **put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.** Colossians 3:5-10

But **sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place,** but instead let there be **thanksgiving.** For you may be sure of this, that **everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater [in that a greedy person worships the things of the world]), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with**

them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Ephesians 5:3-10

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:6-7

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! Isaiah 5:20-21

Therefore **put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness** and receive **with meekness** the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21

For **"Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."** Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. **Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.** 1 Peter 3:10-17

The majority of people these days, I think, like to remember as many Bible verses about how loving God is as they can. They aren't comfortable with anything too heavy—talking about God's righteousness and justice, vengeance, punishment and unpleasant things like that. But really, that is just another form of idolatry if we have rejected or ignored parts of the Bible telling us what God is actually like and replaced them with how we would prefer Him to be. We're worshiping a God we invented in our own minds when we do that.

Behold, the cry of the daughter of my people from the length and breadth of the land: "Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?" **"Why have they provoked me to anger with their carved images and with their foreign idols?"** Jeremiah 8:19

But first I will doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because **they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations.**" Jeremiah 16:18

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: 'I am about to bring a sword against you, and **I will destroy your high places. Your altars will be demolished and your incense altars will be smashed; and I will slay your people in front of your idols. I will lay the dead bodies of the Israelites in front of their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars. Wherever you live, the towns will be laid waste and the high places demolished, so that your altars will be laid waste and devastated, your idols smashed and ruined, your incense altars broken down, and what you have made wiped out.** Your people will fall slain among you, and you will know that I am the Lord. 'But I will spare some, for some of you will escape the sword when you are scattered among the lands and nations. Then in the nations where they have been carried captive, **those who escape will remember Me - how I have been grieved by their adulterous hearts, which have turned away from Me, and by their eyes, which have lusted after their idols. They will loathe themselves for the evil they have done and for all their detestable practices.** And they will know that I am the Lord; I did not threaten in vain to bring this calamity on them.'" Ezekiel 6:3b-10

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, **they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before Me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity.** So I poured out My wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, **for the idols with which they had defiled it.** I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them. But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned My holy name, in that people said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.' But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came. "Therefore say to the house of Israel, **Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And**

I will vindicate the holiness of My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate My holiness before their eyes. I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ezekiel 36:16-27

It's time to actually LIVE the Bible, not just hear tidbits of it on Sunday morning. It's time to stop caring if we seem "odd" to the world, knowing that they only think that way because they are NOT children of God as we are, knowing that we were meant to be set apart and be willing to suffer persecution for our refusal to go along with the wicked ways of the world. Let's stop behaving as if we don't know there's a better life waiting for us after this one. Do we actually think like the world that we have to have all of the "fun" we can now because there's nothing after this is over? If we are truly born again, then our definition of "fun" should have changed along with our goal from pleasing ourselves to pleasing God. If we behave as though we don't even know how great and glorious God is, as though we don't know what our freedom from eternal punishment cost Him, then what on earth is wrong with us? We need to stop going along with the flow and think for ourselves how worthy is our God, how much do we love Him, what are we willing to give up for Him in GRATITUDE and LOVE for what He has done for us and just for who He IS.

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 1 Peter 4:1-5

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and

how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to **make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus**. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for **teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness**, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:12-17

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of **righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**. Romans 14:17

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. 1 Corinthians 15:19

This is important for us to consider. Back when people used to make physical idols out of wood, stone and metal, anyone with any sense at ALL could see that those were not God. We wonder how anyone could have been so foolish to think such ridiculous thoughts, don't we? Praying to a carved statue that we made or bought? Wow. But practically everyone was doing it. Could they all be wrong? Yes, they could all be wrong! We need to remember that in this day and age when the vast majority are on the broad path that leads to destruction! Yes, they CAN all be WRONG. Just because MANY people idolize celebrities, even professed Christians, does not mean that it is acceptable or pleasing to God.

"When you cry out, **let your collection of idols deliver you!** The wind will carry them all off, a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge in me shall possess the land and shall inherit my holy mountain. 21 **There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."** Isaiah 57:13, 21

"Can man make for himself gods? Such are **not gods!**" Jeremiah 16:20

Has a nation changed its gods, even though **they are no gods?** But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be **appalled**, O heavens, at this; be **shocked**, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, for my people have committed two **evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water**. Jeremiah 2:11-13

For **although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth**—as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"—yet **for us there is one God**, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. 1 Corinthians 8:5-6

We will each answer for ourselves to our perfect Judge, who knows exactly how much revelation we each had an opportunity to receive and how, or if, we made use of it. To the one who was given much, more will be expected. To those who "built on the sand" instead of "on the Rock," or using "wood, hay or straw" instead of "gold, silver or precious stones," there will be loss of reward. To those to whom Jesus was only "Lord" in false claims with empty words instead of sincere deeds, they will not enter the kingdom at all.

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is **wide** and the way is **easy** that leads to **destruction**, and those who enter by it are **many**. For the gate is **narrow** and the way is **hard** that leads to **life**, and those who find it are **few**. **"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits.** Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. **"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.** On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' **"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. Matthew 7:13-29

As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country **to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.** Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. The

first came before him, saying, '**Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.**' And he said to him, '**Well done, good servant!** Because you have been **faithful** in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, '**Lord, your mina has made five minas.**' And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.' Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' He said to him, 'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' And he said to those who stood by, '**Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.**' And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!' 'I tell you that **to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.** But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'" Luke 19:11-27

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For **no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.** Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 1 Corinthians 3:10-18

For those of us who find it hard to relate to what is meant by the narrow way being hard and few finding it, there may be a problem with the "walk." Perhaps the reason life is easy is that the light is being hidden under a bushel except when in the company of other like-minded believers. Rest assured, the children of darkness do get stirred up by the light, because it hurts their eyes—but if they haven't seen it in us, then there's nothing to get worked up over, is there? But better for them to endure some discomfort for a while now as we show them what God expects of His children and through the Holy Spirit and the

Word of God, convict them of the sin of which they need to repent, than for them to suffer agony in hell forever, right? As the song goes: "Shine, Jesus, shine."

*But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.**"* Look carefully then how you **walk**, not as unwise but as **wise**, making the best use of the time, because **the days are evil**. Therefore do not be **foolish**, but understand what the **will of the Lord** is. Ephesians 5:13-17

"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be **full of light**, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of **darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**" Matthew 6:22-23

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to **wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.** The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us **cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.** Let us **walk properly as in the daytime**, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.** Romans 13:11-14

For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when **all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble.** The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. **But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.** You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts. Malachi 4:1-3

It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, **to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.**" These are grumblers, malcontents, **following their own sinful desires**; they are **loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.** But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, "In the last time there will be **scoffers, following**

their own ungodly passions.” It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Jude 1:14-23

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