

A Word to the “Wise” Rebellious (To Those Who Are Wise in Their Own Eyes)

by Tricia Berg

*Do you see a man who is **wise in his own eyes**? There is more hope for a **fool** than for him. Proverbs 26:12*

Let me be frank and to the point. Getting what you think you want is not always a good thing. Sometimes, usually after it's too late, there are deep, heart-wrenching regrets. Just ask people who have lost their families due to their infidelity in marriage, or how about all of those burglars, thieves and embezzlers sitting in prison? Or what about Esau when he cared more about his temporary hunger pangs at that time than about losing his much more valuable firstborn inheritance later?

*See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, **though he sought it with tears**. Hebrews 12:15-17 (Also see Gen. 25:29-34, 27:34, 38.)*

As the title indicates, this message is directed to those who think a lot of their own wisdom—perhaps they also have strong views against God and the Bible. Some people who claim to be wise do everything in their power to strike out against their (unacknowledged, rejected) Creator, and to force others to comply with their (strong, but erroneous) beliefs. The purpose of this article is not to make them feel threatened by the suggestion that there may very well be a high price to pay for getting their way, but rather, to help them rethink their position (whether of indifference or outright antagonism against God) while there's still time to “change teams”—while there's still time to avoid the dire consequences of rebelling against God.

*The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. **The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty**. His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers; Bashan and Carmel wither; the bloom of Lebanon withers. The mountains quake before him; the hills melt; the earth heaves before him, the*

world and all who dwell in it. Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken into pieces by him. **The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness.** What do you plot against the LORD? He will make a complete end; trouble will not rise up a second time. Nahum 1:2-9

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "**Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.**" He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "**As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.**" I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make **the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.**" Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. **Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled.** Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Psalms 2:1-12

The noise of battle is in the land, and great destruction! How the hammer of the whole earth is cut down and broken! How Babylon has become a horror among the nations! I set a snare for you and you were taken, O Babylon, and you did not know it; you were found and caught, because you **opposed the LORD.** The LORD has opened his armory and brought out the weapons of his wrath, for the Lord GOD of hosts has a work to do in the land of the Chaldeans. Come against her from every quarter; open her granaries; pile her up like heaps of grain, and devote her to destruction; let nothing be left of her. Kill all her bulls; let them go down to the slaughter. Woe to them, for their day has come, the time of their punishment. "A voice! They flee and escape from the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, vengeance for his temple. "Summon archers against Babylon, all those who bend the bow. Encamp around her; let no one escape. **Repay her according to her deeds; do to her according to all that she has done. For she has proudly defied the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.** Therefore her young men shall fall in her squares, and all her soldiers shall be destroyed on that day, declares the LORD. "Behold, **I am against you, O proud one,** declares the Lord GOD of hosts, for your day has come, the time when I will punish you. The **proud one shall**

stumble and fall, with none to raise him up, and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it will devour all that is around him. "Thus says the LORD of hosts: The people of Israel are oppressed, and the people of Judah with them. All who took them captive have held them fast; they refuse to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name. He will surely plead their cause, that he may give rest to the earth, but unrest to the inhabitants of Babylon. "A sword against the Chaldeans, declares the LORD, and against the inhabitants of Babylon, and against her officials and her wise men! A sword against the diviners, that they may become fools! A sword against her warriors, that they may be destroyed! A sword against her horses and against her chariots, and against all the foreign troops in her midst, that they may become women! A sword against all her treasures, that they may be plundered! A drought against her waters, that they may be dried up! For it is a land of images, and they are mad over idols. "Therefore wild beasts shall dwell with hyenas in Babylon, and ostriches shall dwell in her. She shall never again have people, nor be inhabited for all generations. As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities, declares the LORD, so no man shall dwell there, and no son of man shall sojourn in her. "Behold, a people comes from the north; a mighty nation and many kings are stirring from the farthest parts of the earth. They lay hold of bow and spear; they are cruel and have no mercy. The sound of them is like the roaring of the sea; they ride on horses, arrayed as a man for battle against you, O daughter of Babylon! "The king of Babylon heard the report of them, and his hands fell helpless; anguish seized him, pain as of a woman in labor. "Behold, like a lion coming up from the thicket of the Jordan against a perennial pasture, I will suddenly make them run away from her, and I will appoint over her whomever I choose. For who is like me? Who will summon me? What shepherd can stand before me? Jeremiah 50:22-44

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." Revelation 18:1-8

And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. **They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings,** and those with him are called and chosen and faithful." Revelation 17:12-14

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. **Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"** Revelation 6:12-17

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. And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. Isaiah 2:17-19

Such arrogant, bold people have nothing to fear from those who truly believe the words in the Bible and fear God. He tells us NOT to take revenge, but to leave it up to Him when we're wronged. We who belong to Him have a better, lasting inheritance kept for us in heaven.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. **Never be wise in your own sight.** Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live

peaceably with all. Beloved, **never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God**, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.** Romans 12:14-21

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:15

Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. 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. 1 Peter 3:9-16

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a **fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.** Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. **How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay."** And again, "The Lord will judge his people." **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had

compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hebrews 10:23-39

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ***You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.*** James 5:1-6

No, those who are offended by God, who refuse to obey Him, many of them doing their best to offend Him in return (and to shut down the voice and impact of His people) should pray to get wisdom so they can have the sense to repent of their ungodly attitudes and desires while there's still time.

*The beginning of **wisdom** is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.* Proverbs 4:7

Buy **truth**, and do not sell it; **buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.** Proverbs 23:23

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever! Psalms 111:10

There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers. Proverbs 6:16-19

How much better to get **wisdom** than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver. The highway of the upright **turns aside from evil**; whoever guards his way preserves his life. **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. Whoever gives thought to the word will discover good, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD. Proverbs 16:16-20

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

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 5:15-17

Each of us has an appointment with our Maker, the time of which is known only to Him.

And just as **it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment**, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. Hebrews 9:27-28

For we must all appear before the **judgment** seat of Christ, so that each one may **receive what is due for what he has done in the body**, whether good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5:10

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that **God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?** But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are **storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.** He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. **There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil**, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. Romans 2:4-11

*"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to **repay each one for what he has done**. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." **Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood**. "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." Revelation 22:12-16*

However, there is coming a time when there will be such convincing signs and wonders being done that only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will not be deceived.

*One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and **the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast**. And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints. Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. **It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth**, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Revelation 13:3-15*

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed,

whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. **The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.** Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who **did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.** 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12

The Bible warns believers that there will be people who champion "freedom" who are actually enslaved to sin themselves. These people are described as being darkened in their understanding, and some of them will be masquerading as God's children and gaining "friends" by flattery. Does this sound familiar to you? It does to me!

*But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, **reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you.** They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. **They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!** Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. 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.** For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." 2 Peter 2:12-22*

But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves

for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. These are **hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves;** waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, **twice dead**, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, **casting up the foam of their own shame;** wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. 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 1:10-23

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles* contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For **such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.** For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to **be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.** Romans 16:17-19

*Please note that this word for "obstacle" in Greek comes from the same word translated elsewhere as "stumbling blocks," "snares," "causes of sin," or "temptations." (See Matt. 18:7, Luke 17:1, Matt. 13:41-43) We are told that the proper teaching about God will always accord (be in agreement) with godliness.

If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the **teaching that accords with godliness**, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are **depraved in mind and deprived of the truth**, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. 1 Timothy 6:3-5

To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but **both their minds and their consciences are defiled. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.** But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Titus 1:15-2:1

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age**, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Titus 2:11-15

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must **no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity**. But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:17-24

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

As **obedient** children, do not be conformed to the passions of your **former** ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, **you also be holy in all your conduct**, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, **conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile***, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your

forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 1 Peter 1:14-19

*Please note that we believers are all "exiles" and "sojourners" because our citizenship is in heaven.

*Beloved, I urge you as **sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:11-12*

*These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were **strangers and exiles on the earth.** For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, **they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.** Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has **prepared for them a city.** Hebrews 11:13-16*

*Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But **our citizenship is in heaven,** and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Philippians 3:17-21*

We have to use discernment when we're deciding whether to believe that someone who claims to believe in and love Christ is sincere. Is their "fruit" (the way they behave and talk, their attitudes) good (according to God's will for us, not the world's corrupted standards)? We're even warned that in the end times, some will be offered "help" to the persecuted under false pretenses.

"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 7:15-29

*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 1:22-27*

*He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but **the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.** **And the wise among the people shall make many understand,** though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And **many shall join themselves to them with flattery, and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white,** until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time. "And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. Daniel 11:32-36*

We believers are to "test the spirit" of messages and their messengers (even if they claim to be our "brothers in the Lord" or even appearing as angels of

light!) and reject such messages (and the fellowship of false “believers”) if they don’t line up with the rest of the (unedited, untwisted, untruncated) Scriptures. We’re NOT to join in with the workers of evil.

*For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I **betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.** But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be **led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.** For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. 2 Corinthians 11:2-4*

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. **I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.** As we have said before, so now I say again: **If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.** For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. Galatians 1:3-10*

*Beloved, **do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.** 1 John 4:1*

*Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. **If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.** 2 John 1:9-11*

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 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 1:5-7 (Also continue reading the rest of 1John.)*

Contrary to the popular narrative among most liberals and progressives today, “ignorance” is not defined as “disagreement with the personal beliefs of another (more insistent, forceful, louder) person.” And neither is Biblical truth equal to hate speech.

*Rather, speaking the **truth in love**, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Ephesians 4:15-16 (Please also see how the passage continues later below.)*

*The **aim of our charge is love** that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 1 Timothy 1:5*

*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not **love**, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not **love**, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not **love**, I gain nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3*

People DO need to “wake up,” but not in the way that is being pushed in today’s culture. “Seeing the light” should mean to recognize that the Light of the World is the ONLY hope for salvation (John 8:12, 3:19-21, 12:46), NOT that there is “no need for salvation,” or that we are all “gods” with the right to be masters of our own destinies (and for some, over the fates of others they consider inferior to them—which again, for them, is anyone who is “ignorant” enough to believe in and respect the ONE, true God.)

Nor is it being “woke” (as the trending saying goes) if we desire for global organizations to “save the planet” by controlling everyone and everything, as though there is no God and we need to appoint a committee to act as such (but in reality, they appoint themselves, don’t they?) God, who never lies, has promised that the seasons will continue as long as He ordains the earth to continue. (Gen. 8:22, Num. 23:19, Hab. 2:2-4)

The Book of Revelation gives fair warning that horrific times are ahead for those dwelling on the earth, many of which will involve extreme weather—but those who are sealed as God’s people will not be harmed even IF they might dwell on earth at that time. (Rev. 7:2-3, 9:4, 12:12)

The beginning (more accurately, the firstfruits, which properly implies that

these are not just empty words, but are followed up with actions) of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. So when those who rightly fear (respect, love, obey) God are called "basket of deplorables" "clinging to their guns and religion," it's actually the people who are saying such things who are foolish and to be pitied. This comes from the words inspired by God to have written in the Bible, not from my opinion.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.
Proverbs 3:5-8

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! Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right! Isaiah 5:20-23

For the word of the cross is **folly to those who are perishing**, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "**I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.**" Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For **the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men**. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But **God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 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. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

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

It takes humility to admit that we are accountable to Someone (and you can be sure God is not merely a “force” or “energy”) above us. It takes common sense to look around the world and to realize that chaos never has and never will result in order (not to mention there needing to be something in existence from which chaos began), but that there IS a Creator who made everything and has the sovereign right to control it all. It takes respect to do God’s will instead of our own.

For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar. Psalms 138:6

And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. James 2:23

*For the **wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all **ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth**. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For **his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made**. So they are **without excuse**. For although they knew God, they **did not honor him as God or give thanks to him**, but they became **futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened**. Romans 1:18-21*

God WILL let people go their own way if they insist upon it persistently enough. During this short earthly life, we’re making a case for or against ourselves, to be revealed on Judgment Day. (Rev. 20:11-15, Dan. 7:9-10) ONLY the precious blood of Jesus can wash our sins away. God doesn’t force us to believe in Him, to love Him or to do His will (out of that love)—that would not be genuine. That would not be “in truth and spirit.” (John 4:23-24) Regardless, everyone WILL be humbled in the end—but those who have to SEE to believe will have missed the opportunity to exercise their right to become children of God through saving faith (which is not something you see with your eyes).

*But to all who did **receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God**, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:12-13*

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life**. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be **saved through him**. **Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God**. And this is the **judgment**: the light has come into the world, and **people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil**. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God." John 3:16-21

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore **God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!** Amen. For this reason **God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error**. 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 1:22-32

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." But **to the wicked God says: "What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you. If you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you keep company with adulterers. "You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son**. These things

you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you. **"Mark this, then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver! The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!"**
Psalms 50:14-23

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?** Isaiah 57:11

They have **not humbled themselves** even to this day, **nor have they feared, nor walked in my law and my statutes** that I set before you and before your fathers. Jeremiah 44:10

But the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, for they are **not willing to listen to me**: because all the house of Israel have a **hard forehead and a stubborn heart**. Ezekiel 3:7 (Also see Rom. 11:25.)

For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): **"I am the LORD, and there is no other**. I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in vain.' I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right. "Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save. Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And **there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me**. "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.' "Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; **to him shall come and be ashamed all who were incensed against him**. In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory." Isaiah 45:18-25

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. Hebrews 11:1-3

For in this hope we were saved. Now **hope that is seen is not hope.** For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Romans 8:24-25

It takes desire to truly know God to take the time to actually do so, which starts with reading the Bible for ourselves. It takes putting God as our first priority to serve Him with our very lives, not just "part-time" with one eye on heaven and the other on the "delights" of the world.

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.** And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:15-17

If then you have been raised with Christ, **seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4

It takes love to want to give all for the glory of God, and gratitude to respond appropriately to all He has done for us. But it all starts with humility. Obviously, people who think of themselves as being gods or being above God in any way are not humble.

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be **in you.**" I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and **I in you.** Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "**Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?**" Jesus answered him, "**If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love**

me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. John 14:15-24

*With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless; with the purified you show yourself pure; and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous. For **you save a humble people, but the haughty eyes you bring down.** For it is you who light my lamp; the LORD my God lightens my darkness.* Psalms 18:25-28

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Psalms 51:17

*For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and **also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.**"* Isaiah 57:15

*"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" **He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?** The voice of the LORD cries to the city—and it is **sound wisdom to fear your name:** "Hear of the rod and of him who appointed it!" Micah 6:6-9*

Even Jesus, the ONLY begotten Son of God, humbled Himself in order to become the Savior of the world by being born in a human body like ours, but of a virgin—His Father is God through the overshadowing of Mary by the Holy Spirit. This was should not come as a surprise to anyone. It was foretold in the Old Testament.

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 should 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 2:3-11

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is **from the Holy Spirit**. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name **Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name **Jesus**. Matthew 1:18-25

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a **virgin** betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, **you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus**. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and **the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God**. Luke 1:26-35

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, **the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel**. Isaiah 7:14

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to

establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:6-7

*Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and **what is his son's name?** Surely you know! Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar. Proverbs 30:4-6*

So being God's own Son, Jesus was not born with the sinful nature like we have all inherited from our fathers, ever since Adam. Jesus lived the perfect life without EVER breaking ANY of the law, despite having the same temptations as we have.

*For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those **who belong to Christ**. 1 Corinthians 15:21-23*

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:12-19

*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to **fulfill** them. Matthew 5:17*

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness **to be tempted by the devil**. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 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. Matthew 4:1-11 (Also see Jam. 4:7, 1Pet. 5:8.)

For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:18

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been **tempted as we are, yet without sin**. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16

Because of having a natural body like ours, Jesus was ABLE to die (lay down His life FOR US and take it up—be resurrected—on the third day).

So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and **in three days I will raise it up**." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But **he was speaking about the temple of his body**. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. John 2:18-22

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and **I lay down my life for the sheep**. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For

*this reason the Father loves me, because **I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.** This charge I have received from my Father.” John 10:14-18*

Having kept the law perfectly, Jesus was qualified to not only be our priest under the NEW covenant (in the eternal order of Melchizedek, as the old covenant was passing away), but to sacrifice Himself for us, to save us by the shedding of His blood (the ONE time, sufficient to pay ALL penalties for sin). This is what the animal sacrifices in the old covenant foreshadowed.

*For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. **He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.** Hebrews 7:1-3*

*Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another **priest** to arise after the **order of Melchizedek**, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? **For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.** For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him, “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.” **For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.** And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever.” **This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.** The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but **he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him,***

since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but **the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.** Hebrews 7:11-28

In speaking of a **new** covenant, he makes the **first one obsolete.** And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to **vanish away.** Hebrews 8:13

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. **Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly,** as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared **once for all** at the end of the ages to **put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.** And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been **offered once to bear the sins of many,** will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. Hebrews 9:22-28

For since the law has but a **shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities,** it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For **it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.** Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." **He does away with the first in order to establish the second.** And by that will we have been sanctified through the

offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered **for all time a single sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For **by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified**. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. Hebrews 10:1-18

For our sake he **made him to be sin who knew no sin**, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the **propitiation for our sins**, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:1-2

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that **God sent his only Son into the world**, so that we might **live** through him. **In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins**. 1 John 4:8-10

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but **in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. **After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high**, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my **Son**, today I have **begotten** you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? And again, **when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."** Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in

the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But **you are the same, and your years will have no end.**" And to which of the angels has he ever said, "**Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet**"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Hebrews 1:1-14 (Also see Psalm 45.)

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining **the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.** Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the **good news** to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, **set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.** As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, **conduct yourselves with fear** throughout the time of your exile, knowing that **you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.** Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since **you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;** for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the **good news** that was preached to you. 1 Peter 1:8-25

We are also told that Moses, who was used mightily by God, was the most humble man on the earth (at least during his lifetime).

Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. Numbers 12:3

*Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his **friend**. Exodus 33:11a*

*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*

*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*

Our slates are washed clean when we believe in the Gospel, and everything we do from that point on should reflect our gratitude, love and respect for our great God. There is no mention in the Bible of our having to (or even being able to) pay the penalty for ANY part of our sin—Jesus finished that work.

*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 1 John 1:8-10*

*When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is **finished**," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19:30*

However, our behavior as adopted children of God should show the world what our Father is like. Continuing in sin after being washed clean is compared to a dog eating its own vomit, or a pig wallowing in the mud after being bathed. There are rewards for faithfulness that are promised to those who overcome their old flesh through the power of the Holy Spirit. There will also be consequences for those who know better, but disobey anyway.

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the **firstfruits of the Spirit**, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for **adoption as sons**, the redemption of our bodies. Romans 8:23

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive **adoption as sons**. And because you are sons, **God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"** So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. Galatians 4:4-8

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. John 15:8-10

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. "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 5:13-16

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 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), 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. **Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.** Ephesians 5:1-12**

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For **what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?** What accord has Christ with Belial? Or **what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?** 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. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, beloved, let us **cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.** 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought **to walk and to please God**, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For **this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you.** For God has **not called us for impurity, but in holiness.** Therefore **whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. "'I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that **you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality** and to eat food sacrificed to idols. **I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.** Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, **unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead.** And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only **hold fast what you have until I come.** The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will

*rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and **repent**. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who **have not soiled their garments**, and they **will walk with me in white, for they are worthy**. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ Revelation 2:18-3:6*

*And **that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating.** Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. Luke 12:47-48*

Although this message is for those who reject God (some of whom will actually seek to prevail against Him in the future—Rev. 17:12-14), we can all use it to examine our lives to be sure that the faith we’re exercising is 100% in God (not ourselves or anyone or anything else), and that we really KNOW Him as He teaches us about Himself and His ways in the Bible. Since He never changes, we can be sure that the Scriptures are NOT outdated for our time. We will each answer for our OWN response to hearing the truth.

*Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved. For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to **mourn** over many of those who **sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced**. This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I **will not spare***

them—since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God. **Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!** 2 Corinthians 12:19-13:5

For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. **You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.** Romans 8:6-9

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. **Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. **For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.** But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For **each will have to bear his own load.** Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. **Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.** For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:1-10

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? **Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.** And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. **The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord,** and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. **Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take**

the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. **Flee from sexual immorality.** Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.** 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." **Wake up** from your drunken stupor, as is right, and **do not go on sinning.** For some have **no knowledge of God.** I say this to your **shame.** 1 Corinthians 15:33-34

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for **God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.** Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. **Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.** Hebrews 13:4-8

Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to **abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.** Acts 15:19-20

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that **you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.** Farewell." Acts 15:28-29

We can look at our own fruits to see if they match what those listed for us as being those of the Spirit or if our fruits are still on the list of those stemming from our sinful, old flesh. Jesus didn't die for us so that we could continue enjoying our sin without fear ("fear" is respect and the common sense not to put God to the test!) That is NOT the kind of "freedom" He has given us. That's to be part of our forgiven, washed past, by His grace and HIS power IN us.

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only **do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh**, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. 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. Galatians 5:13-23

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. 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 13:8-14 (Also 1Thess. 5:5-8, Eph. 5:7-12.)

What shall we say then? **Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!** How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would **no longer be enslaved to sin**. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from

the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves **dead to sin** and alive to God in Christ Jesus. **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.** For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? **Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!** Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, **you are slaves of the one whom you obey**, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But **what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed?** For the end of those things is **death**. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the **fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life**. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:1-23

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may **bear fruit for God**. For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we **serve in the new way of the Spirit** and not in the old way of the written code. Romans 7:4-6

We're saved by grace through faith for a purpose. (Notice that salvation precedes the good works.)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them**. Ephesians 2:8-10

And let our people learn to **devote themselves to good works**, so as to help cases of urgent need, and **not be unfruitful**. Titus 3:14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to **purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works**. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Titus 2:11-15

The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that **those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works**. These things are excellent and profitable for people. Titus 3:8 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**. James 1:19-21

If Jesus' Spirit hasn't set us free from being enslaved to sin (such that we are unable to resist doing the same things we did before we came to know Him), that should make us question why not?

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin**. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:31-36

The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But **as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death**." Revelation 21:7-8

Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son.

*And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'" **Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be **hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.** For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.** Hebrews 3:5-14*

If sin still has control over us instead of the Holy Spirit bearing good fruit in us, we may need to question ourselves as to whether our faith is sincere (and according to a genuine knowledge of God and His ways).

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. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may **not sin.** But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. **Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.** By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. John 1:5-2:6

*I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him. And now, little children, **abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.** See what kind of love the Father has*

given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. **No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.** Little children, let no one **deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. **No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.** 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 2:26-3:10

For this is the **love of God**, that we **keep his commandments**. And his commandments are not burdensome. 1 John 5:3 (See again John 14:15-26.)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. **Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.** Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that **bears much fruit**, for apart from me you can do nothing. **If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. **"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.** John 15:1-14

If we still love our old ways and can't seem to break free of them, at the very least, we should admit that we're grieving and/or quenching the Holy Spirit. Again, it's about who and what we love most, which should always be GOD. Even if we were to lose all of our friends and family for His sake, it would be worth it.

*Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption**. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:25-32 (Also see the previous portion of this passage earlier above.)*

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. **Do not quench the Spirit**. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. **Abstain from every form of evil**. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22*

We're NOT supposed to take pride in our sin or in our approval and/or tolerance of it. God favors the HUMBLE and helps them overcome the trials and temptation that He allows for the proving and refinement of their genuine faith. He is AGAINST the proud. He chastises those who are unashamed of their sin.

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 1:32

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. 6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 6

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

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. Resist him, firm in your faith,** knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:6-11

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various **trials**, so that the **tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that, though being destroyed by fire is being refined**—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:6-7

"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. "'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, **because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."' Revelation 3:14-22**

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that **the testing of your faith produces steadfastness**. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.** 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. **Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 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. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. 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.** James 1:2-21

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. **Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were;** as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." **We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the**

ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. **No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.** 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty. **The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.** For the LORD of hosts has a day **against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low;** against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan; against all the lofty mountains, and against all the uplifted hills; against every high tower, and against every fortified wall; against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft. Isaiah 2:10-16 (See the verses that follow in Isa. 2:17-19 earlier above.)

"For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace. **Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush.** Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown," says the LORD. **Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'** I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not pay attention.' Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them. Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not paid attention to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it. Jeremiah 6:13-19

These "fruits of the Spirit" are not our efforts to save ourselves. They're not things that we do through our own might and power, but they are the natural result of His presence IN us as we SUBMIT to His will and His ways.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a

crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Philippians 2:12-16

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" **For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever.** Amen. Romans 11:33-36

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. **For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.** "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:8-11*

Jesus said that we must be born again to enter the kingdom of God. He compared the working of the Holy Spirit to the wind. You can't see it, but you can see the effects of it. FIRST comes salvation, THEN Jesus bears fruit IN us as we ABIDE in Him.

*Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water **and the Spirit**, he **cannot enter the kingdom of God.** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' **The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.**" John 3:3-8*

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. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Galatians 5:23-26

*For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but **if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Romans 8:13-14*

Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us and that He makes His home IN those who LOVE HIM. Don't forget that He clarified that those who love Him will OBEY Him.

*"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that **I go to prepare a place for you?** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." John 14:1-3*

*But, as it is written, "**What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him**"—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. **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.** The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16*

*Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has **stood the test** he will **receive the crown of life**, which God has **promised to those who love him.** James 1:12*

*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?** James 2:5*

*Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God **who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments**, to a thousand generations, and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him.*

He will repay him to his face. You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today. Deuteronomy 7:9-11

Behold, the eye of the LORD is **on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love**, that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. **For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you.** Psalms 33:18-22

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so **great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him**; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion **to those who fear him**. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But **the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.** Psalms 103:11-18

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. **He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. The LORD preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.** Psalms 145:18-20

His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but **the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.** Psalms 147:10-11

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And **he who loves me will be loved by my Father**, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." John 14:21

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.** John 15:8-10 (Also see John 15:17, Rom. 13:8-14, Matt. 7:12, Jam. 2:8, 12, Gal. 5:13-26, 1Thess. 4:1-9)

We know that **everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.** We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. 1 John 5:18-21

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. **His divine power** has granted to us all things that **pertain to life and godliness,** through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, **having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.** For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For **whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.** Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you **practice** these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be **richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. 2 Peter 1:1-15

This is a plea to everyone to humble themselves NOW and submit to GOD's sovereign power instead of insisting upon their own way, and instead of fearing people or valuing their opinion more than God's.

Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ,** he is a **new creation.** The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in

Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. **We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.** 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great." Luke 6:46-49

"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.** Matthew 7:13-14

It's better to be hated by this world than to be a part of it. The citizenship of the adopted children of God is in heaven.

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? **If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.** Galatians 1:10

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather **fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.** Matthew 10:28

"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' **If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.** But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. John 15:18-21

For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and

murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. **Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, **let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.** 1 John 3:11-18

"Blessed are those who are **persecuted for righteousness' sake**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you **when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. "**You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.**" 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 5:10-16

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. "**Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.**" But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. "Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets." But I say to you who hear, **Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.** Luke 6:20-28

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

Truth is lacking, and **he who departs from evil makes himself a prey**. The LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. Isaiah 59:15

But you are a chosen race, a **royal priesthood**, a **holy nation**, a **people for his own possession**, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10

"Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'" **Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name. "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him." 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 3:13-4:3**

But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "**The Lord knows those who are his,**" and, "**Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.**" Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, **if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy,**

useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:19-26

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the **washing of regeneration and renewal** of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:3-7

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then **you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God**, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Ephesians 2:11-22

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, **knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You**

are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. Colossians 3:23-25

In the meantime, the world will go on until the time God has predetermined. It's not too late to get ready for any who have been distracted and/or uninformed about these matters; and those of us who do believe must be careful that we still have "oil in our lamps" when Jesus ("the Bridegroom") returns for us.

*But the day of the Lord will come **like a thief**, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. 2 Peter 3:10*

*("Behold, I am coming **like a thief!** Blessed is the one who **stays awake**, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!") Revelation 16:15*

*"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were **foolish**, and five were **wise**. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the **foolish** said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the **wise** answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, **the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.** Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' **Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.** Matthew 25:1-13*

Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding. Proverbs 23:23

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