

## Be Fruitful

by Tricia Berg

*"And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it." Genesis 9:7*

The context of this passage begins and ends with the same instructions—"be fruitful and multiply." In between those verses, God makes a change regarding the consumption of food. He had previously instructed Adam and Eve that they may eat from every plant and tree in the Garden of Eden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the center of it. However, after the flood, God gave the instructions that animals may also be eaten (and He said He was putting the fear of man into them.)

*And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply** and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man." Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for **God made man in his own image.** And you, **be fruitful and multiply**, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it." Genesis 9:1-7*

*And God said, "Behold, I have given you every **plant yielding seed** that is on the face of all the earth, and every **tree with seed in its fruit.** You shall have them for food. Genesis 1:29*

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "**You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat,** for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Genesis 2:15-17 (Also see Gen. 3.)*

But my message isn't about whether people should eat animals or not. While it is false that animals are equal in value to humans (because man was made in God's image and animals were not, also Matt. 10:31, Luke 12:7), I realize that there are valid concerns about the way that some animals raised for food

are treated. Romans 14 tells us that it is between each person and God whether to eat something or not eat it, and no one should force their views on anyone else. All foods are "clean" for believers in this age, but we should not cast stumbling blocks before anyone for the sake of food. (Mark 17:18-19, Acts 15:19-20, Rom. 14:13-23, 1Tim. 4:1-5)

**"Be fruitful"**—God's instructions to Adam and Eve, the first married couple. The purpose of marriage is mutual support and procreation. (Mal. 2:13-16, Matt. 19:3-9, Eph. 5:25-31) Some couples are not able to be physically fruitful despite their best intentions. However, there are many people who have come to hold the attitude that the fruit of the womb is disposable rather than a gift from God.

*Then the LORD God said, "**It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.**" Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a **man** shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his **wife**, and they shall become **one flesh**. And the **man and his wife** were both naked and were not ashamed. Genesis 2:18-25 (Also see Eph. 5:29-32, 1Cor. 6:15-20)*

*Behold, **children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.** Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. Psalm 127:3-5*

There is a television ad playing OFTEN here in Wisconsin featuring a woman running for governor. She says that "just when you think things can't get any worse, they do," and "I can't believe I'm fighting the same fight my grandmother fought." This politician (whose entire qualifications appear to consist of her pro-death stance) says she is shocked that "abortion is a crime in Wisconsin," without clarifying that she's talking about killing babies after the stage at which they can feel pain (20 weeks and up; half-way through gestation). That is the "things got worse" part (which she didn't elaborate

upon)—she is dismayed that some empathy and compassion is being shown to tiny human beings who have no voice and no way to defend themselves.

She goes on to say that she thinks of her own children (at which point in the ad she is shown happily interacting with her two young daughters—maybe so we can see that she doesn't mean she wishes she had aborted them) and is fighting for them. This brings to mind when Obama said that he wouldn't want HIS two daughters "punished" (by having the "burden" of enduring a pregnancy, birth and motherhood) if they made a "mistake." While pre-marital sex and promiscuity IS a mistake, two wrongs do not make a right. These ignorant views about life do not come from God, the designer and giver of it. (Jam. 1:5, 13-18, Psa. 111:10, Job 34:14-15)

*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*

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and **become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.** Whoever **humbles himself like this child** is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but **whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!** And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire. **See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.**" Matthew 18:1-10*

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

The problem with abortion is that God never gave us dominion over the life and death of human beings. There is a difference between capital punishment and murder—what inexcusable crime have unborn babies committed? There is also a difference between God’s judgment against the ungodly (many of whom did things like sacrifice their children to idols) and murder. (2Kings 17:29-31, Ezek. 16:20-21, Ezek. 20:30-33, Ezek. 23:37) We can receive forgiveness through Christ for any sin, even murder. However, we don't continue intentionally committing sins thinking that God "doesn't see" (Heb. 4:13, Acts 5:1-11) or "doesn't mind" if HIS children (believers, John 1:12-13, 1John 3:1-10), who have been washed clean in the precious blood of His ONLY begotten SON, Jesus, disrespect Him and have no appreciation for the precious gift of eternal life they have received. (Heb. 10:26-39, 1Pet. 1:14-25) Does anyone actually think that God cares whether we are KIND to one another, even our enemies, but not if we KILL innocent and defenseless people? (Eph. 4:32, Gal. 5:22-23, 1Pet. 1:8-11, 1John 3:16-18, Rom. 12:9-21) How is that loving and kind? Jesus said that even to hate is to murder. (Matt. 5:21-24)

*"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. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But **love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.**" Luke 6:27-36*

*Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, **compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do***

*everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:12-17*

The fruit of the earth and how it multiplies is similar to the fruit of the womb, each one reproducing according to its kind. (Gen. 1:11-12, 21-22, 1Cor. 15:38-39) During His ministry, Jesus clarified something that had not been previously understood by the Jews. The “unclean” foods did not literally defile the body. Later, Peter would receive the rest of that lesson in a vision from God—the separation of clean and unclean (as well as kinds of crops, textiles, etc.) represented the Jews being set apart from Gentiles as God’s chosen people. (Acts 10)

*“For you [Israel] are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.” Deuteronomy 14:2 (Also see Mal. 3:13-4:3.)*

The various prohibitions were physical examples to teach spiritual lessons. (Lev. 11, Deut. 14) What is eaten goes inside of a person—God’s people are not to take inside of themselves the idolatrous thoughts and attitudes of those around them, which result in wicked deeds coming out from the evil inside of them. This is similar to how the eye is called “the lamp of the body.” (Matt. 6:22-23) What we see can defile us inside, so we need to be careful not even to look at (let alone participate in) the increasingly wicked things that unbelievers find acceptable. (Rom. 1:21, Eph. 4:17-24, 1John 2:15-17, Phil. 4:4-9, Col. 3, Matt. 6:24 - notice that verse immediately follows the eye/lamp one.)

*“You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind. You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor shall you wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material.” Leviticus 19:19*

*“You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole yield be forfeited, the crop that you have sown and the yield of the vineyard. You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. You shall not wear cloth of wool and linen mixed together.” Deuteronomy 22:9-11*

The two kinds of livestock not being yoked together (like for plowing) or bred together taught that God’s people should not be yoked with unbelievers (i.e. believers should not marry unbelievers). (2Cor. 6:14-7:1) I used to consider the restriction from planting two kinds of crops in one field as a separation from the world, but unbelievers are not “another crop”—they’re WEEDS. (Matt. 13:7, 22, 24-30, 36-43) I believe that the purpose of keeping the crops separate is to teach that not all crops (representing groups of people) are harvested at the

same time, but each in its own order as it matures (e.g. the barley is harvested first, then the wheat, then the grapes.) Each crop has its own offering of firstfruits. (Deut. 18:4, 2Chron. 31:5, Neh. 10:35-38) In fact, Jesus Himself is the Firstfruits of the barley crop (Lev. 23:9-14, 1Cor. 15:23), and the Body of Christ is a kind of firstfruits and has the firstfruits of the Spirit. (Jam. 1:18, Rom. 8:23, Col. 1:28, Phil. 3:15, Heb. 5:14) Jesus is the "Bread of Life" (John 6:35 - whereas bread was generally made out of wheat or barley flour), and wine is made from grapes (associated with blood, wrath and suffering. 1Cor. 11:25, Isa. 53:10, Rev. 14:17-20, Gen. 49:11, Isa. 63:2-6).

Making garments of only one kind of textile showed (like the yoked animals) that God's children must not blend in with the world, but remain separate and (fully) clothed with purity (which is a physical representation of the spiritual state of the heart). (1Cor. 15:33-34, Rom. 13:14, Gal. 3:27, Eph. 5:25-27, Rev. 3:4, Rev. 19:7-8, Rev. 22:14, Isa. 61:10, Psa. 51:10, Heb. 10:22) Jesus explained that the heart is the source of good and evil (resulting in wicked deeds that defile the body if what comes out of the heart is evil):

*And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person." Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit." But Peter said to him, "Explain the parable to us." And he said, "Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But **what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person.** But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone." Matthew 15:10-20*

These next passages help us to understand that we CAN see from someone's behavior what the condition of their heart is, that is, whether or not they are indwelt and led by the Spirit of God. (Rom. 8:13-19, Gal. 5:16-25, 1John 3:21-24) There are EFFECTS produced by the Spirit—just like with a tree bearing good or bad fruit, just like the wind blowing.

*"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good*

treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for **out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**"  
Luke 6:43-45 (Also see 2Cor. 11:14-15)

*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*

Each person dies spiritually when they first use their free will to indulge the sinful nature they were born with (because we have all inherited it from Adam, the first father - Rom. 5:19), which is "counted" against us as sin ("trespasses") when we are able to understand right and wrong, as well as the penalty of sin—death. (Rom. 6:23, Isa. 7:15-16, Rom. 5:12-13, Rom. 7:9) We are not punished for being born with the sin nature, but for exercising it. Prior to sinning, we are covered in righteousness, but afterwards, we are spiritually naked—"dead." (Gen. 3:6-7, 2Cor. 5:1-5) The skins that God made to cover Adam and Eve were foreshadows of how Jesus would shed His innocent blood to cover us with His righteousness. (Rom. 3:21-26, Rev. 5:9-10, 1Pet. 1:17-21, John 10:14-18) "Justification" is being made righteous, which is being "made right" with God (declared "just"/innocent again, like a newborn baby). (Gen. 3:21, Heb. 9:22-28, Rom. 13:14) All of OUR sins were placed upon Jesus, the Son of God, who was punished for them, having NEVER sinned Himself. (2Cor. 5:21, Isa. 52:13-53:12)

*And you, who were **dead in your trespasses** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by **canceling the record of debt that stood against us** with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.  
Colossians 2:13-15*

When we believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that Jesus, the Son of God, died for our sins and rose again from the dead as our Lord and Savior (Rom. 10:8-10), His Spirit washes (baptizes) us and regenerates (brings to life) our dead spirit—He clothes our naked spirit with righteousness. (John 6:63,

John 15:3) That is what is meant by “born again.” We are CLEAN and PURE at that point, but we are still living (“walking”) in the filthy world. So we must avoid “soiling our garments” (which are spiritual, remember—we “soil” them by SINNING). (Rev. 3:4-5, Rev. 22:14-15, Jam. 1:27, 1John 2:1-6)

*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. 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 3:2-8*

*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 1:17-23*

Being made clean and keeping that way is what “sanctification” means (being “set apart,” “holy,” “purified” - 2Cor. 6:17). We are sanctified by the word of truth. (John 17:17, John 15:3, Eph. 1:13-14, 1Thess. 4:3, 1Thess. 5:23, 2Thess. 2:13, Heb. 10:10-14, 2Tim. 2:15, Jam. 1:18) Just like being justified, we are not able to sanctify ourselves of our own power—we SUBMIT to God, to the Spirit of Truth within us, rather than fight against Him and indulging our OLD nature. (John 14:16-17, John 15:26, John 16:13, 1John 4:6, John 4:23-24, 1John 5:6, Rom. 6:1-14)

*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the **word of the truth, the gospel**, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God*

in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us your love **in the Spirit**. And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be **filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God**. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Colossians 1:3-12

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. 2 Timothy 2:19-22

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

Jesus washed the disciples' feet and told them that understanding would come to them later, but to do the same for one another. Because Jesus told Peter that he could have no part in Him if he didn't allow Him to wash his feet, we know there is more to it than dirt on skin. (John 13:1-17)

*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**. 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. 2:1 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.** 1 John 2:1-6

The Church (the Body of Christ, being constructed during this age from all born-again, called-out-of- the-world believers- Col. 1:8-23, 1Pet. 2:4-5, Eph. 2:18-22) is supposed to keep the leaven (sin and false teachings) OUT. (1Cor. 5, Gal. 5:7-9 2John 1:9-11, Luke 12:1-5) There is no way to do that in a corporate sense without each individual personally doing so. We avoid getting filthy, but if we do slip, we must hold ourselves and one another (believers) accountable, for the health and purity of the spotless Body of Christ. Jesus doesn't FORCE us to believe OR to obey Him, but make no mistake—to obey Him IS to LOVE Him. (John 14:24) The promises are made to those who love Him, who overcome by holding fast to their faith. (1Cor. 15:1-2, Phil. 2:14-16, Heb. 3:5-6, Heb. 10:23, Rev. 2-3, Heb. 6:11-12, 1Cor. 2:9, Jam. 1:12, Jam. 2:5)

*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might **sanctify** her, having **cleansed her by the washing of water with the word**, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, **without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.** Ephesians 5:25-27*

*Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, **be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish**, and at peace. 2 Peter 3:14*

*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 6:15-23*

We believers spiritually "bear fruit" for God, because of HIS Spirit IN us. (Gal. 5:16-25, Phil. 2:12-16, Mark 4:20, Luke 8:15, John 15:1-17, Rom. 7:4-6, Titus 2:11-15) In fact, the Spirit of TRUTH is also called the HELPER, just as Eve was made to be Adam's "helper." There is a DEEP significance to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We are one SPIRIT with Christ when we are born again, just like man and wife are physically "one flesh". We are His temple and must not defile our bodies where HE DWELLS. This is why ALL kinds of sexual immorality are particularly wrong for believers (and also for unbelievers, as they go against God's design and purpose).

*"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 6:12-20*

**Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.** 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

If we LOVE God, we will NOT want to practice ANY behavior that corrupts His Holy dwelling. (1Tim. 5:20-21, 2Cor. 12:20-13:2) Slipping is forgivable, but those who refuse to repent grieve the Holy Spirit and quench Him. (Eph. 4:30, 1Thess. 5:19-22, 1John 1:5-10) If they do so persistently enough, they will no longer hear Him at all, which means to no longer believe, since He is the giver of faith. (Eph. 2:8-10, Rom. 10:17) Those who do not believe are NOT saved. (1John 2:23) Those who DO believe have a healthy respect for God, gratitude for the cost of their salvation to Jesus, love in their hearts for God, and they stand in awe of all He has done. (2Cor. 5:14-15, 1John 2:1-6, 1John 4:7-21, 1John 5:3, 1Cor. 2:9, Jam. 1:12, Psa. 19, Psa. 104)

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. John 3:36

**"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. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But **the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.**" John 14:15-26**

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. As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." Hebrews 3:12-15

If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a **murderer**

**or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.** Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for **judgment to begin at the household of God**; and if **it begins with us**, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And **"If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"** Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. 1 Peter 4:14-19 (Also see Rev. 11:18, 1Cor. 3:12-15)

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. Hebrews 10:29-31

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, **much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.** At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will **shake** not only the **earth** but also the **heavens.**" This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus **let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.** Hebrews 12:25-29

Claiming to believe with the mouth only (but not truly in the heart - Rom. 6:17, Mark 7:6-9, Rom. 10:8-10), attending "church" (which is NOT a building, institution or service, but the Body of Christ, true believers), having been "baptized" by being sprinkled as a baby, coming from a family of believers, volunteering, etc. will NOT save anyone. ONLY the Spirit saves. (John 6:63) We can do NOTHING to earn salvation, but those who ARE saved bear good fruit, which is evidence that they have God's Spirit within them. He alone is the guaranty of salvation. (2Cor. 1:21-22, 2Cor. 5:5, Eph. 1:13-14)

*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.** And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. **Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut***

**down and thrown into the fire.** *I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.*" Matthew 3:7-12

*Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains."* John 9:39-41

Isn't it ironic that the Pharisees, who loved to enforce the law and exalt themselves above the people (but not keep the law themselves - Matt. 23) had no problem with adding one more "work" (baptism) to their list of ways they thought they were saving themselves? (Rom. 9:32) They didn't understand that God NEVER looks at outward appearances, but ALWAYS at the TRUE condition of the HEART. (1Sam. 16:7, 1Pet. 3:3-4, Acts 13:22, Matt. 23:25-28, 2Cor. 3:5-6, Rom. 7:4-6, Rom. 6) People forget that if their words and actions are filthy, that is a sure sign that their insides, including their thoughts, are also unclean. (Rev. 3:4-6, Rom. 13:14) Even if what is outward appears acceptable, God can see INSIDE. NOTHING is hidden from Him. (Heb. 4:12-13, Psa. 139:23-24) The point is NOT to try harder of our own effort, but to YIELD to His Spirit. (Rom. 8:13, Gal. 5:24-25, Gal. 6:8) The more we know what pleases God, the more we can take delight in what He loves. (Psa. 36:27, Psa. 37, Jer. 15:16, Matt. 6:19-34, Luke 12:32-34)

If we think we're in charge—that God changes to accommodate our desires and "the times" (Heb. 13:8, Mal. 3:6, Isa. 29:15-16), then we are claiming to BE God. That is what Eve fell for in the Garden—that it's "wise" to mess with God and do what we want instead of what He told us to do. That's how this whole problem of sin ruining the world, which was perfect when God made it, got started! Eve believed the LIE that she would be more like God if she disobeyed Him, but she was ALREADY made in God's image. She became LESS like Him through her foolishness in eating and in giving the fruit to her husband, Adam, to eat as well. We're to be innocent as to evil, just like children.

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat*

of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die." But **the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."** Genesis 3:1-5

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.** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Romans 16:17-20

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

God condemned Israel at one point for making sacrifices to idols and then coming into His temple the same day to sacrifice to Him with their guilty, bloody hands. (Ezek. 23:37-39) This is no different. Our offerings are not acceptable to God if we also make a practice of doing evil. (Rom. 12:1-2, Matt. 5:23-30) Whoever cannot accept God's ways over their own preferences, and according to the "wisdom" and the evil ways of this fallen world is simply NOT HIS. (Rom. 8:9, 2Cor. 13:5, Mark 4:15-23, Prov. 8:13, Psa. 97:10, Amos 5:15)

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*

***They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know **the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.** 1 John 4:5-6***

*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.** 1 John 3:12-13*

*I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when **people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth** and wander off into myths. 2 Timothy 4:1-4*

People who are in favor of some kinds of sexual immorality generally become more and more tolerant of other forms as well. People who don't understand God's beautiful design and perfect purpose are easily swayed to believe there is nothing wrong with aberrant behaviors and beliefs—but where does it stop, or does it? God lets people follow their own depraved inclinations when they persistently reject His truth and insist upon embracing their own wicked ways (which is idolatry). (Rom. 1:18-32, 2Thess. 2:9-12)

*This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will*

come in the last days with scoffing, **following their own sinful desires**. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and **destruction of the ungodly**. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 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. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in **lives of holiness and godliness**, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, **be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace**. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the **ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures**. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, **take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability**. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:1-18

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, **ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality** and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great

day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise **indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire**, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Jude 1:3-7

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 3:19-21**

People who try to convince everyone that unborn babies are merely "potential" human beings, that they don't feel pain when they do, that they have no rights and are merely a part of the woman's body are LYING. They are deceiving themselves and others. (Rom. 1:18) But God cannot be fooled. (Heb. 4:12, Rev. 2:5, Rev. 2:16, Rev. 2:21-23, Rev. 3:1-4, Rev. 3:15-19) You can read [here](#) about how those behind "progress" in the area of "sex education," "reproductive rights" and "women's healthcare" have an agenda that includes distancing parents from influencing their own children with their values. This is being carried out today through their influence in the public education system.

This isn't about "providing 'healthcare' to all" and "'naturally' changing times," it's about profit from abortion, according to a planned business model. The earlier children begin having sex, the more likely they will be to seek an abortion for unwanted pregnancy. Whoever actually believes that Planned Parenthood only performs abortions as a tiny percentage of the whole of their business, and that they are genuinely "nonprofit," wants to believe that in spite of the truth. They probably also believe that they do mammograms—which they don't—or that they are "tolerant" of the other side of "pro-choice"—LIFE. But in fact, they try to put pro-life organizations out of business, because it reduces their profits when mothers choose NOT to abort.

Also read [here](#) about how the "progressives" want to teach children about sex even earlier—a school district in Wisconsin has adopted a new curriculum for that purpose. No one involved is going to be up-front and admit that the goal is the decay of society, for a profit. We have to be smart enough to figure it out by their fruits (which are bad according to God—sexual immorality and murder).

***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.** I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God." Jesus said to them, "**If God were your Father, you would love me,** for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. **Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.** You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a **murderer** from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is **no truth in him.** When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a **liar** and the **father of lies.** **But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.** Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? **Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.**" John 8:31-47

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and **the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.** **A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."** John 10:1-5

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

Those of us who belong to Christ must NOT listen to deceivers! We obey GOD and listen to HIM. (Gal. 1:10, Luke 21:17-19, 1John 2:15-17) We are to separate ourselves from the world, because He called us OUT of it. (2Cor. 6:14-18, John 15:16-19, Rev. 18:4-8, Col. 3, Jam. 4:4-5)

*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*

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

*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 2:18-22*

*And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. **Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy**." "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." The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. **I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.** He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. Revelation 22:10-21

Our task as believers is to continue speaking the truth in love. (Eph. 4:14-16, 1Thess. 4:8, Titus 2:15) Telling people what they want to hear makes our life in this temporary world easier, but our hope is in the NEXT world, not this one. (2Cor. 4:16-18, 2Tim. 4:3, Heb. 13:12-16, 1John 2:17) We believe what God said about the wrath coming against those who reject the truth, and we love people enough to warn them, even if it causes us to be unpopular. (Matt. 5:10-16, Titus 2:7-8)

"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

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.** 2 Timothy 3:12-15

Only **let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ**, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and **not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction**, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. Philippians 1:27-30

We know that gaining the whole world is not worth losing our soul. (Matt. 16:24-27, Mark 8:34-38) We know that the reason people behave in the ungodly ways that they do is that they DO NOT have God. We WANT them to be saved instead of perishing. (1Tim. 2:1-6, 2Pet. 3:9) We know that we shared the same fate as they do before we came to know the truth of the Gospel.

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. 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 4:17-32

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. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Look carefully then how you **walk**, not as **unwise** but as **wise**, making the best use of the time, because the days are **evil**. Therefore **do not be foolish**, but understand what the **will of the Lord is**. Ephesians 5:1-17*

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

*If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. **Rather train yourself for godliness;** for while bodily training is of some value, **godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come**. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. **Command and teach these things**. Let no one despise you for your youth, but **set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity**. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.*

Our motive is LOVE and mercy. It's better to learn the truth and have it cause us temporary pain NOW than to suffer eternal punishment. (1Cor. 5:3-5, Acts 11:15-18, Rev. 20:10-15)

*For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were **grieved into repenting**. For you felt a **godly grief**, so that you suffered no loss through us. **For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation** without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. 2 Corinthians 7:8-10*

*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 2:23-26*

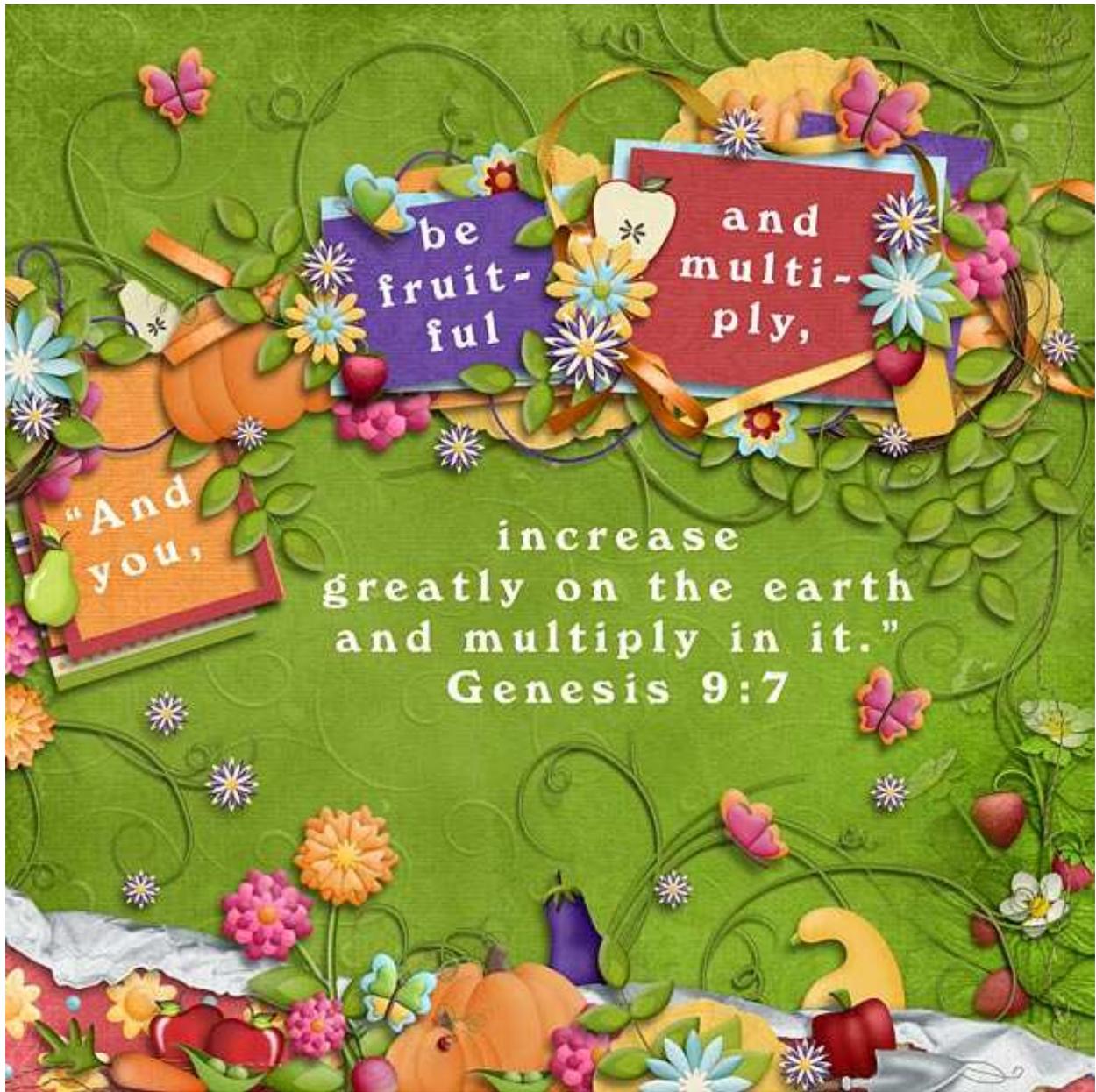
***Practice** these things, **immerse** yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close **watch** on **yourself** and on the **teaching**. **Persist** in this, for by so doing you will **save both yourself and your hearers**. 1 Timothy 4:6-16*

*Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be **obedient**, to be **ready for every good work**, to **speak evil of no one**, to **avoid quarreling**, to be **gentle**, and to show **perfect courtesy toward all people**. Titus 3:1*

*Follow the **pattern** of the **sound words** that you have heard from me, in the **faith** and **love** that are in Christ Jesus. **By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us**, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. 2 Timothy 1:13-14*

*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*

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