

Hated "Haters"

by Tricia Berg

Paul would surely have been convicted of hate speech if he lived in our day in some parts of the world—maybe England or Canada? Coming soon to America? He told it "like it is," but not because of being "mean" or "hateful." He wanted people to have their eyes opened instead of living in blindness. He wanted them to wake up in time, while they can repent. People don't like hearing things they disagree with, but it's better than believing lies with eternal consequences. Paul fought against the deception that robs people of what they hope for, and deprives Jesus of the glory and honor that He is due, as well as His pleasure in rewarding as many servants as possible for their "good and faithful" service to Him (because some are NOT faithful—some are deceived into thinking empty words are pleasing to God. (Matt. 7:21-29, 25:10-30, Luke 6:43-49, 19:12-27)

*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. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10*

(Note: The two terms describing the active and passive partner in homosexual acts from the original text have been combined in modern translations to simply say "practice homosexuality," sparing our God-given sensibilities, but removing some of the original clarity.)

*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 5:5-12*

God is NOT waiting to smite people down for making mistakes. He WANTS us to be saved, or He wouldn't have been willing to suffer the agony it took to make that possible. (John 3:16-18, 10:17-18, Isa. 52:13-53:12) But what He did was out of LOVE, and that should be our RESPONSE to it as well. (John

14:15, 15:9-10, 12-14, 1John 4:9-10) No one is punished with death for being born with the sinful nature—it's about what we DO because of it. We ALL sin (Rom. 3:23), but those who perish do so because their sins are not forgiven—either because they do not believe in Jesus, the only way we can be washed clean of our sins (Rom. 6:23), OR they say they believe, but yet continue practicing unrighteousness, refusing to repent and be washed clean again (by Jesus' ONE sacrifice - Heb. 9:24-28) when they slip. (1John 1:5-2:6, Heb. 7:25, Rev. 3:4-6, 17-18, 2Pet. 2:22, Titus 1:16, Rom. 6:19-22)

"Good works don't save, but those who are saved do good works." This applies to both doing good and refraining from evil. (1Thess. 5:19-22, Rom. 16:19, Eph. 2:10, 4:30, Col. 1:10, Titus 3:8, 14, Gal. 6:9) The works are done BY Him—He dwells IN us. (Phil. 2:12-16, Rom. 12:1-2, John 15:1-10) If we think that saying we love Jesus, but doing our own will instead of His is how we show it, we're deceiving ourselves. (John 14:21, 15:8-10) If we think that all that is expected of us is an hour a week of "church attendance" (but the Church consists of called-out believers, not a building, institution or worship service) and the rest of our time is our own, we really DO NOT "get it." (1Pet. 4:2-3, 2Cor. 5:9, 15) Jesus is Head of the Church, which is the Father's household. (Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 1:17-18, Heb. 3:5-6, 3:12-14, 4:12-13, 12:22-29, 1Thess. 4:6-8, 1Cor. 11:30-32, 1John 2:28-29, Rom. 2:4-11) As such, it is His duty to discipline us and His right to be obeyed. If we deny this, then we are saying that we're NOT His, but the devil's. (Heb. 12:7-11, Rev. 3:19, 1John 3:8-10, 1Cor. 15:22-23, Rom. 8:9, 2Cor. 13:5)

*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 **practice** such things **will not inherit the kingdom of God**. Galatians 5:19-21*

Notice how it says "works of the flesh" above. People today don't understand that when Paul says we are not "under the law" (Gal. 5:16-18), he's saying that PROOF of that being the case is that we NO LONGER make a regular practice of displaying those evil works (fruits) of the flesh. Understand? We display (bear) the fruit of the Spirit instead. We don't restrain ourselves—we yield to the HOLY SPIRIT who restrains those in whom He dwells, which is ONLY in true believers. Look at how God gave up those who refused to honor Him as God to the evil desires of their wicked hearts in Rom. 1:18-32. Anyone whose "fruit" is depravity (by God's definition, not that of the unsaved world) does NOT know God. (2Tim. 3:8, 1John 3:8, Titus 1:16, Phil. 3:18-19, Rev. 2:21-23)

God can't be fooled and neither should we be. (Gal. 6:7-9, 2Tim. 2:19-26, Heb. 4:11-12) If we truly believe, then it will show on the outside. If we understand that God is holy, all-powerful and all-knowing, we will do as He tells us to do instead of listening to and doing what the unsaved world tells us is acceptable and does. (Heb. 12:14, Jude 1:4, Matt. 10:28, 2Tim. 3:12) Don't read Rom. 13:8-10 without also reading what it says right afterwards in Rom. 13:11-14. "Love" has been redefined as "anything goes" on earth, but NOT in heaven. The Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of Truth," which is NOT the "Spirit of hate." God doesn't consider truth to be "hateful" and neither should we (so long as our motive IS love for both body and soul). (1Cor. 13:1-3, 1Tim. 1:5, Eph. 4:15-16, 1John 3:18, Mark 8:36)

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 (Also see 1John 5:18-19, Eph. 5:5-12, 2Cor. 6:14-7:1.)

Don't be deceived into thinking that not "under the law" means freedom TO sin. What it means is that the passions that drove us to do sinful things, because of the very fact that they were not allowed under the law, no longer control us. (Rom. 7:4-6) We are FREE from them and now controlled by the Spirit—by desire to DO God's will. We have gone from bearing VISIBLE fruit for death (sin) to fruit for GOD (righteousness, holiness). We have come OUT of the darkness and into the LIGHT. (John 3:19-21, Eph. 5:11-17)

Jesus said that everyone who practices sin is a SLAVE to it. (John 8:34-36) The WAY that He sets us free is to come and dwell IN us. (John 14:15-17, 23-26) He gives us living water (John 4:10-14, 7:37-39)—new life to our dead spirit. (Titus 3:4-8) If we will just YIELD to His desires and put to DEATH our old flesh, full of sinful desires, then we will "walk in the Spirit" and "bear fruit" (GOOD fruit, not rotten like we used to do, but fruit of the Spirit.) (Rom. 8:13-14, Rom. 6) So in other words, even though the Holy Spirit cannot be SEEN, His presence can be DETECTED—just like we can hear the wind and see how it moves things. (John 3:3-8)

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. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Colossians 3:5-11

Often we'll hear people saying that they don't need to worry about Jesus "losing" them and that "He'll complete the work He started." Those are both TRUE. However, the Father is not giving a people to His Son who don't even respect Him, let alone LOVE Him. (John 6:37, 17:6, 15:1-2, 5, 14:21-24) Nothing external can separate us from God's love, such as persecution, physical needs, sufferings, etc. (Rom. 8:35-39, 2Tim. 4:16-18) If we abide in Him (which we do of our own free will, but by His power), then we are protected from evil. (John 17:15, Eph. 6:16, 2Thess. 3:3, 1John 5:18) Even when it seems to us that bad things happen, we can be sure God is working them out for our good IF we love Him. (Rom. 8:28) The words about "completing the good work begun in them" were said to the Philippians who needed encouragement because they were suffering for His sake. Those words were NOT meant to be encouragement (or reassurance that it is okay) to disrespect Jesus—which is what we are doing when we refuse to behave in a manner befitting the children of God! (1John 3:1, 4:5-6, 5:19, John 15:19)

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6

*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*

There is a verse with similar encouragement in the passage below. We can see by the instructions not to quench the Holy Spirit and to abstain from evil that permission is not being given to run wild and then place the blame on Jesus for "failing" to sanctify us. Perish the thought!

*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**. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at*

the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (Also see Eph. 4:30, 1John 2:28-29.)

It almost seems as though the Corinthians did misunderstand Paul when he wrote something similar to them in 1Cor. 1:8-9, because in 2Cor. 1:13-14 he says they only partially understood him. Those who “boast” do so in the Lord. Those who are His obey Him. (Rom. 15:18, 16:19, 6:17-18, 1Pet. 1:14-16, 2Cor. 2:9, 7:15, 9:3, Titus 3:1-3, 1Tim. 6:11-12, 2Tim. 2:3-7)

DO NOT take hold the promises of Rom. 8:15-16 without also paying attention to Rom. 8:13-14 and 17 (and don’t misinterpret Rom. 8:11-12)! Paul told us that IF the Spirit dwells in us and gives us LIFE, then our flesh will no longer behave as though obliged (indebted) to the flesh. (Gal. 5:19-21) Indeed, there is NO reason to fear if we are truly alive to the Spirit and dead to the flesh, as evidenced by our denying our old sinful self and yielding control to the Spirit who produces the fruit of righteousness—evidenced by our god-pleasing thoughts, words and actions. (Gal. 5:16, 22-24) The “spirit of slavery” bears the fruit of death, which is the same fruit we displayed BEFORE we were saved. (Rom. 6:20-22)

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 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. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Romans 8:11-17

One of Paul’s heavy burdens to bear was concern for believers. (2Cor. 11:28) In addition to some of the Jews trying to get them to observe Mosaic law, there were many former Gentiles being deceived into thinking that they are SO FREE in Christ that no matter what they do, they can never put their eternal inheritance at risk. Apparently, the Corinthians had received so many gifts of the Spirit and blessings in God, they began to be puffed up by them. (1Cor. 4:6-8) **The decayed state of the culture was irrelevant for the children of God** (i.e. It didn’t make it acceptable for them to behave in the same ways, and neither does it for us.) Paul wrote harshly to them, hoping that they would repent before he came to see them personally. He was keenly aware that their

souls were far more important than any temporary hurt feelings caused by scolding them for not yet GIVING UP what should have been former "pleasures." (Mark 8:33-38) We're to look to the things above now that we're children of God, not set our hopes on earthly things. (Col. 3:2-6, Matt. 6:19-24, 33) What we treasure shows where our HEART is. (Matt. 6:21)

What do you wish? **Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?** 5:1 *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 proud! Ought you not rather to **mourn**? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the **destruction of the flesh**, so that **his spirit may be saved** in the day of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 4:21-5:5 (Also see 1Pet. 4:1-3.)*

And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also **put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee**. But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. **Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith**. 2:1 For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. **For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you**. 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4

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

I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am **humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!**—I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show **boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who**

suspect us of walking according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have **divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to **punish every disobedience**, when your **obedience is complete.**** 2 Corinthians 10:1-6

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! I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test. But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may **do what is right**, though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for. **For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.** 2 Corinthians 13:5-10

Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, my little children, for whom **I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!** I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you. Galatians 4:16-20

In the above letter, the danger being addressed was that of reverting to ritual law-keeping for assurance of salvation (things like circumcision and feast days), instead of being under the “law of liberty.” (Jam. 1:25-27, 2:12) See this next passage about what it means for Christ to be “formed” in us, i.e. to “mature in Christ.”

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.** 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 4:15-24

Many times in the past I have separately quoted 1Cor. 9:24-27 and 1Cor. 10:13, unintentionally removing important context contained between the two sections. The reason was that in order to cut and paste, I use a computer program—very convenient. The problem is that in the software I use, the chapter doesn't scroll continuously between chapters. When the end of a chapter comes, the next one displays with none of the previous chapter visible any longer (similar to how pdf readers can be set to either display one page at a time or scroll continuously, except there is no such setting in this case). I really dislike that shortcoming of the program, since it makes even more of a break between related thoughts than a printed version might. There were no chapter breaks in the original manuscripts, nor section headings (which often have a subtle interpretation added in and can make breaks between related thoughts as well.)

So my point is that Paul went ON to EXPLAIN what he meant by disciplining his body and WHY we must ALL do that, but I mistakenly didn't include it in my quote. I apologize for that (and I'm afraid I may have done this in some other instances as well—the good news is that means I'm still learning instead of stagnating—I'm using the "measure [of light from the word of God, of faith] I received" so that I will be given more, as Jesus said. Matt. 13:10-16, 2Tim. 2:15, Eph. 4:7, Rom. 10:17, 12:3, Heb. 5:11-14).

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the **prize**? So **run that you may obtain it.** Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath [victor's crown], but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But **I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.** 10:1 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 9:24-10:13

In 1Cor. 9:27 above, the same Greek word for "disqualified" is used in Heb. 6:8 to describe land that has drunk the rain, but failed to produce a crop useful to its owner. (In the ESV, it is translated as "worthless.") Doesn't that sound a lot like the Parable of the Weeds? (Matt. 13:36-43) We know that the owner of the land is God and the good crop is produced by the Sons of God through the Holy Spirit. (Also see Matt. 13:23, 1John 3:9.) Weeds, thorns and thistles are not what was sown by God, but those are the "crop" of the enemy. Another form of this Greek word is used in Rom. 1:28 (God gave up those who refused to acknowledge and honor Him as God to a "reprobate, debased, depraved, worthless" mind), 2Cor. 13:5 ("fail to meet the test" of faith), 2Tim. 3:8 (men of corrupt mind who led people astray from the truth, "disqualified, rejected" from the faith), and Titus 1:16 (insubordinate, empty talkers who upset entire families teaching for shameful gain what leads away from the truth, who claim to know God by deny Him by their works—disobedient, detestable and "unfit, disqualified, worthless" for any good work).

For it is **impossible**, in the case of those who **have once been enlightened**, who have **tasted the heavenly gift**, and have **shared in the Holy Spirit**, and have **tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come**, and **then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance**, since they are **crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt**. For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and **produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless** [same Greek word as "disqualified in 1Cor. 9:27] and near to being **cursed**, and its end is to be **burned**. Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the **love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints**, as you still do.

*And we desire each one of you to **show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.** Hebrews 6:4-12 (Also see Jam. 5:7-11.)*

Jesus said that figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor grapes from bramble bushes. (Matt. 7:15-23) He ALSO said that unfruitful branches will be CUT OFF by His Father and burned. (John 15:2, 6) John the baptizer said that every tree that bears bad fruit will be CUT DOWN and burned! (Matt. 3:10-12) **Do we really want to ignore these kind of dire warnings? Would that be wise, or foolish?** (Eph. 5:15-17, Matt. 7:24-27 - notice this immediately followed Jesus' warnings about bad fruit, salt that has lost its saltiness, light hidden under a bushel, and the broad path that leads to destruction; also see Matt. 25:1-13, Jam. 1:21-27, 5:19-20, Gal. 6:1.)

The way to be sure we truly ARE God's children is that we walk in the Spirit (led by Him, following Jesus), in which case we will walk in love. (1John 2:6, 3:10, 16-18 4:7-12, 1Pet. 4:7-11, Eph. 5:1-2, 2John 1:4-6, Gal. 5:16, 25, Rom. 8:13-14, John 13:34-35, Rom. 13:8-14, Mark 12:28-34, Jam. 2:14-17, Heb. 10:24-25) And if we love Jesus, we will not want to defile His pure, holy Body (which is His temple) by committing sexual immorality. (Eph. 5:23-27, 30-32) Once again, God has said that sexual immorality is physical intimacy between anyone other than a man and woman who are married to each other. (Matt. 19:4-6, Gen. 1:27) Leviticus 18:30 explains that God's children are not to behave in the same ways that heathens and pagans, by practicing things such as adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, sacrificing children to idols, and more. See my article "[Warned by Every Prophet](#)" for additional Bible study on this topic.

*Do you not know that you are **God's temple** and that **God's Spirit dwells in you**? If anyone **destroys** God's temple, God will **destroy** him. For God's temple is **holy**, and **you** are that temple. **Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.** 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 3:16-20*

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may **discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.** Romans 12:1-2*

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 10:36-39

No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning **abide** in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the **promise** that he made to us—**eternal life**. 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**. 1 John 2:23-29 (The "anointing" is the Holy Spirit, as often symbolized by oil. Be careful not to separate this from 1John 1:5-2:6 and 1John 3:1-10.)

Why did Paul write so much about sexual immorality and the others didn't? I believe that it's because he was the apostle to the Gentiles. (Rom. 11:13, 1Tim. 2:7) In case anyone doesn't know, "gentile" is not like our word "gentleman" that suggests refinement - it means someone not born as a Jew, God's chosen people. To be God's child, one must become a Jew like His Son, Jesus (of the tribe of Judah - Rev. 5:5, Heb. 7:14). In the OT, it was by birth (which included circumcision on the 8th day for males), or for a man who wished to "join himself to the Lord" later in life, being physically circumcised and observing the law. (Ex. 12:48-49, Num. 9:14, Jer. 50:5, Zech. 2:11-12, Isa. 14:1, 56:6-8 - Jesus IS our Sabbath rest in this age - Eph. 2:13-22, Heb. 4:3, 8-10 - Jesus has finished the work of salvation. John 19:30) In the NT, it's by "circumcision of the heart" ("without hands," Col. 2:11-12, for both males and females - Gal. 5:6-12) which is to recognize how grievous our sins are to our holy God and to desire that He make us right with Him (justify us) by forgiving us, because we believe that Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, and washing us clean with the precious blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (Rom. 2:28-29, Gal. 3:27-29 - remember, the Spirit saves, not works we do, not even water baptism - John 6:63, Luke 3:16, John 1:29, 1Cor. 5:7, 1John 5:10, 1Pet. 1:18-19) When we believe, we are grafted in to Israel and her blessings. (Rom. 11:17-25)

The Jews already KNEW that sexual immorality was an abomination to God (Lev. 18, not that the knowledge prevented them from disappointing and angering God by their disobedience - Isa. 1:2-31, Ezek. 23), but the culture of the Gentiles was accepting of every sort of evil. (1Cor. 5:1-2) They didn't have the law to tell them what was right or wrong in God's eyes, and they did whatever they pleased—such that the very word "Gentile" came to represent evil, ungodly behavior. Those who are perishing don't understand that there even is such a thing as truth. (John 18:38, 2Thess. 2:9-12) There is a difference between man's "wisdom" and knowledge of God. (1Cor. 1:18-31, Rom. 1:18-20, 1Cor. 15:34) People who don't believe God exists don't feel accountable to Him, needless to say. (Heb. 11:3, 6, Rom. 8:7-8, 1Cor. 2:12-14) Paul talked about what happens to people who persistently deny God's existence and reject His ways in Rom. 1:18-32 (they are given up to the evil desires of their heart - Mark 7:21-23). Peter was sent to the Gentiles before Paul took over (Acts 10-11, 15:7), and he talked about what they are like here:

*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*

I recently watched a Lutheran (WELS) sermon (upon being invited to do so on Facebook by someone who attends the church where this pastor was preaching). It was mostly very nice, about how we should be willing to curb some of our freedoms if it will benefit our neighbor and perhaps help bring them closer to Christ. One text he referred to in support of this was Rom. 14. Even though that chapter actually refers to our attitude among other believers in being willing to refrain from exercising some freedoms (like what to eat or drink, whether we consider certain days more special than others or not, etc.) and not judge our brothers in the Lord who don't hold the same convictions as we do (Rom. 14:5), we can all see how it could also benefit our unsaved neighbor.

And remember our passage (1Cor. 9:24-10:13) above? Well, right before it (1Cor. 9:19-23), Paul talks about giving up some of his freedoms in order to reach the lost. However, we can be sure from everything else that Paul says that he doesn't consider deliberate sinning to be among our "freedoms." That

is why I was so saddened by the verse below being used in the sermon to support "freedom in Christ" with absolutely NO mention of the rest of the context of the passage. I actually quoted what came before this verse (1Cor. 6:9-11) at the beginning of this article.

"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. 1 Corinthians 6:12

In context, the full passage is about how we are NOT "free" to defile the temple of God, which is our bodies, by committing sexual immorality. Paul's point (as with 1Cor. 9:24-10:13 above) is that we MUST exercise restraint as members of the Body of Christ. "You were washed" doesn't mean that we are unable to "soil our robes" if we LOVE sin that much as to go rolling in it in the PURE white robe Jesus clothed us in. (Rev. 3:4-6, 2:20-23, 22:14-15 - these are the words of our Savior and KING, to the church.) Jesus washed us in His precious blood! (Rev. 5:9-10, Rom. 13:14, 2Pet. 2:18-22) That should MEAN something to us! NOW is the time to REPENT (don't just say "sorry," but TURN from sin) and be forgiven and washed clean (again, for those who believe). Live for GOD until He brings you home to Himself. (2Cor. 5:14-15) How much sterner could Jesus have put it than to say it would be better to enter the kingdom of God MAIMED than to lose our souls due to indulging our flesh? (Matt. 5:29-30)

The passage we're discussing (which is the context of 1Cor. 6:12) continues as follows:

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**

If we choose to exercise our "freedom" in Him to do things that He hates, we will answer to Him for that. (Rom. 2:4-11, Heb. 3:12-14, 4:12-13) We are called to purity and holiness, to be separate from the world. (2Cor. 6:14-7:1, John 15:18-21)

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

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**. 24 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. Galatians 5:13-18, 24-25

We have already discussed that not being under the law does NOT mean a license to SIN. The law held people into bondage not only to the penalty of sin, but to the desire to do its will, like a slave is in bondage to its master. (Rom. 6:12-23) Being "led by the Spirit" means that God dwelling IN us leads us to do His will, as slaves of righteousness. (Also see Rom. 8:13-14 - "the deeds of the body" is similar to how we "walk" - neither of these are invisible.) "If we live" by the Spirit means IF we have been washed and regenerated by the Holy Spirit and made a new creation in Christ. (Rom. 8:1, 2Cor. 5:17, Rom. 6:1-11, Col. 3:3-4) I just can't emphasize enough that this is NOT imaginary, but REAL. The change is not usually instant (but for those delivered from addictions of various sorts, it can be), but there is progress towards being more Christ-like. (2Pet. 1:3-15 - If we fail to appreciate we were cleansed of our former sins and go on sinning, that is NOT pleasing to God. HIS divine power (Holy Spirit) grants us these things pertaining to life and godliness, so that we will have assurance of entry into the kingdom of God.) Those who ABIDE in Him and His love will inherit the promises. They are the ones who LOVE Him. (1Cor. 2:9, Jam. 1:12, Heb. 6:12)

He never leaves or forsakes us (but we are not held by force—love is what keeps us devoted to Him—we can leave Him if we love something or someone else more than Him, which would be utterly foolish). (John 14:16, Matt. 28:20, 2Tim. 4:10, 1John 2:15, Jam. 4:4) In Hebrews 13:5-6, there is a caution to trust God in all things, rather than worrying about money or being afraid of men. (Matt. 6:25-34) It quotes what was said to Joshua before taking on the GIANTS in the promised land. (Josh. 1:5-9) It's not about reassuring Joshua that if he loves money or pagan ways more than God, he shouldn't worry. However, those who deny Jesus, even out of fear, WILL be denied by Him. (2Tim. 2:11-13, Matt. 10:32-33, Luke 12:8-9, Rev. 21:8, Matt. 10:28, Luke 12:4-5)

The word "acknowledge" in Matt. 10:32-33 is really CONFESS, like telling the truth in a court of law, our testimony must agree with that of the Holy Spirit IN us that we belong to Jesus. (Rom. 8:9) He is "the anointing" who teaches us. (1John 2:19-20, 26-27, John 14:26) Those who are denied entry to the kingdom of God do not have "the testimony" in themselves. (1John 5:10-12, Matt. 7:21-23, Matt. 25:8, 11-12) Don't forget that "those dwelling in heaven" at the time that Satan comes against the saints with a vengeance have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb AND the word of their testimony, because they loved not their lives even unto death. (Rev. 12:10-13:18, Dan. 7:23-27, Dan. 11-12, Luke 17:33) A believer who is like salt that has lost its saltiness or a light hidden under a bushel is NOT giving testimony. (Luke 11:33-36, 9:23-26, 14:33-35)

*We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also. 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 6:11-7:1*

Remember, He is faithful to forgive and wash us clean when we confess our sin to Him, but if we deliberately continue in it, we risk quenching the Holy Spirit to the point that we no HEAR and thus, no longer believe. (Rom. 10:17, Matt. 13:8-9, 13:41-43, Mark 4:21-25, Luke 14:34-35, Rev. 2-3) Without living faith, we have no guaranty of salvation IN us. (1John 1:9-2:2, 2Cor. 1:21-22, 5:5, Eph. 1:13-14, Jam. 2:26 - again, the "works" do not earn salvation, they display proof that the person IS saved.) Those who DO love God and seek to do His will have nothing to fear—there's a difference between discipline and punishment.

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.
Revelation 3:19

And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Hebrews 12:5-13 (Also see Titus 2:11-15.)

*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. **We love because he first loved us.** 1 John 4:18-19*

Make no mistake, if "your Jesus" would never "judge" anyone, then you do not KNOW the REAL Jesus. (1John 2:3-6, 3:6-10) He is seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven now, but He will return to judge the living and the dead. Judgment BEGINS with His own household. (Rev. 11:15-19)

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. Hebrews 10:26-31

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 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 4:12-19 (Also see Matt. 5:10-16)

"The one who overcomes 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

"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. Revelation 22:12-15

We understand our God is ONE, unchanging. Fear of Him (a healthy respect for His awesome power, knowledge, wisdom and holiness) is the firstfruits of wisdom. (Psa. 111:10) Those who have no fear, and thus no wisdom, are taking the chance that they will be among the FOOLISH virgins who are not ready when the Bridegroom returns. (Matt. 25:1-13, Psa. 119:105) If we feel secure

while deliberately continuing to practice our sin, we should think again. (Acts 5:1-11) Our God is the SAME one who said these things:

*You **felt secure in your wickedness**, you said, "**No one sees me**"; **your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray**, and **you said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me."** But evil shall come upon you, which you will not know how to charm away; disaster shall fall upon you, for which you will not be able to atone; and ruin shall come upon you suddenly, of which you know nothing. Isaiah 47:10-11*

***Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?"** You turn things upside down! **Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?** Isaiah 29:15-16*

*At that time I will **search Jerusalem with lamps**, and I will **punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will he do ill.'** Their goods shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them." The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. I will bring **distress on mankind**, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. **Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the LORD. In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.** Zephaniah 1:12-18*

*"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

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 9 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. 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 2:4-5, 9-12

Those who think they are so wise these days, who have twisted and turned things every possible ungodly way, are the most foolish people on the planet. I’m quite sure that no one who ends up in the Lake of Fire will think of themselves as “wise.” (Rev. 20:11-15, 3:5)

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!" Psalm 50:16-23

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

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.**" Matthew 18:2-9

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to **enter life** crippled than with two hands to **go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.** And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to **enter life** lame than with two feet to be **thrown into hell.** And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to **enter the kingdom of God** with one eye than with two eyes to be **thrown into hell, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'** For everyone will be salted with fire. **Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.**" Mark 9:42-50 (Also see Matt. 5:13-16.)

It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, **to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of**

all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.
*These are grumblers, malcontents, **following their own sinful desires**; they are **loud-mouthed boasters**, showing **favoritism to gain advantage**. But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, **"In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions."** It is these who cause divisions, **worldly people, devoid of the Spirit**. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; **save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.** Jude 1:14-23*

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

We don't have "hoops" to continually "jump through" to be justified before God like they did in the OT. We trust in Jesus' ONE sacrifice on our behalf (Heb. 9:24-28). Also unlike then, now if we really believe in our hearts, He lives inside of us. (Jer. 31:31-37, Heb. 8:6-13) The new covenant was made with Israel, to which we are grafted in; Israel has not been replaced, nor "transformed" into a Gentile nation—we are making Israel jealous by entering into the covenant before most of them. (Rom. 11:7-8, Matt. 21:28-32, Luke 13:23-30) We believers from all tongues, tribes and nations are the "foolish nation" who once was "not a people" but now is. (Rom. 10:19, 11:11, 1Pet. 2:9-10, Rev. 5:9-10) Not only are we now His temple, but we have His power in us to help us resist sin. (Titus 2:11-15, Gal. 5:22-24, Jam. 4:4-10, 2Pet. 1:3-11) We OBEY out of LOVE, gratitude and respect. His commands are not burdensome, but "love your neighbor" does not mean loving sin! (1John 5:3, 2Cor. 5:13-14, Rom. 1:32, 16:18-19, 1Pet. 2:15-16, 2Pet. 2:14, Jude 1:16) Whoever refuses to give up their sin is testifying against themselves that they love themselves and their sin more than Jesus. It's so simple a child could understand it. (Mark 10:15)

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

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**"? James 4:4-5

Whoever **loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,** and whoever **loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.** And whoever **does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.** Whoever **finds his life will lose it,** and **whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.** Matthew 10:37-39

"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

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**. John 15:8-11

The discussion about abiding in Him and in His love is part of Jesus' teaching the disciples that they must keep His words and bear fruit, even if the world hated them. (John 15:18-21) He said He wanted their joy to be complete and His joy in them. What is Jesus' joy and what did it cost Him to enter into it?

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with **endurance** the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who **for the joy that was set before him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and is **seated at the right hand of the throne of God**. Consider him who **endured** from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. **In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood**. Hebrews 12:1-4 (Also see 1Pet. 2:19-25, Heb. 13:13, Rev. 2:26-29, 3:21-22.)*

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. **Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be **accounted righteous**, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall **divide the spoil** with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet **he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors**. Isaiah 53:10-12**

The rewards for persevering are very great and eternal—worth giving up some temporary “pleasures” and “treasures” in this world that is passing away. (Col. 3:23-25, 1Cor. 15:58)

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. James 1:12-16

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that **the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the **sons of God.** Romans 8:16-19**

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the **surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.** For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that **by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.** Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.** Only let us hold true to what we have attained. 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 3:8-21 (Also see 1Cor. 15:51-53.)

And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are **considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead** neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are **sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.** Luke 20:34-36

The Kingdom of God, over which Jesus reigns supreme as the only begotten Son of the Father, is more valuable than anything we could possibly imagine—worth even being HATED for His sake.

"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."** John 15:18-20 (Also see 1John 4:4-8.)

*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.** 1 John 3:11-15*

*I have given them your word, and **the world has hated them because they are not of the world**, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are **not of the world**, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. John 17:14-18*

*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. 1 John 5:18-20 (Also see John 14:6, 16-20, 26.)*

*Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be **considered worthy of the kingdom of God**, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the **Lord Jesus** is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, **inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord***

and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians 1:4-12

Who persecuted Jesus and the early church? People who claimed to know God. They even recruited unbelievers to help them. (Matt. 27:1-2, 11-31, Acts 6:8-15, 7:54-60, 9:23-25, 14:19, 17:5-8, 13, 19:24-41, 22:22-23:15, 24:1-25:5) These sorts of things have happened in the past and will happen again. (Ecc. 1:9, Matt. 10:16-42, 24:9-13, Mark 13:9-11, Luke 12:11-12, 21:10-19, 1Thess. 2:14, Phil. 1:28-30) No one with a lukewarm, shaky faith would be able to withstand severe persecution for Jesus' sake. (Rev. 3:14-22) In Jer. 12:5-6, God tells him not even to trust his own brothers and that the trial he's been through so far is nothing compared to what is to come. There is a warning to the persecutors in Isa. 66:5.

If we can't even stand for our faith when disliked because of it, we won't be able to do so when hated. If we think it's all about us and can't even understand that we're to conform to God's will and not the other way around, then how would we be able to resist doing whatever we thought necessary to survive? When we abide in Jesus, we know that we will not suffer God's wrath. (1Thess. 5:9-11, Rom. 5:9, Isa. 26:20-21) Neither is there any need for further "testing" through tribulation of those whose faith has already been proven genuine. (Rev. 3:8-13)

However, those who are alive on earth during the "reign of the beast" will either have to endure (even to their deaths, if necessary - Rev. 13:9-10), or they will take the mark of the beast and worship it. (Rev. 12:10-13:18) Everyone who does so will suffer eternally in the Lake of Fire. (Rev. 14:9-13) The promise to escape that "hour of trial" was made to those who had already been tried by enduring persecution, including by alleged believers. (Rev. 3:7-13, Rom. 2:28-29, Rev. 17:12, 1Pet. 1:6-7, Jam. 1:2-4, 12, Heb. 10:32-39, Rom. 8:16-19) Everyone on earth whose name is not in the Lamb's Book of Life will be deceived by the convincing signs and wonders performed by the beast. (2Thess. 2:9-12)

Even if we might not be alive when this time of the worst tribulation ever comes on the whole earth (Matt. 24:21), we need to be ready when it's our time to meet our Maker. We MUST NOT trade our eternal inheritance for "a bowl of

soup.” Anything in this temporary life that causes us to stumble, whether love of money, physical passion, anger, grudges, envy, etc. is our “bowl of soup.” Esau was still the son of Isaac, but he didn’t get the blessing and inheritance he wanted. (Heb. 12:15-17, Gen. 25:29-34, 27:34, 38) Because of his rash, careless actions, he was considered to have “despised” his firstborn inheritance. (Heb. 12:22-29, 3:5-6, 12-14) That means he had less regard for what was a long way off than for gratifying immediate desires, like the hunger of his belly.

God said that He “hated” Esau (Mal. 1:2-4, Joel 3:19-20, Obad. 1:1-21 - Edom is another way to refer to Esau), which refers to his wicked ways that came out from his evil heart. (Matt. 15:18-20, Prov. 6:16-24) In a similar way, Cain offered not from his heart what was valuable and dear to him (as Abel’s firstborn lamb was—a foreshadow of the Lamb of God is the firstborn and only begotten of His Father - John 1:29, 3:16, 1Cor. 5:7, 1Pet. 1:18-23), but instead offered something (probably not the firstfruits, but “leftovers” - Exo. 34:26, Deut. 18:4) which God didn’t accept (and so Cain killed his righteous brother rather than repenting.) (Gen. 4:3-14, 1John 3:12) See my article “[Cain’s Offering](#)” for more.

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. 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. Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. Proverbs 3:1-12

The prodigal son was still a son when he returned home on his own, but nevertheless, he had already spent his inheritance on worthless living. (Matt. 6:19-34, Luke 12:16-48 - Please read all of the context of those two passages—it’s not only about money even though that is a common stumbling block. Also see 1Tim. 6:9-11, 17-21.) To his great relief, the prodigal was welcomed back into his father’s household with open arms—but if he had not returned he would have died in that sadly impoverished and filthy state. (Luke 15:11-32)

Here is a partial description of what our inheritance will be like, IF we HOLD FAST to our faith and put to death by the Spirit the deeds of the flesh, and thus OVERCOME. (Rom. 8:13-19, Rev. 2-3) We don't earn the right to become sons of God, but sons of God behave as such, proving they are no longer under the dominion of Satan and sin. (John 1:12-13, 1John 3:1, 10, 1John 5:19, Matt. 13:36-43, 47-50, 1John 4:5-6)

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "**Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.**" And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment." Revelation 21:1-6*

*And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for **the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.** By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. **But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. **No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.** And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for **the Lord God will be their light,** and they will reign forever and ever. Revelation 21:22-22:5*

How long would it take us, if we're honest with ourselves, to be ready for Jesus to return? (1John 2:28-29, Rev. 3:11) Would ten years be enough time for us to "have our fun" and get around to pleasing God instead of ourselves (i.e. our

old sinful flesh, which was to have DIED when we were BURIED with Christ in baptism - Col. 2:12, Rom. 6:4)? How about tomorrow or even later tonight? Because none of us knows when WE will see Jesus, our judge, who is supposed to also be our LORD if we truly belong to Him. (Rom. 10:10, Acts 2:36) If we don't belong to Him, then we have bigger problems than "getting our way" in this short life! It's not about "doing enough good works" to please Him, but about the desire of our heart to KNOW and to DO His will (not just listen to what others say we can "get away with" and still be "saved." Phil. 2:12-16, Col. 1:10)

*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 3:13-18*

Don't look around at what others are doing—the broad path leads to destruction. (Matt. 7:13-14, also see Matt. 7:24-27 about how the one who is wise will not only hear what Jesus says, but DO it—some who thought that was optional and bore thorns and thistles instead of good fruit will not enter the kingdom of God - Matt. 7:15-23; also Jam. 1:22-25, 2:18-26.) In Hebrews 11, the saints of old were commended for their faith, which was counted to them as righteousness. They were not made righteous by keeping the law, but the genuine faith in their hearts bore fruit in the form of deeds that pleased God. (Rom. 7:4-6 - today we literally have the Spirit in our hearts if we truly believe.) We'll each answer for ourselves. (Gal. 6:5, Rom. 14, 2:6-11, also Rom. 2:1-5 and Matt. 7:3-5 about repenting ourselves and not only worrying about the sins of others.)

These are dangerous, difficult times we live in. (2Tim. 3:1-5, 3:12-4:5) Body and soul are at risk of being destroyed by invisible powers and by those who are controlled by them. We have to recognize deception when we see it. We have to put on the armor of God in order to stand against it. We have to put all of our trust in GOD as our refuge and fortress instead of in this world. (Psa. 147:10-11, 33:10-22, 149:4, Jam. 4:4-10, 1Pet. 5:6-11)

*Finally, be **strong in the Lord** and **in the strength of his might**. Put on the whole **armor of God**, that you may be able to stand against the **schemes of the devil**. For we do not wrestle against **flesh and blood**, but against **the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places**. Therefore take up the **whole armor of God**, that you may be able to **stand firm in the evil day**, and having done all, to **stand**. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of **faith**, with which you can **extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one**; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the **Spirit**, which is the **word of God**, praying **at all times** in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:10-20*

Paul had been physically assaulted and imprisoned numerous times for speaking the truth of God (2Cor. 11:24-27), and yet he never allowed himself to be silenced. (Gal. 1:10) In our country, most people have heard the Gospel but they either reject the existence of God, or they claim to accept it but there is no inward change (and thus, no outward change, or the outward change is by their own power, doomed to fail when tested by trial and tribulation.) We need to remember to keep including the truth in love and vice versa instead of thinking there is any way to do one without the other. That is—if we really believe all that God has said. If we don't, then we're as deceived as those among whom we're supposed to be shining as lights (and seasoning with salt—both of which represent truth—salt is the cure for the decay of lies, and light chases away the darkness of deception). (Phil. 2:14-16, Eph. 5:6-17, 4:18-19, Col. 4:5-6, Matt. 5:13-16, 6:22-23, Mark 9:50, Luke 11:33-36, 14:34-35, John 3:19-21, Rom. 1:21, 13:12-14, 1Thess. 5:5-8, 1John 1:6, 2:9-11) We CAN overcome and be "more than conquerors," if we rely on God instead of ourselves. (Rom. 8:31-39)

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