

Walk in His Ways and Fear Him

by Tricia Berg

*"The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to **do**, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers. And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, **testing** you to know what was in your **heart**, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you. So you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God **by walking in his ways and by fearing him**." Deuteronomy 8:1-6*

There's a lot in the above passage, isn't there? God tells us what He expects of us, what His definition of obeying is, why He does what He does, and more! Here are some related passages:

*Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and **walk** in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Pay attention to the [warning] sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not pay attention.' Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them. Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not paid attention to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it. Jeremiah 6:16-19*

The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish. There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. Proverbs 14:11-12

God tests us to see what's in our **heart**. Will we respect and obey Him? Will we trust and rely on Him, and therefore follow Him and walk in His ways (as the verse at the top indicates)?

*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. Matthew 15:18-19*

Jesus is God's only begotten Son, and the promises His Father made to Him had conditions attached to them. If Jesus had disobeyed and failed to remain faithful, then He would not receive the reward (keeping charge of His Father's house and ruling the nations). If we disobey, we will not receive certain rewards, either. All of the workers who reported for work (representing true believers - also see the Parable of the Two Sons - Matt.21:28-32) received the same "pay" (representing salvation) in the Parable of the Vineyard Workers (Matt. 20:1-16), but the rewards were according to faithful service in the Parable of the Talents (which were awarded in varying measures, just as we each have varying gifts of the Holy Spirit.) (Matt. 25:13-30, 1Cor. 12:4-11, Rom. 12:3-8, Luke 6:37-38, Mark 4:20-25).

*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. 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. Hebrews 12:1-11 (Also see Isa. 53:11-12)*

*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*

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 6:9-12

*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*

In the scene below, Joshua the high priest is "standing in" for Jesus. (Remember, the names in Hebrew are almost identical, and Jesus is our High Priest.) What is pictured is a foreshadow of Jesus bearing OUR sins, along with the promise of His reward for succeeding. (Isa. 52:13-53:12) We don't bear anyone's sins, but we still do His will for us.

*Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by. And the angel of the LORD solemnly assured Joshua, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: **If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts**, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are **a sign**: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch. For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree." Zechariah 3:1-10 (See a similar scene in Zech. 6:9-13, where it is made clear that Jesus is both High Priest and King. "Melchizedek" means King of Righteousness - Heb. 7:2. Please*

note that the Hebrew word translated "of access" is probably better translated "to walk" and means "rule over" in this context. See Rev. 1:20-2:1. Jesus is head of the Church, His Body. Col. 1:15-23, Eph. 1:22-23, Eph. 5:22-33. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Psalms 2, Psalm 45, 1Tim. 1:17, 1Tim. 6:13-16, Rev. 17:14, Rev. 19:11-16)

*So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "**You are my Son, today I have begotten you**"; as he says also in another place, "**You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek**." In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. **Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered**. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a **high priest after the order of Melchizedek**. Hebrews 5:5-10 (Also see Matt. 26:36-42, Psalm 110.)*

*Your **throne**, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your **kingdom** is a scepter of **uprightness**; you have **loved righteousness and hated wickedness**. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions. Psalm 45:6-7*

*But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have **loved righteousness and hated wickedness**; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." Hebrews 1:8-9*

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

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, **I have come to do your will**, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" Hebrews 10:5-7

"For I have come down from heaven, **not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me**." John 6:38

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but **Christ is faithful over God's house as a son**. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. Hebrews 3:1-6

What is His will for US? People who want to find a way to justify continuing in their sins say that His ENTIRE will is for us to believe, but that doesn't agree with the whole counsel of the Bible. (1Thess. 4:3-8, 1John 2:15-17, 2Cor. 4:2, 2Tim. 4:3-4)

Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I **did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God**. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that **after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them**. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is **able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified**. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Acts 20:26-33

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*

*For this is the **will of God**, that by **doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.** Live as people who are free, **not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.** 1 Peter 2:15-16*

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.**" John 13:34-35*

*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.** Galatians 5:13-16*

At the outset of His ministry on earth, Jesus was tested. He passed by resisting the temptation to join sides with the devil. Instead, He put His trust in the goodness of His Father and the sureness of receiving better rewards than those He was tempted with by Satan. (Heb. 10:32-36)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."" Matthew 4:1-4

Jesus is the Bread of Life on which we feed (spiritually, not physically.)

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." John 6:35

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." John 6:63 (Also John 15:3)

The Israelites were tested in the wilderness for forty years. The church is being tested "in the wilderness" (the world) for forty Jubilee years* (representing freedom - Lev. 15:10) to see who will FOLLOW Jesus and OBEY His commands by walking in His ways. As He said below, the one who loves Him will do so.

*50 (years per Jubilee cycle) x 40 (days and nights) = 2,000 years, or two "days" of 1,000 years each; 50 is the complete number (fullness) of the omer count ending on the Feast of Weeks—which count began on Firstfruits when Jesus rose from the dead and finished the barley harvest on the same day as the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were offered. (Lev. 23:9-22, Exo. 34:22, Psa. 90:4-5, 10, 12, 2Pet. 3:5-10, Rom. 11:25, Hos. 6:1-3) Ruth (a "type" of the Church) went to Boaz (a "type" of Christ) when he was threshing barley the night he agreed to redeem her. (Ruth 3:2, see more below.)

For those who are confused about whether the Jubilee cycle was 49 or 50 years, we have a pattern with the Feast of Weeks. Each year there was the weekly Sabbath followed by a High Day on the first day of the week. Like Firstfruits, Pentecost is ALWAYS on Sunday—the day after the Sabbath of the seventh FULL week (counting the first AND last day, so FIFTY days, not 49). So, there is the regular Sabbath year followed by a special Sabbath of the Jubilee year. You can't start a new count of a non-Sabbath year at the same time as you observe a Sabbath year. What would our week look like if we considered the seventh day also the first day? How confusing! That makes NO sense at all! We MUST get our information from the Bible, not through traditions of men.

Note we are nearing the "two days" since the arrival of the Holy Spirit, but we must get prepared, and remain so at all times. Jesus taught in the parables that he would seem to be delayed. (Luke 12:41-48) So let's not set dates, and let's not get discouraged and join the scoffers if He doesn't arrive as soon as we hope. (1Thess. 4:16-18, 1Thess. 5:9-11)

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we **walk in darkness**, we **lie** and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you*

*may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to **know him**, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a **liar**, and the **truth is not in him**, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are **in him**: whoever says he abides in him ought to **walk in the same way in which he walked**. 1 John 2:1-6*

Notice in the example of Ruth in the Old Testament, she came out of Moab (a pagan nation representing the world) by FOLLOWING her mother-in-law to Bethlehem where she later married Boaz. She didn't just SAY she would follow and then turn back (which is what her sister-in-law did). Once there, she worked (by gleaning) in the field of Boaz (the "lord of the harvest"). (Ruth 2:23, Lev. 23:22, Jam. 2:5, Matt. 9:37-38, 2Tim. 2:6-7)

*And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from **following you**. For **where you go I will go**, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." Ruth 1:15-17*

*Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him **deny himself and take up his cross and follow me**. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Matthew 16:24-27*

*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*

*After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer **walked with him**. So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." John 6:66-69*

*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for **if they had been of us, they would have continued with us**. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are **not of us**. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. 1 John 2:19-20*

If we claim to believe in Him and to love Him, but obey our old desires and follow the world instead of Him, then we can expect to be disciplined IF we really belong to Him. (Heb. 12:5-14, quoted previously; Rom. 8:9) The one who is humble obtains grace, which is power and help from God in the time of need to resist temptation (NOT "I still love you and 'understand' why you 'can't' obey me—you'll still get the same reward as those who gave up their lives for my sake" like this lost, self-centered world thinks sounds good).

*For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also **with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite**. Isaiah 57:15 (Also see Matt. 5:1-15 as to who will inherit the kingdom.)*

*We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is **growing** abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. 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 1:3-12*

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden

*from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find **grace to help in time of need.** Hebrews 4:12-16*

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

*Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be **tempted beyond your ability,** but with the temptation he will also **provide the way of escape,** that you may be able to **endure it.** 1 Corinthians 10:12-14 (Also see Jam. 1:12-16, previously quoted.)*

"Able to make His servant stand" does NOT mean that God will FORCE us to resist temptation. He enables us, through the power of His Holy Spirit, to withstand it—but we must be faithful to take up the armor He gives us. (Eph. 6:10-20, quoted later.) The following verse refers to the performance of our service to God (as He calls us to do, and provides what is needed - Matt. 6:7-13, Matt. 6:32-34, Matt. 21:22, John 15:7-8, John 16:23-24, Jam. 4:1-3)—it's not referring to intentionally sinning against Him.

Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. Romans 14:4

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same

function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the **grace** given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine. **Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection.** Outdo one another in showing honor. **Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.** Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, **so far as it depends on you**, live peaceably with all. Romans 12:3-18

He didn't set us free TO sin, but FROM sin. Whoever is still making a practice of it is still enslaved, and therefore not an heir who will stay in the house (kingdom of God) forever.

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who **practices sin is a slave** to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:34-36

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.** Romans 6:15-19

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

If we INSIST upon going "back to Moab" (or "Egypt," or "Sodom," etc.), He will eventually stop striving with us, but His GRACE is meant to lead us to repentance, not for us to pervert it into a license to SIN.

*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*

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

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

*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. Jude 1:3-4*

Remember, Jesus expects to be OBEYED as Lord and Master, not with empty words, but ACTIONS. (John 4:23, Matt. 7:6-9, Mark 12:28-34) What good would it have been to God (and us) if He had only SAID He would obey His Father, but hadn't actually done so? Our freedom cost Him more suffering than we could possibly imagine, to the very end of His life. We obey out of love, gratitude and respect. We are to be useful, faithful servants to our Master, just as the example He set for us, and also the parables, teach. (Luke 19:11-27) Just as those in the "hall of fame of giants of the faith" did. (Heb. 11)

*"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. **Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?** Everyone who comes to me and **hears my words and does them**, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who **hears and does not do them** is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great." Luke 6:43-49 (Also see Matt. 6:21 - the evil person's "treasure" in their heart (what they love) is wickedness. Also see Matt. 3:10 and Matt. 13:36-43.)*

*"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **You will recognize them by their fruits.** Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every **healthy tree bears good fruit**, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor*

can a diseased tree bear good fruit. **Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.** Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. **"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.** On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' Everyone then who **hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man** who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who **hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man** who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. Matthew 7:13-29

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the **implanted word**, which is able to save your souls. But **be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. **But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.** If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. **Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.** James 1:19-27 (Remember faith comes by hearing the word, and Jesus is the Word - John 1:1-5. He is "implanted" in us when we truly believe - 1John 4:13, 1John 3:9, and He bears good fruit. Gal. 5:22-24)

Jesus gave His life to save us and that should mean something, no—EVERYTHING—to us! Those who belong to Him have His Spirit within them enabling them to seek, discern and to do His will. (Rom. 12:1-2, Eph. 5:10)

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear

and trembling, for **it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.** Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Philippians 2:12-16

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact **the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.** But **if Christ is in you**, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. **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. 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.** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the **firstfruits of the Spirit**, groan inwardly as we **wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.** Romans 8:7-23

Please understand that the "life to your mortal bodies" above is the same thing Paul is talking about when he says in Rom. 6:4 that we died with Jesus so we could walk in newness of life. We have the power NOT to live according to the flesh NOW despite our mortal bodies. In the future, our mortal bodies will take on immortality and there will BE no flesh to overcome, and thus, no need for this exhortation, which is for the present time. (Titus 2:11-15, 1Cor. 15:53)

Jesus will judge His own people first, then those who refused to love the truth and be saved. (Rom. 1:18-32, 2Thess. 2:10-11, Isa. 45:22-23, Rom. 10:8-10, Rom. 14:10-12 - Note: "judging our brother" is picking at their service as though it's not as good as ours, wanting everyone to serve God exactly like us, and criticizing them for the same errors we make ourselves, etc. Judging sin inside the church is expected of us. 1Cor. 5:6-7, 12-13, Matt. 18:15-17, Matt. 7:5) We can all relate to how infection or cancer need to be nipped in the bud before they take over a physical body. It's the same spiritually with the members of the Body of Christ. (1Cor. 12:27) But the ultimate goal is to help the transgressor acknowledge and repent of their sin so they can be restored to fellowship rather than being allowed to deceive themselves that there are low or no expectations regarding behavior of the children of God. (1Cor. 5:2-5, 2Cor. 2:6-8, Matt. 18:15-17, 2Cor. 13:10-11) The children of the devil obey their father and we obey ours. (Eph. 5:6, 2Cor. 12:20-13:2, 1John 3:1-10, John 8:44, Rom. 1:18, Col. 3:5-7)

*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 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*

Don't listen to anyone telling you that you can disregard the Old Testament now that the new is here, or that only a tiny portion of even the New Testament is applicable to you. The whole Bible is a treasure and a gift from God to His people who want to KNOW Him. Just because we're not under the law doesn't make any words of God irrelevant. The Old Testament helps us to understand the new, including which requirements are still in effect, why some no longer are, and a great many prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled. (Col. 2:16-17)

*"Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his **treasure what is new and what is old.**" Matthew 13:51-52*

*Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.** 2 Timothy 3:12-17*

*For whatever was **written in former days was written for our instruction,** that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4*

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.** 1 Corinthians 10:1-11*

The following verses all go together:

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:105 (Again, Jesus is the light of the world and needs to be inside of us in order for us to be able to walk in the light. John 8:12, John 12:35, Luke 11:34-36, Eph. 5:7-17, 1John 1:5-7)

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

I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. Proverbs 8:17 (This is about wisdom, which has been defined above.)

God teaches believers through His Holy Spirit. We can read the Bible for ourselves and understand it because He helps us. We don't have to put all of our trust in fallible (and often greedy) "teachers" who tell us things that sound good to the unsaved world and make a profit from us by selling books and DVDs, etc. (2Cor. 4:2, 1Pet. 5:2, 2Pet. 2:1-3) Whenever we listen to teachers and preachers, we need to be careful to check what they say against the Scriptures. The Bible encourages us to do this and commends for it, contrary to what false teachers would like us to think (so that they can continue deceiving us.) (Acts 17:11, 2Tim. 2:5, 2Tim. 3:13, Rev. 2:2) During the dark ages, "common people" were not allowed to read the Scriptures. Think about it! That's how those in power got away with so many ungodly, evil things.

*But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for **you have one instructor, the Christ**. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself*

will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Matthew 23:8-12

*Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be **judged with greater strictness**. James 3:1*

*At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have **hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children**; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. Matthew 11:25-26*

*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 14:26 (And these things will AGREE with the rest of the Scriptures.)*

*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 2:26-29*

It IS necessary to ABIDE in Jesus if we hope to inherit the kingdom, which is what the entry into the promised land by Israel symbolized. Those who wanted to go back to Egypt (which symbolizes the world) did NOT enter in. (Psa. 95:6-11) Caleb followed with his whole heart and entered in. (Deu. 1:34-36) The hope of glory is Christ in us. (Col. 1:24-29, Col. 3:1-11, 2Thess. 2:13-15, Eph. 1:3-14, Heb. 3:1-6, 1Pet. 1:6-9, Rom. 8:9, 1Cor. 15:23) We must follow and abide in Him and He in us in order to ultimately realize that glory. (Not that we should live in fear, but that we should not treat God's grace as "cheap" when we know how costly it really was. 1John 4:18)

*These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **You are my friends if you do what I command you**. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and **bear fruit** and that your fruit should **abide**, so that*

whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another." John 15:11-17 (Also see John 15:1-10, quoted later below, and 2Cor. 6:14-18, 1Cor 15:33-34.)

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

*Note that the son who says in the house forever is a resident of God's house, over which Jesus is High Priest and King ruling over the royal priesthood of which the sons are a part (just as Aaron and his sons, as types of Jesus and those who belong to Him. Remember, Jesus holds the scepter of uprightness on His throne, and zeal for His Father's house consumed Him—that included maintaining its holiness. (John 2:13-17)

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.** Malachi 3:16-18

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.** 1 Peter 2:9-11

For **zeal for your house** has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. Psalm 69:9

So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and **bear the**

reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Hebrews 13:12-16 (Also see Matt. 16:24-27, Luke 23:26)

For this is a gracious thing, when, **mindful of God,** one endures sorrows while suffering **unjustly.** For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For **to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.** He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might **die to sin and live to righteousness.** By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. 1 Peter 2:19-25 (Also see Rev. 14:5, Isa. 53:5-9)

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

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 3:14-18

When Jesus told the disciples that they knew the WAY to where He was going, He didn't ONLY mean that if they confessed Him with their mouths they would somehow get there. He also meant that BECAUSE they believe the truth in their hearts, they would faithfully FOLLOW in His steps (as Peter later said, as quoted above, and Peter DID, out of LOVE - John 21:15-19). NO ONE is empowered by the Spirit to do so UNLESS they FIRST believe in their hearts (and isn't that where love comes from?) Notice it was Thomas, who had to SEE to believe Jesus had risen from the dead, who asked the question about how to get where Jesus was going. (John 20:26-29)

*"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And **you know the way to where I am going.**" Thomas said to him, "**Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?**" Jesus said to him, "**I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but **the Father who dwells in me does his works.** Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do;** and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." John 14:1-14*

Think about it—why would they need to know the way if He's coming BACK for them? Because He's coming back for those who LOVE Him, that's why. And those who LOVE Him take up their cross and FOLLOW Him—they OBEY Him BECAUSE they love Him. He made it perfectly CLEAR what is meant by ABIDING IN Him. Those who are IN Him will be resurrected BECAUSE of His Spirit residing in them. (Rom. 8:16-17) He continues the above discussion as follows:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you." "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ***Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.*** And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "***If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.*** And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me." John 14:15-24

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. **Abide in me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ***If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.*** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ***As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.***" John 15:1-10

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might **walk in newness of life**. For **if** we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be **united with him in a resurrection like his**. We know that our **old self was crucified with him** in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would **no longer be enslaved to sin**. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now **if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him**. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6:1-11

Esau lost his firstborn inheritance and blessing by caring more about satisfying his immediate, but momentary hunger than what seemed so far off that he didn't appreciate the value until it was TOO LATE. (Gen. 25:29-34, Gen. 27:30-38)

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. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and **to the assembly of the firstborn** who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. 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 12:12-29 (Also see Rev. 1:4-8, Rev. 5:9-10, Rev. 7:13-17, Rev. 20:6.)

For the sake of argument, let's say that someone truly believes in their heart, but for some reason they are still "unable" to stop doing the sins that Jesus died to save them from. My advice would be to FIGHT the good fight! Some will enter the kingdom "as through the fire" with loss of reward, but they will be deeply saddened at how little love they gave their Savior in return for the unfathomably great love He lavished on them.

*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, 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.** 1 Corinthians 9:24-27*

*For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. **If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.** Do you not know that you are **God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. Let no one deceive himself.** If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 1 Corinthians 3:11-18*

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps

*on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. **By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.** 1 John 3:1-10*

Some who expect to gain entrance will not enter in, but rather it will be revealed they were deceiving themselves when they claimed to believe. We must not take chances with our faith by giving in to sin like the unsaved world around us. There is a point where grieving and quenching the Spirit (Eph. 4:30, 1Thess. 5:16-22) will result in no longer being able to receive the word in our hearts, through which the free gift of faith is given. The effect of the Spirit in us is ongoing, overflowing, giving us joy no matter what our circumstances. (Phil. 4:10-13) That's why we're told to rejoice! (John 7:37-39, Acts 13:48, Rom. 5:11, Rom. 12:12, Phil. 4:4, 1Thess. 5:16-22, 1Pet. 1:8-9)

*He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them, "**Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.** When once the **master of the house has risen and shut the door**, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then he will answer you, '**I do not know where you come from.**' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' But he will say, '**I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!**' In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last." Luke 13:22-30*

*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*

*So **faith comes from hearing**, and hearing through the **word of Christ**. Romans 10:17 (Hearing means receiving what was heard into our heart and acting upon it—just like we say someone who doesn't do what we ask of them doesn't "listen" to us—our words fall on "deaf ears.")*

In the letters to the churches (all seven letters were to be read in each of the churches - Rev. 1:11, and we receive a blessing for reading and keeping the words of that book - Rev. 1:3), Jesus ends each one with a promise to those who overcome and the words, "he who has an ear to hear." People who are in rebellion against God REFUSE to hear. Don't be one of them!

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one **who conquers** I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.' Revelation 2:7*

*Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. **Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one **who conquers** will not be hurt by the second death.' Revelation 2:10-11*

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one **who conquers** I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.' Revelation 2:17*

*I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead. And **all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works**. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only **hold fast what you have until I come**. The one **who conquers and who keeps my works until the end**, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' Revelation 2:21-29*

Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people **who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.** The one **who conquers** will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Revelation 3:4-6

Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The one **who conquers**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' Revelation 3:10-13

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone **hears my voice and opens the door**, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one **who conquers**, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Revelation 3:19-22

Jesus gave us an example of how to resist the temptation to make the satisfaction of our physical hunger our priority (along with other "hungers" (desires) of our old sinful nature - 2Cor. 5:14-17, Rom. 6), by relying on the word of God. The antichrist will be favoring with gifts those people who take the mark and worship him. (Dan. 11:30-35) Jesus demonstrated for us that our defense is knowing the word of God, and remembering that we have a better inheritance waiting for us. (Heb. 10:32-35, 1Pet. 1:4)

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was **hungry**. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, '**Man shall not live by bread alone.**'" And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." And Jesus answered him, "**It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you**

serve.” And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.” And Jesus answered him, “**It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.**” And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. Luke 4:1-14

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “**God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.**” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. **Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith,** knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:5-11

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 withstand 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

Let's be sure we have plenty of OIL in our lamps (remember, faith comes by hearing the word of God and the Holy Spirit is our guaranty of redemption - 1Cor. 1:21-22, 2Cor. 5:1-5) so we can be sure to be on the INSIDE of the door (in the parable below) when it shuts!

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

*"No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. Therefore **be careful lest the light in you be darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.**" Luke 11:33-36*

*"You are the **salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.** You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it **gives light to all in the house.** In the same way, **let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.**" Matthew 5:13-16*

I can't make anyone listen or care. We each need to examine ourselves and decide whether to heed the warnings of the Bible. If we find ourselves lacking, we have to choose whether to love the world (or trust that our friends, family and the "worldly church" know where they're going) and continue on the broad, popular path that, according to their wisdom, leads to eternal life in the

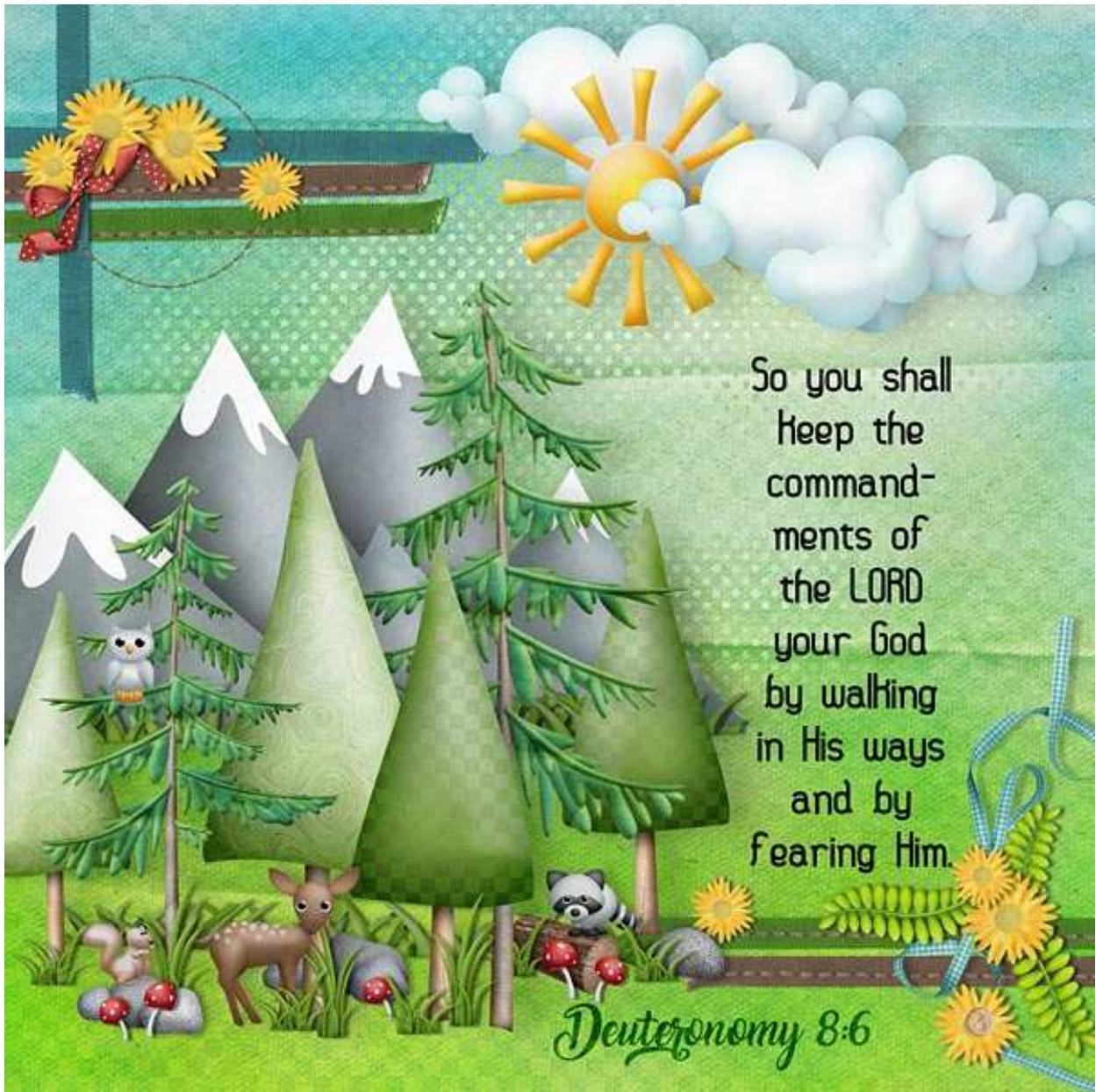
kingdom of God (if they even believe in God at all), or to turn onto the harder, narrow path and risk being persecuted for it. (1Tim. 3:12, Matt. 5:10-11, Matt. 7:13-14, Heb. 12:14, John 6:39-40)

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! 2 Corinthians 13:5

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

*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***

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