

Holiness

“We Shall Be Like Him”

Volume 4

By

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Subordinate To The Word

“And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

(Deuteronomy 6:9)

Make the Word of God practical. The good news, beloved, is that the Word of God works at home, not just at church. The authority of the Word is the same in the house as it is in any ecclesiastical setting. Once we’ve all understood the final authority of the Word of God and recognized our role within our homes—child, wife, husband—should there ever be confusion or conflict? No. Is there going to be opportunity for confusion or conflict? Yes, because each one wants to perceive the Word by his flesh. How do we handle that? First of all, we realize the tendency for each one of us to perceive the Word of God from his own fleshly appetites, his own will, and his own wishes. Can you say that you make every judgment totally, totally unbiased? Is it from an absolutely pure perception? “I have no self-interest or self-manipulation. I will be totally objective. I have no agenda.” I think every one of us would have to say that we don’t operate that way all the time.

How many of you go into these situations aware of the need to guard yourselves so that you can be objective? Do you go into an issue saying, “I guard my own heart that I might be objective in this because I know that I have certain convictions”? “I know that I have certain preferences. Therefore, because of my fear of God and my reverence for His Word being represented as holy, I will protect myself and those to whom I’m representing God in a willful objectivity.” That’s the fear of God. That’s recognizing the majesty and the holiness of God. It’s realizing our own frailties, and it enables us to be just.

Men, you are not the final authority in your home; God's Word is. Therefore, your judgments can be questioned and even challenged with an appeal to the Word of God. You have Scripture on the doorposts of your home. So when you make a judgment, and your little five-year-old child looks up there and says, "But Daddy, verse two says..." do you respond, "I didn't know you were tall enough to read verse two yet! What I say is....Strong's says this....If you could read Edersheim, you would understand, son, why I'm interpreting it this way"? I didn't think that telling a lie was that hard to interpret! "Daddy, you just told that man something that wasn't true." "Well, son, you know, the Greek says...." So there it is on the doorpost for everybody to read. We all live this way. That's teaching the fear of God.

When we set ourselves in a place to be judged by the Word of God, it brings a peace and assurance to those within that household. Those that are under the oversight of your authority are assured that they're never going to be influenced by your self-will, but that you will always subordinate to the Word of God. "If you'll show me the Word of God, I'll do it." That's how you teach your children to fear God. They say, "You mean everything we're going to do is here in the Book, already spelled out? You mean we're not going to get any surprises? The rules aren't going to change midstream?" "No, we do it this way every time." What a peace that brings into our households! Oh, if we could live it out, the fruit would be phenomenal! *"Holy Reverence, Pt. 2," August 20, 2000, Sunday PM*

Kingly Robes And Linen Ephods

“And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.” (2 Samuel 6:14)

David was the king, but he knew his place. He was a child before God, and he danced and sang and was despised of his wife because he didn't act dignifiedly enough. He didn't meet her standards. Families sometimes pressure you to obtain a certain status and to have a certain image, whether it's in-laws, outlaws, your wife, your parents, or whomever it is. Your parents might have certain standards that they want you to live up to, certain positions that they might want you to occupy. Don't worry about “kingly robes,” young people. Prove yourself worshipers in the linen ephods of God. Let the people look down on you. You may be a plumber; you may be a carpenter; you may be a car wash technician; but can you worship God?

The Scripture speaks here about David's humbling of himself. Saul wanted to be honored in the eyes of the people, but David wanted God honored in the eyes of people. Whatever it took to honor God, the worship that was due Him, David was found in the middle of it. When it was brought to his attention, he said, “Woman, let me tell you something. You think this was bad? I will be more vile than this, and I will be base in mine own sight! I'm going to take it up another notch because God is worthy. My commitment to God bothers you? Watch this!” (2 Sam. 6:22). When somebody comes to you and says, “You're too fanatical; you've taken it too far,” say, “You haven't seen anything yet, man! Dear God, I'm just getting started. I'm going to become more vile yet in your eyes as God becomes more glorious in mine.” A man after

God's own heart, the sweet psalmist who became king, was able to return to his roots: worship of God, the primary thing.

Saul wanted to be honored in the eyes of men; David wanted to honor God. David honored Him by recognizing the anointed and not taking things into his own hands, just trusting God to do what was right. "Bless God, I've got my rights!" No, just let God exalt you. Humble yourself, and in due time the Lord will exalt you. "I just want God in our presence. I want revival in my home." Then do it with due order! Don't try to set your own standards. Don't compromise for your family and present a new and better method. Do what the Word says. Honor God. Do it God's way. Sanctify yourself and bring His presence in on the shoulders of the priests. You don't have a better idea. There's not a "better method." Strip yourself of your image and dance before God with all of your might! Then purpose to be even more vile as you humiliate yourself in your dependence upon God, in your worship of God, in your thanksgiving for His goodness. The world mocks us and despises us, and we count it all joy, as a man after God's own heart.

Father, continue to strengthen us in our praise and in our worship. We ask that we would have the heart of David and be willing to be despised in the eyes of those around us, that You might be glorified. The humility of David, the humility of the Seed of David—"Into Your hands I commit My spirit," said the Son of David, our Savior, our God, the King. There is no other way to rule than with the spirit of David, the spirit of Jesus, the spirit of humility, the spirit of submission, obedience, and worship of our heavenly Father. Let us, Father, be men after Your own heart, we ask in Jesus' name. *"Turned Into Another Man, Pt. 5," January 15, 2003, Wednesday PM*

Where The Fight Is

“And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.” (Matthew 10:21)

Either you are for God or against Him. There is no neutrality. “You love Me; you hate Me. You’re for Me; You’re against Me.” Is that a clear principle to most of us? Why doesn’t that apply to your family members then? How can they be in the middle? How can they not have made a choice? How can they serve two masters? It’s light; it’s darkness—except my family. It doesn’t work that way. The choice you’re going to have to make is, “What side am I on?” If I still want to give my backslidden children and my estranged family members honor, bless them, embrace them, go to the mall with them and shop with them, then could it possibly be that I’m more interested in my own emotions? Am I more interested in their temporal, secular welfare than I am in the purity, the holiness, and the value of the blood of Jesus that they have willfully chosen to trod beneath their feet? This whole thing is about loving or hating Jesus. That’s what it’s all about.

I’m trying to show you where the fight is. The fight is not between me and a group of people that don’t like me. The fight is not between you and your children or you and a spouse. The fight is between truth and lie, light and darkness, God and Satan. Let’s understand what the battle is, and then it’ll help you out—but not emotionally. You’re going to have to deal with your emotions. You’re going to have to deal with your own natural feelings. I’m not saying that all of the hurt will go away or that it will be easy.

See where the battle is, and it'll help you understand these principles. "Brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And [you] shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (Matt. 10:21-22). That's what it's all about. It's not about the fact that you didn't let them go to the movies, that you didn't buy them the Nintendo, or that you made them come home at a certain time on curfew. There will be hatred, because the core, the root of why you are speaking these things, is based in Jesus! You're serving another God. You're living in another kingdom. It's not philosophical; it's relational. It's whom our allegiance is to. It's not about a philosophy. It's about a man named Jesus.

"And [you] shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that [endures with me—he that loves Me more than he loves them, he that's willing to die himself, takes up his cross] to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). As simple as we can make it, that's what this is all about. Next time you have to deal with children or spouses, don't get all caught up about you and them. It's light and darkness. It's truth and lie. It's Jesus or Satan. Step back and get yourself out of the picture. Look strictly at the eternal consequences, not what's going to make you feel good, them feel good, or what kind of an argument they have. "You didn't wipe my nose when I was a baby, so I killed twelve people." Sin will always say, "The woman thou gavest me." They're always going to point their finger at someone else. "The people made me," Saul said. "The woman thou gavest me," Adam said. The fact of the matter is you're the man. What are you going to do now that you've been enlightened and you know the truth? "*Let Us Draw Near, Pt. 2,*" January 26, 2003, Sunday AM

The Cost Of Wisdom

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7)

Before these words mean anything, there needs to be a fear of God, reverential fear, and also an understanding of terror. “It’s a fearful thing,” the Scripture says, “to fall into the hands of a living God” (Heb. 10:31). The Word of God is very clear about standing in awe of Him (Ps. 33:8). The Lord’s presence is a terror even to those that are in right standing with Him. When you see Him in the fullness of His majesty, the Scripture says you’ll fall at His feet as dead (Rev. 1:17). Do we, as believers today, understand the holiness of our God so that we would hear that voice, “Take off your shoes. The place that you stand is holy”?

We need to begin to teach the fear of the Lord to our children when they’re just infants, that they will answer to a power that’s higher than themselves. There’s a person who loved us and gave Himself for us and purchased us. Therefore, we’re not our own. We’ve been bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus. Oh beloved, may it be sooner that our kids can know that they’re not their own, that they’re not making their own decisions, and that they’re not setting their own courses. There’s nothing in life that they can call their own. There’s no physical, material possession that they can call their own. Their wives are not their own. Their children are not their own; they’re the blessing and heritage of the Lord (Ps. 127:3). The sooner we teach that to our children, the wiser they’re going to be.

He says that as you begin to understand these things that I've written unto you, they'll give you subtlety, "O you simple ones" (Prov. 1:4). It'll give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. Listen, let's begin to determine where we are in our course and whether we would be considered a wise or a foolish person. Jesus summed it up in Matthew, chapter 7, didn't He? A wise man builds his house upon a rock. What is the "rock" that Jesus was speaking of? He says those that "hear and do" are wise. Churches are full of hearers today. The wise man does the Word of God. You begin to discern if I am wise by whether or not I am a doer. Is there fruit of obedience? Do I do the Word of God when it hurts or even when it's going to cost me something? The wise man chooses the wisdom of God even when it costs him mother, father, houses, and lands. The wise man chooses to do the Word of God when it costs him his life and vocation, because Jesus said, "Don't say you love Me and not keep My commandments." This is what we're to teach our kids.

What are you teaching your kids, the little ones, by the decisions you're making on a daily basis? Do they see you compromise to make life easier for you and them? "Well, you know, it's because I love my child." I want to tell you something. If you love your kid, make the right decision. It doesn't matter how hard it is, because many times in our lives, that chastening is of the Lord—and the Lord chastens those that He loves. What are you going to teach your kids? To seek ease, or to seek godly praise and to be called the "friend of God," hearing in the end, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"? "*Absentee Parents, Pt. 4,*" *December 10, 2000, Sunday AM*

To Fear Is To Obey

“Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.” (Luke 12:5)

As we take a look at the fear of God, let’s study the duty of man: to fear God and to keep His commandments (Eccles. 12:13). Where is the reverence for the Lord in our lives today? If we feared God, we would obey Him. I’m not just talking about your fear of God as a reverential fear; I’m talking about a literal fear of the awesomeness of God. That word is so overused today: “Awesome! Oh man, that’s awesome!” There is nothing awesome but God. Skateboard moves are not awesome; cars are not awesome. The One that is awesome is trivialized in our society and in many of our own lives. We don’t fear God if we don’t obey Him. Your fear of God is in direct correlation to your obedience. Your fear of God is in direct correlation to your ability to subdue your own flesh.

“Don’t fear those that can kill your body,” Jesus said, “but fear Him who can kill body and cast soul into hell.” A lot of us are afraid of what people think, whether we’re going to be accepted or rejected. Many of us are afraid of denying ourselves. We’re fearful of going into that realm of self-denial and discipline of the flesh. The flesh lies to us and tells us of all these things that it needs and wants and deserves. We’re so afraid to say no to ourselves and to those around us—fear of rejection, fear of becoming inferior, fear of losing our status in society, or whatever the motivating factor is. We fear lack; we fear failure a whole lot more than we fear God. Fear of lack motivates us. Fear of lack is referred to as “the power of lust.” The flesh lusts. It desires to have. We fear being

without, so we lust to have. Frankly, our fear of lack is greater than our fear of God. If we feared God, we would love Him and keep His commandments.

Do we really know who God is? We studied His attributes and spent a little bit of time talking about the majesty and the sovereignty of God. If God is sovereign, if God is all-powerful, then how is it that so many of us just blow Him off casually on a daily basis, doing what we want to do instead of what we've been commanded to do? Why do we, as people that profess to be believers, react to the Ten Commandments like they're the ten suggestions?

Do your children respond to your directives as commandments or as suggestions as to how they might operate in a certain area? The way your children respond to your authority is exactly the way they see God. How have you taught them? If your children do not fear you, they don't fear God! You see these children that react—I'm talking primarily out in society, but we see it here in our fellowship too—rising up in their flesh, saying, “No!” The parent responds, “Oh, you dear thing!” They're never going to know the awesomeness of the power, majesty, and holiness of our God. Your children ought to fear you. *“The Whole Duty of Man,” September 18, 2002, Wednesday PM*

Supernaturally Undergirded

“For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.” (Hebrews 12:10)

“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness” (Hebrews 12:9-10). Sometimes their motives were not always pure. They just wanted a good reputation within the community. They wanted good kids so that everybody would think they were good parents. Good kids do not necessarily have good parents, nor do bad kids necessarily have bad parents. People think, “Well, if the kids are bad, then people are going to think I’m a bad parent.” You can be a good parent and have bad kids, or you can be a bad parent and have good kids. The key is there are biblical principles that we’re required to follow, and we’re to train our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he’ll not depart from it” (Prv. 22:6).

There are requirements. It isn’t up to some spiritual lottery as to how the kids are going to turn out. We have the Bible promises that if we will train them up in the way they should go, when they’re old they will not depart from it. Amen? What we’re being promised there is this: if the child has the soil that Jesus spoke of in the parable of the sower, if he has a good heart, and you sow the seed, you will get a harvest of righteousness. We’re responsible to be a part of breaking up that fallow ground, sowing seed, and watering it with admonition to bring a crop. We’re responsible to sow into their

lives. Ultimately, they're responsible for the ground of their hearts and whether they'll receive it or not.

The Scripture goes on and says that many of us have trained our children for our own pleasure and after our own purposes, but God's motive is this: it's to profit you that you might become a partaker of His holiness. If that's God's motive, then beloved, listen. Fathers, listen. Our motive always has to be the holiness of God, not my reputation, not what people will think about me in the community, not, "This is the way it's going to be in this house, bless God, because I don't want to be hassled with all of your nonsense." It's the holiness of God. It's the only motive that God will supernaturally back you on and bring about those promises that when they're old, they will not depart from it. If your motive is the holiness of God in love, God will come and supernaturally undergird your ministry in the raising of your children, if your motives are pure. *"Rods or Rocks, Pt. 2," September 11, 1994, Sunday PM*

Keep Your Soul Diligently

“Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life....” (Deuteronomy 4:9)

This is speaking toward the responsibility that we have as parents. Doesn't it start out right there? You know, your children are the picture window into your home. One of the prayer requests that one of our kindergartners or first graders made was just the perfect example of that. It was humorous to hear the request that was being made because “Mommy and Daddy fight.” It starts out with us parents. Take heed to yourself. Are you having problems with your kids? Take heed to yourself. Are your children below the standard that the Word of God requires? You don't have a mature four-year old? You don't have a mature teenager? You can't expect four-year olds to act like teenagers, and teenagers shouldn't act like four-year olds. We're looking for perfect, or mature, four-year olds. So many times as parents we make the mistake of requiring more than our children actually should be producing. We get concerned that our children are children. Children are children, and they act childishly sometimes. Childish behavior is the fruit of being a child. Kids just do things that aren't real sharp! Children do things that go beyond their scope. They don't understand many times the magnitude of what they're doing. It doesn't mean they're evil and rebellious! Because children do childish things, we need to make some kind of distinction between what is childish and what is rebellion. What is the action of an unregenerate, immature individual? What do we expect as they grow and become new creatures in Christ?

There are different expectations. When do we allow them more liberty to walk in the Spirit? It's very simple. When you begin to see the fruit of the Spirit, then you can begin to let people walk in the Spirit. If there's evidence of walking in the Spirit and the liberty that produces fruit that brings glory to God, then you allow them to walk further in that. To the degree that they need to be governed by law, then we keep those restraints on them as the schoolmaster and the tutelage to bring them to maturity. They're not going to be mature just because they're born again. Maturity is a life process. How many of you would like to say you're finished growing?

Now, what is my responsibility if they're not exactly where I would like to see things, or if the house is not exactly where I would personally like to see it? Maybe we ought to take heed to ourselves. Maybe we need to rediscipline to keep our soul diligently. I wonder if maybe we've forgotten the things which our eyes have seen. I wonder if our first love and the memorial of all of the great blessings of God have departed from our hearts. The fact is that if God preserved and directed us, then surely He's going to do it for our children. How would we dare let them go another direction than the supernatural avenue that we've taken? How can I allow my children to go any other way than the course that I walked, in which I saw the hand of God? I saw Him bless and strengthen me beyond my ability. I saw Him sustain me beyond my righteousness and my goodness. I saw Him honor His Word because we wanted to glorify His name. How can I send my kids on any other course than that? The Word works! The reason I so emphatically taught it to my kids without compromise is that it worked for me, praise God! Has it departed from your heart? Be careful that you don't lose it. "*Absentee Parents, Pt. 3,*" December 6, 2000, Wednesday PM

Preparatory Discipline For Glory

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think....” (Romans 12:3)

People are capable of destroying one another for no reason. Man is not good. “He’s evil and totally depraved,” is what our theology tells us. If that’s the case, then what is it, especially as we’re training some of our children at the younger ages, that we’re dealing with? We’re dealing with all of these issues that are innate within them, that make them human beings. We’re going to have to bring them to a place of instruction, discipline, and control using the schoolmaster, which is the authority of the Word of God (Gal. 3:24). We hold up this mirror and say, “This is how my child will be led. This is how my child will be taught.” If we don’t, there’s no hope for them.

In our delay at the airport for our flight home, I got to watch some airport behavior. This one child, of course, was making a scene, screaming at the top of his lungs. The child, probably about six years old, was stomping his foot, putting his finger in his dad’s face, just screaming and telling him what he was going to do. Defiant! I mean, he had his hand on his hip, finger in the face, and everything inside me just started rising up. The thing that came to my mind is that they’re going to turn these children loose on us! They’re breeding a whole generation that’s totally unrestrained, without conscience, completely governed by self-will, by momentary pleasure and satisfaction, with no love for parents, and with no recognition of authority. Do we think that our children are any different than that? Without restraint, they’re not. The one thing that keeps us from bringing them into that proper discipline is

pride. Pride is nothing more than exalting self-will over the authority of the Word of God.

When I use “pride” in this discussion, here’s what I want you to think. Pride is arrogance and haughtiness. Let me show you how it works and what we need to do in this preparation of training our children and disciplining our own lives to walk in holiness. Pride is a misdirected value. In other words, “This child isn’t as bad as other children because he’s mine. Of course, I’m better than everybody else, so it has to be genetic! Therefore, our child is a little superior, is a little smarter, is a little better-looking, is a little stronger, faster,” or whatever brings the accolades back to our family. We discipline them out of a pride factor of how much glory comes back to the family name rather than a preparatory discipline for the glory of God. It’s bringing about obedient vessels to God, ones that can present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service; not being conformed to the world, but being transformed by the renewing of their minds. Realize, beloved, that what we’re doing is training up a life that can walk by the gift of the measure of faith that God has given him.

Lord, we just ask that You would give us insight into our own hearts. Father, we know that there’s not a person that doesn’t deal with this horrible power of pride, but deliverance will come through knowledge. Deliverance will come through the understanding of how foolish it is to think that somehow we’re special, when You, in Your sovereignty, have chosen to give to every man the measure. How can we boast in that we haven’t achieved? Let those that boast, boast in You. We thank You for that, Father, in Jesus’ name. “*Pride, Pt. 1,*” October 1, 2000, Sunday AM

Jealous For Their Honor

“Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.”

(1 Timothy 5:19)

We find here that when those in authority are in sin, we’re to be very careful how we respond. The Scripture says, “Don’t put that light before your parents.” In other words, don’t be quick to try to expose their faults. Don’t allow yourself to be the one that exposes these areas in their lives that are disorderly, but, in fact, deal with them in honor and respect. Don’t be quick to try to expose, because it shows the partiality in the heart of an individual who’s always wanting to find something against authority. It shows your own rebellion. It shows your own lack of love. Be very careful before you put light before your parents or before those that are to be honored in your life.

Scripture doesn’t say, “Be partial.” It doesn’t say, “Be a respecter of persons.” What it’s talking about is how we expose it to others and don’t deal with it directly with them. So what do we do with authority? We’re never allowed by the Scriptures in any case to gossip about anybody or be busybodies, especially about those that are in authority. If you’re honoring them, you’ll go to them and never want to be the source of exposing their weaknesses to anyone else. You’re jealous for their honor. You’re jealous for the role that God has placed them in. Yet natural man always wants to pull down and expose because it makes him feel better about himself. Where do you find your own tendencies? Wives, we know most of your husbands are perfect. When they do mess up every once in a while, how quickly do you want to share that with your best friend—

whom you know keeps it in total confidence and only shares it with her other best friend, and her other best friend, and her kids who happen to overhear? Is there a jealousy for honor, knowing God has placed that man in that role? We recognize him as being God's gift to our household. We honor him and we thank God for his wisdom, his strength, and his desire to keep us on course! Can you say that's where your heart is? If not, you're a respecter of persons, and the person you're respecting is you.

Young people, let me tell you something. As you get older, it becomes very clear that your parents have feet of clay. We begin to question, "Why are they requiring this of me? I can see all of these weaknesses in their own lives!" You know all the struggles you're going through? Compound that now. When you become an adult, you're going to continue to have your own personal struggles. Then you're going to be responsible for that household, and it's an awesome thing. The war with sin in our members never goes away. It's very easy as an adolescent to be an idealist. You need to come to the place, young people, of thanking God for the authority that He has placed in your midst that's leading you into truth and in the way of righteousness. Honor father and mother. Honor those gifts. Understand that with authority and honor comes a wisdom that's supernatural, that brings them into a realm, by gifts, that causes them to perceive things that you don't perceive. The problem with every one of us is we all just think we're right! We all think that our way is the best way. As we humble ourselves, we're able to submit ourselves and recognize that there are certain gifts among us that can speak wisdom, that can have revelation—amazingly!—that we don't have. So it's vitally important for us to honor those roles. "*Honor to Whom Honor, Pt. 3,*" December 30, 2001, Sunday PM

Seasoned With Salt

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” (Colossians 4:6)

We speak the truth in love. We speak in season, and we speak, according to this fourth chapter of Colossians, having our words “seasoned with salt.” We’re the salt of the world (Matt. 5:13). Salt gives flavor. It preserves truth, the integrity of God, and the holiness of God so that we can know how to answer every man. When it talks about grace, it doesn’t mean being mealy-mouthed. We speak the truth. We tell people the facts. There’s no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). We don’t mix secular humanism and the divine authority of the Word of God. There is no compromise in the life of a Christian, but there is an answer in season. There is the seasoning of our words with salt.

“Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay, and everything that proceeds beyond that,” Jesus said, “comes of evil” (Matt. 5:37). “You know, we’ve got to defend our position!” “No,” He said, “that’s evil. That’s man’s methods.” That “foolish jesting” that’s spoken of in Ephesians even has to do with that. It shades different principles so that we don’t offend these people, so that we can still be accepted of them. That’s corrupt communication that’s proceeding out of our mouths. It’s yea; it’s nay. It’s black; it’s white. It’s light; it’s darkness. It’s truth; it’s a lie. How forceful are the words that we speak?

How kind are we, evidencing that fruit of the Spirit? We talk about kindness and the need to be kind, even here in the family, the

household of faith. How kind are we as we're giving instruction to our brothers and sisters, to our children, to our spouses? We need to be able to speak the power of words seasoned with salt. If we can't say it in love, if it hasn't been spoken to us of the Spirit in truth, then we're going to be wise to spare our words.

Father, we just ask that as You continue to order our steps by Your Spirit that we would be conscious of what we say and how we're saying it. We ask that we would look for opportunities to speak to our brothers and sisters words that would edify and bring refreshing and strength, that we would encourage them to be doers of the Word. Father, give us words that will positively motivate our children into righteousness. Give us words that would be spoken in season. Help us to grow to where we can put a watch over our lips and not allow the passions that are in our members to bring forth destruction out of our mouths. How great a matter a little fire kindleth. Speak the truth in love, seasoned with salt, allowing no corrupt communication to proceed out of our mouths but that which edifies. It is our hearts' desire, Father. We choose now to guard our lips, in Jesus' name. *"Right Words," May 19, 2002, Sunday PM*

Adding The Flavor Of Life

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” (Matthew 5:13)

How many people can come in contact with you and walk away not changed? How many of them can walk away in the same darkness of heart and mind? I don't mean they all have to get saved when we encounter them, but do you share some kind of light? Is there some hope which you're able to spread as you bring to them the light of the glorious gospel? If the salt has lost its savor, it's good for nothing. What are we contributing to the kingdom of God? Men are to see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

What this thing is all about is being out and letting people see our lives as “epistles read of men,” and what the Spirit of God can do in the life of an individual. It's letting them see what the blood of Jesus is able to accomplish, what light it infuses us with, and that a heart of stone can become a heart of flesh. Sin no longer has dominion over us. The fruit of the Spirit is able to evidence itself in our lives—the love, the joy, the peace, the gentleness, the meekness, the temperance, the faithfulness. All of these things begin to show forth, and they say, “These people aren't like the other earth-dwellers that I come in contact with.”

I think some of us have lost sight of not only how different we should be, but how different we really are. We've lost sight of the excitement of that and the expectation of being even more peculiar in their eyes as God sets us apart, begins to order our steps,

gives us supernatural wisdom, and we apply the wisdom of the kingdom. It's foolishness in their eyes, and yet God always makes us win. Even when we lose we win, because they kill us, and we go out with a smile, saying, "Father, don't lay it to their charge. They don't know what they do." It echoes in their ears for the rest of their lives, and we win, praise God! That's what being a Christian is all about.

How different are we? What makes us different than the Bahai and the Buddhist and the Muslim? Are you just another religion when you walk onto the job? When you walk into their presence as the salt of the earth, is there a flavor of life that's added? We're different than these folks. These people are desperate. These people are lonely. These people are frightened. We have the joy of the Lord that's our strength. Maybe you're not that different. Have you taken survey of your own life and asked, "Am I truly salt? Do I add some spice to this thing? Do I bring in life?"

We also know that salt was for preservation. Are we preserving the righteousness, the holiness, of the name of Jesus and the sanctity of the infallible Word of God? Are we the salt of the earth? There's a great absence if we're not doing our job. There's no one there to contend for the faith if we're not being the salt of the earth. There's nobody there to love unconditionally if we're not the salt of the earth and the light of the world. In a day when everybody's looking from a socialistic perspective and the spirit of humanism, we take a stand for absolutes. It's the light of the world. It's bringing them the wisdom of God and contrasting the wisdom of this world that's foolishness. Where are we in our representation of the kingdom of God? "*Seen and Heard, Pt. 2,*"
May 20, 2001, Sunday PM

Projecting A False Image

“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.” (Ephesians 4:25)

If we see the phrases “wherefore put away” or “to whom ye yield your members” as self-will or self-ability, we’ve missed the whole point. It’s an enabling of God. It’s by grace alone that we’re able to affect these things. There still has to be the pursuit, the desire, and the yielding to that greater force for the enabling of the Holy Spirit to come in. There has to be a trust in God’s methods above our own abilities and our own natural tendencies of self-preservation, self-exaltation, and all of those other things that we would call “the lust of the flesh.”

“Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. And put away lying; speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.” Now check this out. He’s telling you and me that we have to put away from ourselves lying. What does that tell us? We’re going to be confronted with opportunities where we have to make a choice. Am I going to, at this moment, fall into my natural tendency to lie, to try to shade this thing? The whole purpose is what? Self-preservation, self-image. I lie to make myself look better in the eyes of others. I lie to keep from having to experience uncomfortable circumstances that may come upon me because of the choice that I’ve made. We begin to lie for the purpose of projecting this false image. Why would we do that? For acceptance, preservation, whatever the real root intention might be; but the real reason is this: we lie because we choose it over the truth. Does that seem to be an oversimplification? The fact of the matter is we don’t love truth. We begin to make decisions based on situational ethics.

We have to make a determination in our lives before the circumstance arises, that regardless of what circumstance we find ourselves in, in any given situation, we will speak the truth. That choice is made before the encounter. We need to start making decisions now, when no pressure is put upon us to speak the truth. We have to now discipline our minds to believe that the truth will do something. What will the truth do? It'll make us free. The truth will always set us free from all of those lies that the devil has told us about what we'll accomplish through image, through manipulation, in trying to control other people's lives, and all of the circumstances of life that we try to control externally. We need to begin to believe that the truth makes us free to experience the intervention and presentation of God in our lives.

The fact is that God will now become involved in the issues of life to vindicate His Word. That's what it means to choose the truth. Now, let's bring it down from the foundational into the practical. The pressure's on me. All of us have been guilty of shading the facts. Many of us have been guilty of telling little "white lies," which in fact are dark, black, damnable lies, because every liar will find himself where? In the lake of fire. We realize that lying has a source. What's the source of all lies? The father of lies is Satan, so the source is satanic. Whenever you and I begin to feel pressure as we're faced with this momentary decision, are we going to apply light and truth? Will it be darkness, satanic wiles and manipulation, or Holy Spirit guidance to truth, which sets us free? Truth is a means of seeking the representation of the glory of God and being jealous for God's presence and God's glory. The Holy Spirit will lead us into truth, not just as biblical principles, but as a way of life. *"Choices," August 9, 2000, Wednesday PM*

Preventing Self-Deception

“If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”
(Matthew 6:23)

The purpose of mortification is mutual edification through individual holiness. With humbleness of mind, we realize that we can't do it in our own strength. We can think we're doing it. We can never be under any greater power than self-deception. It's greater than any demonic power. It's greater than Satan's power, because we're believing a lie to be truth. When a person finds himself in that arena, he is in a very dangerous place.

The way to mortify the flesh is to stop being an entity to yourself. Humble yourself. Admit the carnality. Deal with the ugliness in your life. Humble yourself by not only repenting, but humble yourself by now allowing the body of Christ to minister to your life. Here's one of the keys that's going to help you in your mortification process. It's very important to understand that you're not going to make it on your own—period. Without the ministry of the body of Christ, no man is able to walk free from the power of sin in his members. You will end up being deluded. You'll end up with a perspective of sin. You'll end up with a perception of yourself that is tainted and perverse, because God never intended for any member in the body to stand alone.

We're not going to get into the teaching on the body ministry that we did a number of months back, but we all know the basic principle, don't we? Every member is to have the “same care one for

another,” and we’re to be knit together, “fitly joined.” When we talk about mortification, what kills the flesh more than having to ask for help? Does anybody here like to admit, “I can’t do it. I need your help”? How many of you enjoy doing that? “I can’t do it. I’m not able. I need help.” Does anybody have trouble doing that? I wonder if that’s a common problem among us, since it’s a hundred to nothing.

The mortifying of the flesh, for those of you that really want to be free, is about really hating that sin—you really want to be free. Do you want to know how to kill the flesh? Go to those that are around you; go to those that love you, people that have laid their lives down for you. Remember, we said you don’t do it in the heat of battle, do you? You’re insane at those moments. You do it rationally, and you go to those people that you can trust. You go to your different spiritual overseers. You go to your parents, young people. Don’t go to friends. “Some of my friends are more spiritual than my parents.” Well, you may perceive that. It may look that way to you, and, in fact, in some ways it might be. But if your parents are regenerated, if your parents are pursuing the kingdom of God, then there’s nothing greater than following this biblical order: wives submit to your husbands; children obey your parents. There’s no greater safety and there’s no greater mortification than fulfilling that role by coming and saying, “Mom, Dad, I can’t do it. I need help.” *“Methods of Mortifying, Pt. 3,” August 5, 2001, Sunday PM*

Thou Shalt Not Surely Die

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”

(1 Timothy 4:1)

Now, what is this “doctrines of devils”? Is this occult magic? Is this poltergeist? What kind of doctrine do you think devils would spin? Well, let’s not be ignorant of Satan’s devices. First of all, Satan comes as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). Is Satan going to come into the church and say, “Okay, everybody curse God”? That doesn’t work real well as a rule. He’s an angel of light.

Doctrines of devils have one source: the devil. What is his doctrine? “Thou shalt not surely die. Defy God; you won’t die. Has God said? You won’t die. That’s not ‘rebellion.’ It’s just a ‘difference of opinion.’ You won’t die! Unity—let’s embrace the Catholics; let’s embrace the Muslims. After all, there are many paths to God!” It’s what the world’s doctrine is putting on us. How many paths are there? “You won’t die.” Doctrines of devils is that same spirit that you see in the Garden, and behind it is the spirit that you see in Isaiah when Lucifer is exposed in the fourteenth chapter: “I will ascend above the throne of the Most High.” It is idolatry. It is placing self-will, self, as the object of why everything else exists. “This world revolves around me, mine.” Every decision is made in light of that instead of the glory of God, the holiness of God, the eternal purposes of God.

God says, “I want to share with you everything that I have in My creation, but this one thing you can’t do: Don’t eat of this fruit.” “God is holding out on you. The moment that you eat of that, your

eyes will be opened. You will be as God!” God uses all kinds of other things. He uses husbands. He uses parents. He uses pastors. “People are always against you! You just need to ascend and do what’s right for you!” Doctrines of devils: compromising the Word of God to appease the self-will of man! I don’t care what is being preached; I don’t care if the name of Jesus is attached to it; I don’t care if Scripture is being quoted. “If we’re not producing fruit for the glory of God, we’re worth nothing but to be cut off, cast aside, withered, and burned,” is what John’s gospel teaches (John 15:6). You don’t hear a lot of teaching like that! What you hear is the “I” gospel, the “feel good about yourself” gospel, and that’s doctrines of devils. It’s all done in the name of Jesus. It’s taking scriptures and twisting them to the glory of man.

Paul speaks to Timothy, this young pastor, and says, “In the latter days, some are going to depart from the faith, and they’re going to give heed to these seducing spirits and the doctrine of devils. They’re going to speak lies in hypocrisy” (1 Tim. 4:1-2). These people know what they’re doing. Those who have apostatized, some of your children were not plucked out of Jesus’ hand! Do you understand that? No man, nothing, can pluck us out of His hand (John 10:28). They departed. They willfully chose to deny His lordship! They chose their flesh! They chose their will! They received the same Holy Spirit, the same gospel of grace, the same illuminating truth that you and I have, that every day lets us know the need to depend upon Him. Every one of us is aware that sin is in our members, and we can potentially sin. Because of that, we’re preparing ourselves and adorning ourselves in the armor of God and washing ourselves with the water of the Word. These people, frankly, choose not to. They are not victims. *“Let Us Draw Near, Pt. 4,” January 29, 2003, Wednesday PM*

No Place For Self

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” (Matthew 5:17)

There’s a kingdom, and its citizens “do and teach [and these will] be called great in the kingdom” (Matt. 5:19). Jesus said, “If you say you love Me and you don’t keep My commandments, you’re a liar! You’re not part of My kingdom!” So the question we’re asking is this. How about the propagation, the sharing, of the gospel of the kingdom? You know, that’s what it’s called: the “good news of the kingdom.” There’s a place that you can run to from the powers of the world, the kingdom of the world, the powers of darkness, the lordship of Satan. You can leave that kingdom, become citizens of a new kingdom, be safe, live in the light, and live in righteousness! There’s the good news that there’s another kingdom. There’s an alternative. What are we doing to share that gospel? Are we content that people who name the name of Jesus think they’re alright if they’re hearers and not doers of the Word of God? It’s an offensive kingdom. It’s a kingdom that suffers violence. It’s a kingdom whose gate, whose access, is straight and narrow.

It’s a kingdom that you can’t come into carrying all of the excesses of the world’s lifestyle and methodology. It’s a hard thing for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 19:23)—a rich man vs. a man poor in spirit, a man who’s trusting in his uncertain riches, a man who is having the Word of God choked out by the cares and the deceitfulness of the lusts of the world’s kingdom. You can’t enter into this kingdom. It’s a straight and narrow kingdom. It’s easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than

for a man who's partaking of the world to enter the kingdom of God. One item from the world is too big to take through that straight and narrow path. There is no worldliness in this kingdom. There is no place for self in this kingdom.

We see what Jesus is teaching us here. "Don't think that I've come to destroy the law; I've come to fulfill it. I've come to be the prototype of obedience. I've come, that through My obedience, the law will be satisfied and the justice of God will be established." We use the term "propitiation," which means "an appeasement." It means "a satisfying." Jesus' obedience and His partaking of your sin and my sin upon Himself—He who knew no sin becoming sin with our sin—satisfied the justice of God when He was crucified, when He was separated from God. Then God in His righteousness, because He was an innocent sacrifice, was able to raise Him again, and the holiness of God was satisfied. The law had been fulfilled.

Because of Jesus' victory, you and I can live free—experientially, literally free—from sin's power. That's what the gospel is all about. Jesus satisfied the holiness of God, and if we believe that, we will be citizens of the kingdom. The Bible teaches that because Jesus satisfied the law of God, He will dwell in us and give us the capacity to live in obedience—to be doers of the Word and not just hearers, to love Him to the place of keeping the commandments, to divest ourselves. "If you don't love Me more than these, you're not worthy of Me." Which kingdom are we drinking from? Which kingdom are you and I bearing fruit in? Which one are we comfortable in today? "*The Kingdom of Violence, Pt. 2,*" March 2, 2003, Sunday PM

Which Kingdom Are We Of?

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:19)

I am at peace because I'm in the Holy Ghost. I know I'm exactly where He wants me, praise God. Are you walking in that part of the kingdom? It causes you to understand that what doesn't make sense to the natural mind makes perfect sense from the eternal perspective. You don't judge by the immediate circumstances, but rest in the eternal wisdom of God. Which kingdom are you going to live in?

We have a picture, taken in Bakersfield, of a curb right across from the youth chapel, where a young man who had OD'd on heroine was raised up by the power of God. I can see it like it happened yesterday, but it was over thirty years ago when that young man was brought back to life. I can see him as he jumped out of that car, ran across the street and through those double doors, and dove to the altar. Numerous young people who were on drugs were delivered by the power of God. Which kingdom are we a part of?

The world is absolutely inundating us with humanism. We aren't buying it, but the world, in its supernatural ignorance, in its supernatural stupidity, still embraces all of this humanistic, Dr. Spock approach to child rearing. We see the total anarchy, defiance, and hatred in the youth who have no understanding of right or wrong. Men somehow think that there's an innate goodness in us. Unregenerate man is evil, totally depraved. Without instruction, he has no consideration for justice, for right, but only for self-expression, self-gratification, self-rule. We've been told

that “man is basically good; there’s a goodness in man.” There is no goodness in man. Which kingdom are we a part of?

Are we content to let children be moral and not be born again? Are we content with good kids, or do we want saved kids? I’m not just talking about our own. I’m talking about people that we encounter. What I’m saying is this: the gospel needs to be taken to the good kids, not just to the street kids. The up-and-outers need to be saved just like the down-and-outers. There’s so much emphasis on the drug addict, the poor individual with AIDS; they need to hear the gospel. But, beloved, we’re talking about humanity who are lost in the deception of their own righteousness. Only the power of the gospel can break the chains that hold their thoughts in bondage to the secular humanism of our day. For fear of offending people who go to church, we don’t tell them they need to be born again. “Oh, I go to church.” Do we stop there? That’s not enough. I’m not talking just about the Catholics. What about some of these people who are Calvinists, modern-day Gnostics, or modern-day Pharisees? What have we done to reach those around us?

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20). These were people that kept the law to the letter, every jot and every tittle. But He said, “There’s a righteousness that must exceed that, if you’re going to enter this kingdom that I’m talking about.” What is this righteousness? Look at verse 19. “You must do and teach. I didn’t come to destroy the law; I came to fulfill it and I expect you to do it, not study it, not to give a mental assent.” Is there a heart change? Is everything in your life about doing the Word of God? *“The Kingdom of Violence, Pt. 2,” March 2, 2003, Sunday PM*