

Committed to Purity

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Our nation has reached an all-time low in morality, and it is true even among Christians. Those who do not live in immorality often suffer guilt and other effects from past failures or abuses. They want deliverance.

Yet, so many sit idly in Laodicean churches, living comfortably with a conscience of convenience while souls go to hell. Laodicean churches preach Christ but produce a false peace. If anyone can have peace without divine convictions, it is a false peace. We don't want to be a church that winks at sin or lives in double standards. And we don't need the kind of evangelicalism that draws big crowds because of popular personalities and gifts rather than holy men with divine convictions.

What we need today are old-fashioned, Bible-loving, gracious, whole-counsel-of-God Christians of conviction. God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap. If he sows

to the flesh, he will of the flesh reap corruption. But if a man sows to the spirit, he will of the Holy Spirit reap abundant and everlasting life. "...And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Galatians 6:7-9).

This message is not to condemn anyone but rather to stimulate a desire for purity in all of our lives. Satan's strategy is to wear down the saints, and Christians need convictions to be able to stand against the devil and resist him in the name of Jesus Christ. Then we will be able to go forward, walking on water by faith and showing Satan that we are more than conquerors (Romans 8).

My prayer is that this booklet will inspire you to enter into God's final authority, and that without living in any measure of relativity, you will be empowered by God's love and grace as your motive.

Chapter One

COMMIT TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE PURE WORD

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).

“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37:4-5).

We are living in an age when many do not recognize a final authority—no final power nor absolutes. Instead, our society promotes the relativity of opinions and experiences, but it does not understand the principle of commitment to

convictions which lead to conversions through communion with God in His Word.

Thank God, we know there is a Final Authority. There is an Absolute Power, and He is revealed in the Bible, which provides foundational, categorical absolutes. His Word is our provision to know God's thoughts on any subject. Understanding these truths imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, we come into a personal relationship with God, who is our Final Authority and our Absolute Power. The Lord then gives us a final word for every category and detail of life.

Conviction that Leads to Commitment

Believers today must break out from Laodicean lukewarm attitudes. In 1 Peter 2:23, Jesus *committed* Himself to the righteous Judge, knowing it would lead Him to death on the cross. The Greek word *paradidomi* describes the action of giving things over into the hands of Another. *Poieo* is also a word for commit, which means "to do" (James 1:22-23). We are to do God's will from the heart with a form of thinking that comes from the Scriptures and produces fruit (see Matthew 7:21; Ephesians 6:6; and Romans 6:17).

Commitment also speaks of making a pledge to engage ourselves in our convictions. A con-

viction is a firm belief which comes from the evidence of God's divine authority, illumination, and revelation through inspiration from categories of Scripture. For example, I have a conviction that God speaks through His Word and that what He says is true because God cannot lie about any subject (Titus 1:2). It is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). Every Word of God is pure, and if any man shall add to it, he is a liar (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Conviction means that I understand that God is not a man that he should lie (Numbers 23:19). Therefore, I am to lay up the words of God in my heart and soul, to bind them as a sign upon my hands and as frontlets between my eyes (see Deuteronomy 6:6-8). This is a picture of my mind functioning through the power of God with the provision of the Word.

Conviction means that we are not to add to or take away from the Word of God (Deuteronomy 12:32). So when I have convictions, the Word of God is *the* final authority on marriage, friendships, and issues of morality. The Word is the final authority for why the Church is here and how it is to function on the earth.

God's Word is absolute. By the grace and love of God, I commit myself to divine convictions

that are based upon the evidence of divine inspiration.

The Curse of Adultery and Divorce

There is a lot of adultery going on, even in churches. Adultery is a criminal act: “and be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23b).^{*} If a man or woman has sex outside of marriage, it is a criminal act in the eyes of God! Any person who willfully commits sin must make a commitment to repent totally, without sentimentality and with no abstract interpretation of the Word of God.

We need to make a commitment to have a conviction of what God’s Word says about adultery. “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14). In Matthew 5:28, Jesus said that even to think about committing adultery is to do it.

God considers adultery a crime. If someone broke into your home today and stole your valuables, you would consider that a criminal act wouldn’t you? It’s robbery, it’s stealing. Isn’t it just as much a crime to break up a family?

Recently, I read statements made by children from broken homes during counseling:

“I would rather my parents die than separate.”

“I would rather die than have my family break up.”

“I feel like nobody loves me.”

“I don’t trust God because of what He let happen to our family.”

From these comments, you see that divorce is worse than death in the eyes of some children.

Yet, when two people get married, they swear to keep their vows to their own hurt (Psalm 15:4). They make a commitment to God to express unconditional love to each other. They make commitments to show grace, mercy, forgiveness, and patience—personal commitments to Jesus Christ and His words of conviction.

Establishing Precise Commitments

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to convict. Jesus said that when the Spirit would come, He would “reprove,” or convict, the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged.

Oh, how our nation needs convictions! We need convictions to love righteousness and hate iniquity (Psalm 45:7). Our convictions must agree with what God’s Word teaches us.

Convictions lead to precise commitments. For example, Mark 13:10 says this Gospel must

be preached in all the world. I thank God for the many programs I hear on Christian radio and television which promote world missions. God wants us to make a commitment as a church to publish the Gospel in all the world.

We are also to make a commitment to love as God loves, to forgive as God forgives, and to be pure as God is pure. We are to have godly, categorical commitments. Paul wrote, “And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment [meaning doctrine]; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be [pure] and without offence till the day of Christ” (Philippians 1:9-10).

God wants our love to be according to the Word through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who sheds that love abroad in our hearts with the same power that sent Jesus Christ to Calvary to die in our place. He wants us to make commitments to Him and to His way. He is saying, “Trust in Me, and I will bring it to pass—there’s not a thing I will hold back.”

The Power of Prayer

There’s a true story of a little girl who was taken from her parents and put in a orphanage. The parents had separated and were living in

immorality, drinking, and drug addiction. It was a harrowing situation and the girl had to be removed from it.

Some people from a Bible-believing church had an outreach to that orphanage. They went every week and loved the children, brought them clothes, and gave them Christ. This little girl received Jesus as her Savior and made a commitment to the Word of God and to prayer. She prayed five times a day, "God, please save mommy and daddy and make us a family again." She kept praying and kept thanking God for hearing her prayer.

In time, the mother attended a Billy Graham crusade in California and was gloriously saved. She called her husband in New York and said, "I've got to see you." She flew to New York and her husband also was gloriously saved. They found their little daughter and became a family again. The girl's prayer was answered. She had a conviction that God hears and answers prayer, and she made a commitment to pray. We need to make commitments to love, to pray, and to believe for our loved ones no matter what their state is.

When we make a commitment to something we receive from the inspired Word of God, it

produces a deeper conviction. God has the final word. God is the final authority. And He has the final provision. He wants us to live under the control of the precious Holy Spirit.

During World War II, a Hungarian man found that his whole family had been taken captive by Hitler's army. After walking nearly a hundred miles, he managed to escape the country, and found his way to Brooklyn, New York. One day he was telling his story to a stranger while riding on the subway. After listening intently, the stranger introduced himself and said, "I heard a similar story from a woman with the same last name as yours. I still have her address!" The Hungarian man made a phone call and found out that this woman was his wife. She was living alone, thinking everyone from her family had died. They were reunited because God has the final authority; God has the final power; God has the final word.

Convictions about Eternity

We have to get back to the precious Word of God and live in holy convictions. Our faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Every word of God is pure. It is only by the pure Word of God that we learn to make

commitments. Let's make commitments to friendship, to purity, and to study.

We need to understand that it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Let's make a commitment to share the Gospel with those who are bound for hell. Some Christians need to reestablish in their convictions that there is indeed a hell. It is a wicked place of unending torment, where the fire will never be quenched.

Also, we need to have a conviction that there is a heaven. What a precious reality. We need to have a conviction that God will never impute our sin to us, that when we believe, we receive total forgiveness of sin. Yet, we must also have a conviction that He will lovingly chastise us if we don't repent of our sin and grow in grace and knowledge. He loves us and desires that chastisement will produce peaceable fruits of righteousness (Hebrews 12:11).

Faith that Serves by Love

Each of us must make commitments to serve and to give. Someone once said to me, "I can't love my partner." I said, "How about having an understanding of Galatians 5:6 and revealing a faith that serves by love?" You don't

have to ‘feel’ love to love someone. You just *will* to love them. You will to forgive, to understand, to be kind, to be patient. It’s all a matter of choices.

People think that they are going to “feel” something forever in their marriage. Truthfully, no one feels something *all* the time. You simply love with your will, and you make a conscious decision to be faithful, come what may. You determine to be pure toward your partner because of a conviction from the heart that is according to God’s will (Ephesians 6:6). You make a commitment to that conviction through the grace of God and the Holy Spirit.

We need a reason to be true, and the reason is the reality of God. We need a purpose, and we have an eternal purpose according to Ephesians 3:11. Besides needing a reason and a purpose, we also need a provision, and *God* is our provision. His Word is our provision. We need a motive, and the love of God is our motive. There is no greater power, no greater force in all the world to motivate us than the love of God.

**Read Sin: The Great Detective, by Pastor Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.*

Chapter Two

CHOOSE TO WALK
WITH CONVICTIONS

“For the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.

“Wherefore henceforth *know we no man after the flesh*: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:14-17).

We don’t know anyone after the flesh, because the flesh in every man is evil and sinful. When God says that in Christ we are new creatures, He means it. Therefore, I have a conviction that every Christian is a brand-new creature, that old things have passed away, and that all

things are new in Him.

The alcoholic says he wants help, but he won't come to church. He is hopelessly, helplessly lost because he won't choose to draw near through a commitment to God, a commitment to the Body of Christ, or a commitment to holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of Truth that sets people free.

Addictions have no power over divinely inspired convictions from the power of God. God has the final authority over drugs and alcohol. He has the final authority over immorality. He can break the strongholds and release the person who is trapped.

God has the final authority over lying, over sentimentality, and over social drinking. God has the final authority to release you, to set you free, and to give you a single eye and a single heart (Matthew 6:22; 2 Corinthians 8:5).

Taking Control

We need to make a commitment to honor each other (Ephesians 5:21). Understanding that these are the last days, we need to make a commitment to take control of our lives through Jesus Christ. If we don't, the devil and the world will take control. Pride, circumstances, and the

love of money will take over. Relative righteousness will take control unless we are controlled by God's perfect righteousness, which was imputed to us at salvation and is imparted to us as we receive Bible doctrine daily.

We need the Holy Spirit's old-fashioned final authority. Recognize that God's Word and His provision are final; we need nothing less than that. All of God's promises are yea, none of them are nay (2 Corinthians 1:20).

We need a conviction to love one another, to edify and not blame, to build up and not tear down, to speak well of people and not speak evil. We need a conviction followed by a commitment to have pure thoughts. Christians should be convicted for the immorality of fornication, pornography, and lust that they allow into their lives through X-rated and R-rated movies and television. They don't agree with God, neither do they have His convictions on the subject.

Men need to have convictions to work hard and be diligent in their labor so they can provide for their families. The man who doesn't provide for his family is worse than an infidel.

We should have a firm conviction that Satan wants to plague us with sickness and disease.

He wants us to accept the curse of the Fall and to live in the law of sin, death, and illness. We are new creatures. This must be our conviction. Everything about yesterday is gone forever. God's mercies are new every morning and His compassions will not fail. He is the portion of our life (Lamentations 3:22-24).

We need old-fashioned biblical convictions for every area of life. Convictions lead to commitments, conversions, communion with God, and proper communication with people. The result is a divine provision to evangelize others, all because of the godly convictions that emanate from our souls, manifested through Jesus Christ in us. When we have convictions, we will never be the same, because convictions received through the love of God always lead to conversions.

Set Apart for God Himself

Billions of years ago, God had a plan to make His deity incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through the 'hypostatic union' He became fully God and fully Man (John 1:14). As a part of that plan, Jesus would die for the sins of the whole world in the unlimited atonement (1 John 2:2). But God did something else so crucial in that

“time before time”: Because of His omniscience, He set apart the godly for Himself (Psalm 4:3). And anytime they call, He hears.

The Lord said in Isaiah 43:7, “Every one that is called by my name...I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11). Our spirit, soul, and body were created strictly for the Lord’s pleasure and for His glory, to be set apart unto Him.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13).

God’s grace has appeared to all men through the creation and the gift of God-consciousness (see Romans 1:18-32; Romans 2:14-15). The word “teaching” in Titus 2:12 is *paideuo*, referring to the entire process of educating people with *all* of the Bible. This goes way beyond giving instructions; it teaches us practical ability and capacity

to apply the entire Bible to our lives.

The first thing grace teaches us is to deny ungodliness. Then we can live “soberly”—with discreet, quiet truth, having the rooms of our soul filled with categorical doctrine—“righteously and godly in this present evil world” with the expectation of His return. This is our blessed hope. We grow to love Him so intimately that we constantly look for Him to come back, yet without living in presumption or anxiety.

“[Jesus Christ] gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all *iniquity*, and purify unto himself a *peculiar* people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and *rebuke* with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Titus 2:14-15).

In this passage, “iniquity” speaks of emotional rebellion against spiritual authority because of lust patterns of self-exaltation. Christ died to redeem us from iniquity and to “purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” “Peculiar” refers to something chosen to be one’s own possession. Interestingly, the word “rebuke” means to bring in conviction. God is purifying people who will be His own possession. And how does He do this? By bringing in conviction through His Word.

Chapter Three

THE DEVASTATION
OF FORNICATION

“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:9). God looked across time billions of years ago, saw us and called us by name. “I want Jack and Jim and Mary. And while they are on earth, I want them for Myself. I will add things unto them, but I want them entirely—spirit, soul, and body—just for Me.”

In 1 Corinthians 6:15-17 we read, “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that *he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.* But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” We are members of His body, flesh, and bones (see Ephesians 5:30).

Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 6:18 that

we are to “flee fornication.” Though he often mentions adultery, here he specifically says fornication, which means to engage in sexual activity outside the boundary of marriage; it includes adultery. “Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth *against* his own body.”

Think of the spiritual, physiological, psychological, and emotional aspects of God’s divine illumination on the subject of sexual sins and why we must flee them. Proverbs 6:32 says that people who commit adultery lack understanding. They do not comprehend how the physiological, psychological, and spiritual aspects are intertwined and effect the central nervous system. They misunderstand the ‘libido’ (or sex drive) and what it means to connect or to be joined to another, as described in 1 Corinthians 6:15-16. The sex drive, often characterized by libido ‘waves’, is a normal and necessary function in a wholesome union. When, however, it is outside of a relationship sanctified in heaven, it means that a person places himself under bondage to a terribly destructive pattern and force that only God can deliver him from.

In the Genesis 4:1 description of a sanctified union, Adam “knew” Eve and she conceived.

When two people commit fornication, they “know” about each others’ physiological and emotional responses. They are *joined*—they have become one soul and one flesh—and the energy stimulated by the libido waves make them want the connection again and again. Men will often turn to pornography to satisfy this desire, and because there is so much trash on TV and over the internet, sin rages out of control in this area of immorality.

One Soul, One Flesh, Two Hearts

When two people enter into fornication (which includes adultery) and the pattern is repeated without repentance, there is a connection to the old sin nature and to Satan’s system. The connection is “closer than air,” and it cannot be sundered (Job 41:16). They become one soul and one flesh, but they are not one heart, neither can they be.

But the reason they have to do it again and again is because they became one soul, and now Satan is energizing the affair through the emotions and through the libido waves, so they can fulfill their lust. Galatians 5:16 says, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

Please recognize that an isolated act of fornication causes two people to become one soul and one flesh—wicked, evil, and infected. (For a person who is involved with pornography, his infected soul and flesh are attached to demonic influence.) If a couple divorce and remarry, unless there is repentance and the attachment is forsaken and dealt with thoroughly with God's purging, it is a marriage that is one soul and one flesh but two damaged hearts.

What happens when people involved in fornication get married? What happens to someone who is married and becomes involved with pornography? The wife doesn't desire her husband, and the husband doesn't get any satisfaction from his wife, because they have destroyed the physiological and psychological capacity of their libidos for the one person God gave them. Therefore, they have sinned against their own bodies and are in bondage to forces that make them crave further stimulation. This pattern will go on for years, unless they receive deliverance from God.

Unfortunately, there are people who are not committing sexual sins, but they have not been good marital partners for a long time because of what happened prior to marriage. When they

sinned against their own bodies, they damaged their souls and affected the libido, which must be guarded with great care. The same effect is often realized in the innocent victims of molestation, who must be counselled with great sensitivity.

But a married couple who are right with God have one heart, one soul, and one flesh. They belong to God; they are His cherished possession. That is why no man dare try to separate what God has closed. "Let no man put asunder" because the two have become one flesh (Mark 10:6-9). On the other hand, Jonathan and David had one heart and one soul, but in the purity of their love for each other, "...passing the love of a woman" (2 Samuel 1:26), they were *not* one flesh (Acts 4:32). With the relationship of a man and a woman, however, the flesh plays a major role in the unity of their double trinity: their spirit, soul, and body.

This is why God commands us to *flee* fornication. A man is not to know any woman in the flesh. He is not to know any woman but his wife in the sense of sexual thrills and thoughts. Fornication is so destructive. Those who commit it lack understanding, and they destroy their capacity for the marriage bed, which is undefiled (Hebrews 13:4).

If you are reading this and feeling condemned, remember that God wants to bless and instruct you through the whole counsel of God. This can all be corrected. God doesn't want to condemn you—He loves you and wants to help you.

God's Initiations, Our Responses

God initiates and we respond. When this happens, He is revealed in us. He is reflected through us, and He is glorified by us.

Isaiah heard the Lord saying “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” The prophet said, “Here am I, send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

Initiation. Response.

In Acts 9, the Shekinah glory of the Lord shined down on Saul of Tarsus as he was on the road to Damascus. The brightness of God's glory knocked him down and he heard a voice: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?...I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:4-5). Saul was kicking against the Church, but he was really kicking against Christ. Finally, Saul said, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” The Lord initiated and Saul responded. As Saul (who later became Paul) continued to respond to God's

initiations, he became a great missionary and also wrote eleven New Testament epistles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In Song of Solomon 5, Jesus is pictured as the Bridegroom with His locks filled with the dew of the night. In verse 1, He initiated to the Bride, saying, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

But in verse 2, the bride had a separated, questionable response. She said, "I sleep, but my heart waketh." She recognized the voice of her Beloved knocking at her door, saying, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." He had a tremendous savor of spices coming out of Him toward the Bride.

"But," she replied in verse 3, "I have taken off my coat, and I've washed my feet; how can I defile them again?" She didn't respond to His initiation. And when she went out into the town to find Him, she was hurt by those who were supposed to be watchmen because she hadn't

responded to her Bridegroom.

The key to our relationship with God is to have an intimate, personal communion with Him where He initiates and we respond. In turn, we can initiate to God based upon His initiations to us, and God responds to us. Billions of years ago, He desired our fellowship with Him. He wanted our fellowship to be in the Spirit (Philippians 2:1) and in the light of His Word (1 John 1:7). And He desired that sometimes we would fellowship with Christ's sufferings for us through resurrection power and the Cross (Philippians 3:10).

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy [Spirit], be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Our fellowship is derived from communion with the Holy Spirit. *God wants fellowship.* He wants a community where He initiates with His Word through the divine vibrations of His Spirit. Through our fellowship He wants to give us an eternal purpose, an eternal destiny, and an eternal relationship—an intimate, positive, ever-growing, ever-glowing, overflowing life between us and Him. It's a fellowship of life (1 John 1:2), love (1 John 1:3), and light (1 John 1:5-7). As God does this, the Son of God is revealed in us.

Chapter Four

MADE CLEAN BY THE WORD: A SPIRITUAL CATHARSIS

In Galatians 1:15-16 Paul wrote, "...It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen." First, the Son has to be revealed in us to take over our human spirits, our souls, and the libido waves that effect our bodies. We must become His—spiritually, mentally, and physiologically. That needs to happen first, and then we are clean through the Word, after we have rebounded.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

The blood of Christ shall purge us from "dead works," meaning anything done in spiri-

tual death. We are purged and made clean to serve a living God! We don't have to live in the consequences of immorality, in the consequences of sin and iniquity, or in the consequences of evil, always trying to pay for what we have done. The blood of Christ through the eternal Spirit will do a catharsis, purging the one thing that needs to be purged and made brand-new: *the conscience*. This brings in God's norms and standards for the spiritual, the psychological, and the physiological parts of man. Once our conscience is purged, a new line of communication opens up—an intimate fellowship with God in life, love, and light.

“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared” (Psalm 130:3-4).

God wants us to walk in the Spirit and to fellowship with Him. He sets us apart for Himself. He purifies us so that we can be His own possession. He wants to possess a man's entire outlook and attitude. He wants to possess the thought life as well as the schedule, to give a life filled with joy. Joy is a wonderful power. “The joy of the LORD is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

Getting Back to First Love

The love of Christ is a mighty power, a wonderful force. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:18-19).

In these two magnificent verses God is saying, “My love takes care of guilt. It takes care of fear and insecurity.” In fact, when the Holy Spirit sheds love abroad in your heart, fear is *cast out*. No special meeting is required. You don’t need someone else to help you do it. The Holy Spirit’s love casts out fear. It does a complete catharsis.

In Revelation 2:1-7, God commended the church at Ephesus very highly. Yet, they lacked one thing. God said, “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (Revelation 2:4). “First love” means God loving me as a depraved sinner, God loving me while I was ungodly (Romans 5:6), while I was yet a sinner (Romans 5:8).

“God justifieth the ungodly” (Romans 4:5). I was ungodly. My whole head was sick. I was sinking, but I reached out and said, “Oh, God,

are You there? Forgive me. I believe!” He justified me on the basis of the faith I expressed, and He came into my heart to live. By His grace, love, and mercy, I was saved. On top of that, forty-six positional things were done at the moment of salvation, before I could blink an eye.

Not only are we saved by faith, we are purified by faith (Acts 15:9), and 1 Timothy 5:22 says, “Keep thyself pure.” But how? We are purified by faith in His Blood and by faith in His love. We simply *receive* it. As we receive it, God turns us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18). He gives us an inheritance with the saints who are sanctified by the faith of Christ.

Every child of God can overcome and be a winner. “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest” (Jeremiah 45:5).

The “evil upon all flesh” speaks of satanic infections in the soul and body. Don’t seek things for yourself. Make a commitment to be a good steward and sacrifice for His work. If you don’t seek things for yourself, God will give your life as a “prey,” meaning you will receive a special

prize as a winner wherever you go. But if you do seek things for yourself, evil will come upon you. Infections come in through the devil's cosmic system, affecting your spiritual, psychological, and physiological makeup. These infections will stay with you, even as you *seem* to go on with God, and secretly you will become double-minded.

Renewing the Mind

But there is an answer: Receive first love. Allow the precise convictions that come from categorical doctrine to produce a continual renewal. God says, "I will purge your conscience and get rid of the infections. I will make you clean, and give you a catharsis if you will just receive first love." When you received Christ, you received first love and you were saved. You didn't do a single thing but believe upon Him. Now that you are saved, receive "first love" for the purging of your conscience. God will make you brand-new, spiritually, psychologically, and even physiologically, regarding the response of your libido.

"Be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Ephesians 4:23). "Be renewed" is *anakainoo* in the Greek, which comes from *kainos*, an iterative

present tense, which implies a daily succession of moments where you keep being renewed. It means there is nothing old going on inside of you because of this continual renewal in your human spirit and in your mind. The verb *anakainoo* is intransitive, which means the subject (*you*) receives the action of the verb (*be renewed*) with no object. The verb is followed by an instrumental case of agency. In other words, with help from the agencies of the spirit and the mind (which is now the mind of Christ), and by the provision of the Word and the Holy Spirit, we are renewed daily.

Having conviction with a commitment to purity brings us into fellowship with God in victory, power, life, and with an expectation from Him in everything (Psalm 62:5). We go forward knowing “we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Romans 8:37). God always causes us to triumph (2 Corinthians 2:14), so let’s grow, glow, and go in the light of intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

Every believer needs to have a conviction that says, “I am God’s beloved.” Get alone with Him and make some serious commitments to Jesus Christ based upon that conviction. We need precise convictions through a precise provision—the Word of God and the power of His Spirit. That is the only way to stay on the straight road of protection where God commands a blessing. Instead of being conformed to this world through wrong decisions, let’s make commitments to draw near to God and be filled with the Spirit continually.

If you are backslidden, you can have a conviction that you are a new creature in Christ. Having a conviction of grace teaches us to deny ungodliness in this present evil world. You can glorify God with a commitment to your convictions through the promises and mandates of the Word of God.

If you are lost, you need to have a conviction

too. Without receiving God's free gift of salvation, you will go to hell when you die. But God loves you and paid for your sins. If you believe in your heart that He died, was buried, and rose from the dead for you, He will save you right now, and you can have the conviction that you have eternal life.

Let's walk in love as His dear children and have convictions—divine propositions from God to us in the integrity of His love. Receive mercy, forgiveness, and grace, and let Jesus Christ produce the change. He is the final authority. His Word is final and His grace is the ultimate provision for life. His love is the only true motive for change, and His purity is the life of holiness which comes to us by imparted righteousness so we can reveal His nature.