

Living by Every Word of God

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the Amplified Translation. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

In this booklet, we have set forth the premise that the key to victory in the Christian life is based upon living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. There is no other way to experience the life of Christ in our daily walk with Him. As Christians, we are called to make an invisible God visible to a lost and dying world, and appropriating the Word is our means of making Jesus Christ a reality in the lives of those who do not know Him as Lord and Savior.

Some readers may be inclined to think that to live by every word of God is to live in idealism, but this is not so. Every born-again believer must understand that God has specifically designed each individual to think and act in explicit accordance with the Scriptures. To follow anything less than the divine standards set forth in the Word of God is unacceptable to Him. Yet, God has not called us to follow a standard that is impossible to implement. He has provided a

limitless supply of grace.

The Word of God is an eternal, immutable standard, forever settled in heaven and brought into existence by the Living Word, Jesus Christ. The exact character and nature of God the Father is expressed in the life of Christ (Hebrews 1:3). Therefore, He is our perfect example of what it means to live by every Word of God. Every moment of the Lord's life, every thought and action, was a demonstration of His commitment to live in obedience to His Father's plan.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are commanded to live by every word of God. It is a privilege to carry out His will in every situation. Imagine—every conversation and every situation is a potential opportunity to appropriate the Word of God! Knowledge of the Word becomes wisdom as we, by faith, allow Jesus Christ to live His life through us.

Each believer must commit his life to follow divine precepts. In contrast, the unregenerated or carnal man employs his limited, finite, human viewpoint to evaluate the infallible Word of God. The natural man's reference point is men rather than God. Pride causes him to think that he is qualified to evaluate life based upon the data he receives from his senses. He will not ac-

cept the fact that apart from God, the capacity to know truth is impossible. He does not realize that it is impossible to evaluate life on the basis of the severely limited capacity of his senses. God declares that the Word of God alone will judge all human experience, but the Word of God will never judge the Word of God (John 12:48).

When we reach an understanding that the Word of God is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89), and that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16), we come to realize the great and awesome privilege God has given us to appropriate His divine standards in every aspect of life. As we continue in His Word, we go from faith to faith, and we realize a specific, precise, immovable provision for every detail of life. Every believer is a living epistle of the Word of God, not written on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3b).

Chapter One

IT IS WRITTEN

Immediately following the baptism of Jesus Christ, which marked the beginning of His public ministry, Matthew 4:1-4 explains that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. The first temptation came after Jesus had gone without food for forty days and nights.

“And the tempter came and said to Him, If You are God’s Son, command these stones to be made (loaves of) bread. But He replied, It has been written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:3-4, Amplified Translation).

The Lord’s response to this challenge was identical to words given to the children of Israel, in Deuteronomy 8:1-3:

“All the commandments which I command you this day you shall be watchful to do, that

you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers. And you shall (earnestly) remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your (mind and) heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that He might make you recognize and personally know that man does not live by bread only, but man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.”

Note the correlation between these two circumstances. The Israelites spent forty years in the wilderness, and Jesus Christ spent forty days in the desert. These were tests to provoke a response of humility and recognition that God’s instructions, through the Word of God, are the mandate by which man is to live.

Remember, Jesus Christ was God incarnate, so He had the power within Himself to overcome his hunger. Yet, He was waiting for God the Father to supply His needs. Over and over again, throughout the Gospels, we read that Jesus would do nothing without specific guid-

ance and direction from the Father, because it was the Father's work that He came to accomplish (John 17:4).

John 17:24 explains that the Father, from the foundation of the world, bestowed His gift to love the Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus describes this love as His own personal glory! Now, we only know God the Father through the Son, "For there is one God and one mediator, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). By what means did Jesus impart to us those things which the Father had given to Him from the foundation of the world?

"For the uttered words that you gave me I have given to them. And they have received and accepted them, and have come to know positively and in reality—to believe with absolute assurance—that I came forth from your presence.

"And they have believed and are convinced that you did send me. I made Your name known to them and revealed Your character and Your very self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them—felt in their hearts—and that I [myself] may be in them" (John 17:8, 26).

Through Jesus Christ, we are adopted as

God's own children, and we can truly know God with absolute assurance. God's plan and purpose for His children, which was ordained from the foundation of the world, is that we might live for the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:12*a*). This is the glory of living by every word, because it is by the Word of God that we are sanctified, set apart for the Master's use. We are to follow the example of Jesus Christ, the Living Word, who overcame the world by obedience to His own Word.

"I have told you these things so that in Me you may have perfect peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer—take courage, be confident, certain, undaunted—for I have overcome the world—I have deprived it of power to harm, have conquered it [for you]" (John 16:33).

Chapter Two

IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

How can we possibly live by every Word of God unless we hear it? How can we have the power of God if we do not receive it? How can we be effective in serving Christ if we are not habitually involved with His people? There are those who think that being faithful to a local church is old-fashioned and not meant for today. All local assemblies which make an impact on this nation consist of members who have solid convictions about church attendance. Satan is always available to give us excuses why we should not attend services. This chapter will provide the reader with scriptural ammunition to support the Biblical principle that it is vital to assemble together with the brethren in Christ.

The Church of Jesus Christ is described in 1 Timothy 3:15 as “the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and

stay—the prop and support—of the truth.”

The church is the means by which the truth of the Word of God continues to be propagated on the earth. This is the divine institution through which God the Father manifests Jesus Christ, His Son. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, “Upon this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Ephesians 2:20 says that the church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, [with] Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone.”

Therefore, it is elementary for every believer in Christ to be diligent in his commitment to the local body of believers to which God has called him. The apostle Paul exhorts believers to hold fast to the truth, without wavering in their hope.

“Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together (as believers), as is the habit of some people, but admonishing—warning, urging, and encouraging—one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25, Amplified).

The church is the pillar and support of the truth. It is our only hope in this life, for it is the place where we receive the Word of God and the enabling power with which we serve God.

We must hear the Word of God if we are to live by its precepts.

“Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together as believers” appears in the Greek text as *me egkataleipontes ten episunagogen heuton*. Not forsaking (*me egkataleipontes*) is a double negative adding greater force to this command. The word *episunagogen* means “to go with” and originally referred to a synagogue of the Jews. In the New Testament, it refers to the meetings of the local assembly, the church.

“As is the custom or habit of some people” appears as *kathos ethos tisin*, and means that, even then, there were believers in the habit of missing or staying away from the assembling of the church. This is a clear command not to forsake the gathering of the saints. Paul admonished them not to follow the poor example set by some church members who neglected the local assembly. The phrase “but encouraging one another” is *alla parakalountes* in the Greek. This means “to admonish, warn, urge, and encourage one another to be faithful,” “to call one another aside and exhort one another to be faithful.” How do you respond to those who have not been obedient to this passage? We should encourage others not to miss services. A humble

believer will joyfully accept and receive the words spoken, rather than react in negativity with excuses and hidden anger. Hebrews 3:13 says, “Warn (admonish, urge, and encourage) one another every day, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened (into settled rebellion) by the deceitfulness of sin— (that is) by the fraudulence, the strategies, the trickery which the delusive glamour of his sin may play on him.”

We are to encourage one another “all the more faithfully, as [we] see the day approaching,” which in the Greek is *kai tosouto mallon oso blepete eggizousan ten hemeron*, meaning “do it more and more as you see the day approaching.” As the end of this age draws nearer, Satan’s attempt to overcome God’s kingdom becomes more and more intense. As believers, we should not be ignorant of the strategies of Satan and his demonic host. Ephesians 6:11-17 explains the spiritual warfare that is waged against the individual members of the Body of Christ. Part of our defense against the supernatural evil that is taking place in the atmosphere comes through our involvement, commitment, and faithfulness to the local assembly and pastor-teacher to which God has called us. Needless to say, with-

out a firm determination and an undaunted commitment to participate as part of a local church, the believer makes himself susceptible to demonic influence. He actually allows Satan access to his life by a choice of his own free volition.

God commands us to identify with and be active in our local church because it is established for our protection and benefit. Without the local church, God knows that we do not stand a chance. If we are not faithful to a local assembly, eventually we will be deceived in one area after another, until complete carnality takes over our lives. It is for this very reason that Jesus came full force against the temptation of Satan by declaring, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

The provision of necessary details in life (i.e., food, clothing, and money to pay the bills) are not to be the controlling factors in our lives. Concerning people who are controlled by the details of life, Jesus said, "O ye of little faith! Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:30, 33). In this verse, Jesus is making an appeal. He is emphasizing the fact that the Word of God

should have preeminence over the details of life. If we live by every word, He promises to take care of our physical needs. The Apostle Paul wrote, "And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Each believer should ask, "In which area of my life am I vulnerable to Satan's bid? Can I be bought for a price?" This is the question that Satan asks God about each believer. Consider the book of Job. Job had everything. Satan wanted to know whether or not Job's love for God was dependent upon God's abundant provisions in his life. Job is our supreme example in suffering, because God allowed everything he owned to be leveled and destroyed, all in one day! There are very few Christians who have endured such affliction and trial. God won the battle in Job's life, but what does it take to upset our security and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Job said, "I esteem the words of your mouth more than my necessary food" (see Job 23:12). The word "esteem" here means to hide something away or to store it carefully for use as needed. Job understood that the Word of God, which was stored in his mind and ready to be drawn from in the time of need, was more im-

portant than having the necessary food which would sustain his body.

As believers, we must exalt His Word above all else. "For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Psalm 138:2*b*). God has placed greater importance upon the words that He has spoken than upon His name. His name represents His character and nature; His name also represents His reputation and authority as Creator of the universe. God made this statement because He wants us to place the same value and emphasis upon His Word as He does. He sent Jesus to complete the work of Redemption. Jesus Christ is called "the Word" who became flesh and dwelt among us. It is impossible to separate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from the Word of God, the Scriptures.

"In the beginning [before all time] was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself" (John 1:1).

Luke 14:12-27 gives the account of a man who prepared a great banquet. Jesus compared this banquet to eating the bread of the kingdom of God. The master invited his friends, family, and wealthy neighbors to come to dine, but many refused the invitation because of prior commitment. One man was a landowner and,

undoubtedly, felt it was more important to attend to the many details brought about by such a great responsibility. Another man replied that he must take care of his new yoke of five oxen, the means of his livelihood. Another man explained that he had to spend time with his new wife and, therefore, could not be present at the banquet.

These appear to be legitimate excuses. "I'm too busy with my property investments." "I have to take care of my work vehicle." "I can't neglect my new bride." But it is obvious that these people did not take time to realize that it was the master who bid them to come. The account in Luke chapter 14 goes on to say that the master became very angry. He sent his servant to invite to the banquet the poor, blind, disabled, and lame from the highways and byways. In the same way, the Lord invites "whosoever will come" to His banqueting feast, because He wants His house to be filled.

We are capable of putting other things before the kingdom of God. We all make good excuses to justify putting our family, home, job, and friends before God in our priorities. In striving to maintain our attachments, we often fail and miss the mark of our calling, which is to seek the

kingdom of God first in our lives. God is just and righteous. Therefore, He cannot wink an eye at our disobedience when we hold on to worldly things that keep us from being faithful to Him. Church attendance is one of the first areas where unfaithfulness to God begins to be manifested.

We must, again, learn to comprehend the priority God has placed upon His Word as the eternal truth. The church is the divinely instituted pillar or support of the truth. Therefore, we must not allow anything to enter into our hearts and lives that would cause us to abandon our commitment to faithful church attendance. If you have never made such a commitment, we urge you to do so. Let nothing keep you from committing yourself to a church that has a worldwide vision.*

** Be sure to read, Choosing A Local Assembly, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 2001, for further study.*

Chapter Three

RESULTS OF INCONSISTENCY

Apostasy is one of the topics most thoroughly explained in the New Testament epistles. Apostasy comes from the Greek word *apostasia*, which means “a departure or series of departures.” Another definition is “to draw back as a process of the free will.” This word is used in the epistles to describe the process by which a believer, either consciously or unconsciously, enters into a series of departures from the truth of the Word of God.

Apostasy becomes evident in a believer’s life when he begins to make negative decisions regarding his obedience to the clear commands of truth in the Scriptures. Please note that an individual is not apostate if he misses an occasional service, but if he misses habitually, this definitely would be a trend toward apostasy. Hebrews 3:12 says, “(Therefore beware) brethren; take care lest there be in any one of you a wicked, unbelieving

heart—which refuses to cleave to, trust in and rely on Him—leading you to turn away and desert or stand aloof from the living God.”

Remember, there is a constant spiritual battle taking place between the kingdom of God and the evil world system ruled by Satan. Satan’s strategy is to somehow cause each believer (to some degree) to forsake the Word of God, until he eventually forsakes it entirely.

Again, it is the church of Jesus Christ—the local assembly of believers—that has been ordained by God to be the propagation and support of truth in the world. Therefore, the very first evidence of negativity toward the truth is described in 2 Timothy 4:4, in that some will “turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off the myths and man-made fictions.” This is an obvious reference to the fact that some Christians were unable to deal with the truth that was being preached in church. The previous verse explains that they will go from one teacher to another.

In order to grow spiritually, it is necessary for a believer to faithfully attend a local church. He will have a more personal experience with the Lord if he has a church and a pastor-teacher that he can call his own. The pastor should be al-

lowed to preach the Word in season and out of season. He should never legislate or lord it over the congregation, but lovingly lay down his life for the people whom God has given him. He should be the greatest and most humble servant in the church.

Yet, when a Bible-believing pastor preaches the Word of God in truth, it must be heard as the Word of God, and not as the word of men: "And we also (especially) thank God continually for this, that when you received the message of God (which you heard) from us, you welcomed it not as the word of (mere) men, but as what it truly is, the Word of God, which is effectually at work in you who believe—exercising its (superhuman) power in those who adhere to and trust in and rely on it" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The pastor-teacher simply communicates what can and should be verified by the believer-priest by reading the written Word. We are not dealing with the issue of false teachers here, but rather we are referring to the believer who is turning away from the objective truth of the Word.

Another form of departure is found in 2 Peter 3:17: "Let me warn you therefore, beloved, that knowing these things beforehand, you should be on your guard lest you be carried

away by the error of lawless and wicked [persons] and fall from your own [present] firm condition—your own steadfastness [of mind].” Peter is warning us to beware of conspiracies that form in the church and cause us to turn away. As time progresses, people involved in conspiracies turn against the pastor-teacher as well as against the spiritual people in the church. Hebrews 3:12 teaches that they will affect the weaker members of the Body, especially if they can find sympathizers and others who harbor a seed of rebellion. Satan revels in this activity. He injects it with momentum until he causes a full-blown conspiracy to split or destroy the local church.

Rebellious people have difficulty submitting to the visible authority of the church because they lack sufficient faith to trust God for the human inadequacies of the leadership of the pastor-teacher. In order to justify their form of rebellion, they become experts at twisting and privately interpreting the Scripture. They will remain in this deceived state until repentance takes place in their hearts.

“Jesus said, Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye

offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:28, 29). The eye here represents spiritual perception or the place where light enters into the soul. The word "right" in the Greek is *dexios*, which means that the part of the soul that will not surrender to truth must be pointed toward the truth. Specifically, Jesus is saying that there is a place in the soul of every man that will not receive and honor the absolute authority of the Word of God. The spoken Word of God will judge us on the last day.

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48, KJV).

The man who will not turn away from the sin of lust (the example used in the above passage), or any other form of mental attitude sin, will not be led to the truth. When we do not hold steadfastly to truth, mental or covert sin limits our perception of truth. Instead of making a divine impression on our hearts, truth only passes through the mind leaving us guilty, insecure, self-condemned, reactionary, rebellious,

and discouraged.

Psalm 36:9 says, “In Your light do we see light.” To sin and not repent is to refuse the light. We need the light of His Word to get through the day, but unless the Word cleanses this area of sin, an evil trend will take over. Unable to submit to the light of the truth, the lust becomes more important than the Word of God. Stubbornness takes priority over humility, and grace is refused. The result is that a place is then given over to Satan.

Matthew 5:29 says, “If thy right eye offend thee....” The word for “offend” in the original text is *skandalizai*. This verb appears in the present tense, active voice, and indicative mood. This means that the subject of the sentence is continuing with certainty to produce the action of scandalizing his own emotions. The emotions of man were divinely designed to receive and appreciate truth, but sin and negativity scandalizes or incapacitates the emotions so that they react to evil stimuli. If a believer remains in this state of incapacitation, it will lead to a departure from hearing the truth (2 Timothy 4:4), unbelief (Hebrews 3:12), and apostasy. This person forsakes the assembly (Hebrews 10:25) and has no choice but to build relationships with others

who foster the same incapacity toward truth. He sustains himself on the basis of personality rapport, endorsement, and fulfillment from these friends (2 Peter 3:17).

The Word of God says, to “pluck out,” whatever hinders our walk with God. The phrase “pluck it out” appears in the Greek as *ezele auton*. This verb is in the aorist tense, active voice, and imperative mood. This means that it is a clear and definite command for the subject to produce the immediate action of deciding against that which stimulates sin, so that he can move toward the Word of God. This is the only way in which an incapacity toward truth can be healed.

According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, “pluck it out” means “to take out with determination.” This applies to any area of life where we refuse the truth of the Word. By the grace of God, cast down whatever prevents God's life from flowing through you (2 Corinthians 10:5). God promises victory. We are commanded to strike at the root of unholy inclinations, and to rid ourselves of anything that would stimulate the old sin nature. On the other hand, we are to be “set apart” through the Word of God, which He has magnified above His character, reputation, and

authority.

Once the incapacity has been plucked out, it then must be cast away. The word “cast” is *bale* in the Greek, which means “to throw with force, smite oneself with a slap, or to buffet oneself with a decision.” The word also appears in the aorist tense, active voice, and imperative mood. This means that the subject is given a definite command. He is commanded to produce the immediate action of throwing away his incapacity to receive truth and, through doctrine and grace, force it out of his life!

Unless we grow in the grace of God, we will experience the frustration of Romans 7:18 and 21: “For I know that nothing good dwells within me; that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it—I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out.... So I find it to be a law (of my being) that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands.”

Each of us has experienced—either willfully or in ignorance—the tremendous power of the old sin nature. When it is combined with the satanic, cosmic, world system, we find out what it is like to be ensnared and entrapped by the force

of sin. No matter how hard we strive to improve a situation, we always come back to the same defeat.

Of course, the only Person great enough to overcome sin is Jesus Christ, who is the Living Word. The Word of God is quick, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). The Word brought about creation, framed the heavens, and holds all things together. It reveals the Cross, the Blood sacrifice, grace, and salvation as a free gift through Jesus Christ. Through the Word, the Holy Spirit creates a hunger and thirst for righteousness, a tender desire to glorify Christ, and a pure and innocent motivation to magnify the Word of God. We have victory when we execute our will to agree precisely with the eternal Word.

The God of all power, who created the entire universe, reaches down in love and joins the five parts of our soul (the mind, conscience, emotions, self-consciousness, and free volition) with God's divine thought patterns. God produces a heavenly life of power in each believer. Divine illumination in the heart of man takes over human capacity and causes us to think in the power of God's Word, as well as to reveal the attributes of God in practical behavior.

Chapter Four

THE WORD AS OUR FRAME OF REFERENCE

A believer's premise for life is Matthew 4:4: "Man shall not live and be upheld and sustained by bread only, but by every Word that comes forth from the mouth of God." We have seen the importance of consistency and faithfulness to hearing, receiving, and obeying the Word of God. Let us turn our attention to what is, perhaps, the most crucial aspect of living by every Word of God: loving the Word of God. The Psalmist cried out to God, "Your Word is very pure—tried and well-refined; therefore your servant loves it" (Psalm 119:140). Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

The objective and realistic believer must soon come to the conclusion that the Word of God is the only true authority in his life. Pro-

verbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seems right to a man and appears straight before him, but at the end of it are the ways of death." Jeremiah 17:9 declares, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly perverse and corrupt and severely, mortally sick! Who can know it (perceive, understand, be acquainted with his own heart and mind)?"

Again, the believer who thinks objectively in agreement with the Word is convinced that he cannot trust his own heart. The Word of God promises not only to keep him from an evil path, but also to guide him in the way of truth. The eternal Word will penetrate our being, dividing our soul and spirit: "For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power—making it active, operative, energizing and effective; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and (the immortal) Spirit, and of the joints and marrow (that is, of the deepest parts of our nature) exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

The believer who perceives the Word of God in this way has no choice but to make every commandment the norm and standard for his

life. Regardless of circumstances or feelings, he must decide that the Word will reign in his heart, since he is determined to conform to its every command. God's love and grace have been bestowed upon us through Redemption that is ours in Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must determine to esteem the Word of God and every precept as right, just, and holy.

"I considered my ways; I turned my feet to obey Your testimonies.... Your testimonies have I taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, even to the end. I hate the thoughts of the undecided (in religion) double-minded people: but Your law do I love" (Psalm 119:59, 111-113).

We must allow the Word to have entrance into our hearts and minds. Also, we must become responsible, as well as accountable, before the Lord. The Holy Spirit has promised to convict us in all areas of sin and unrighteousness. Therefore, we must respond to His conviction with repentance and humility rather than reacting in pride and arrogance. James 4:5 says that God yearns for the Holy Spirit to be welcomed into our hearts. "The Spirit whom He has caused to dwell in us yearns over us—and He yearns

for the spirit [to be welcome]—with a jealous love” (James 4:5b).

What should our frame of reference be toward the Word of God? We should love the Word and always be ready to receive it with a humble mind in submission to the authority of God. To do otherwise would be to exalt ourselves against the truth of God, turning away from objectivity and reality into a form of proud, emotional subjectivity. Since we are in a sinful condition, we must humble ourselves before God in repentance. We must have a willing heart to obey every area of truth.

In one of His weakest moments, Jesus responded to temptation by saying, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4).

Jesus did not consider the fact that He had not eaten for forty days and nights. His circumstances mattered not, for it is written! The phrase “It is written” is *gregraptai* in the Greek. It appears in the perfect tense, passive voice, and indicative mood. The perfect tense indicates that it was written in the past, stands as it was written, and is still in full force and effect today. Kenneth Wuest refers to it as “the existence of

finished results in present time.” The passive voice denotes that the subject receives the action produced by the verb. Jesus as well as Satan, receives the action and the force of “It is written.”

However, note that the very next verb in this verse is *zesetai*, the Greek word for “shall live.” It appears in the present tense, active voice, and imperative mood. A man himself produces the action by choosing in his free volition to live by every Word of God. The necessity for food is a detail of life, and we are not to be occupied with our need. We are commanded to be controlled by the Word of God and not by the details of life.

Chapter Five
THE ABUNDANT LIFE

John 10:10b says, “I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance—to the full, till it overflows.” This chapter will deal with the benefits that committed believers will receive for temporal or experiential blessings to be enjoyed in this life, and eternal blessings that will be experienced in heaven.

Fullness of Life: The Body of Christ

Jesus Christ desires that every believer would have life in abundance—“to the full, until it overflows.” How do we experience this abundant life? This question is answered in Ephesians 1:23: “Which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all—for in that body lives the full measure of Him Who makes everything complete, and who fills everything everywhere (with Himself).” Psalm 133 teaches us about the blessings we receive when the brethren dwell to-

gether in unity.

One of the greatest problems in the world today is loneliness. So many people think that no one understands or cares about them, but in the Body of Christ we are able to bear one another's burdens. Generally, it is not the problems people face that cause them heartache, but it is the fact that they feel as though they are the *only* ones who have these kinds of burdens.

Satan loves to isolate people from the life of Jesus Christ in His corporate Body. Those people do not have Christ's life to meet the needs of their situation. John 5:40 says, "And still you are not willing (but refuse) to come to me, so that you might have life."

If you do not come to Jesus Christ, how can you have His life? If you do not hear the Word, how can you have faith for your personal life? If you do not show yourself friendly, how can you have friends? (See Proverbs 18:24.)

When you go through a trial, do not withdraw from hearing the Word. Draw near! The Word of God promises that if you draw near to God and His people, He will draw near to you! James 4:8 states: "Come close to God and He will come close to you. [Recognize that you are] sinners, get your soiled hands clean; [realize that

you have been disloyal] wavering individuals with divided interests, and purify your hearts [of your spiritual adultery]." The result of drawing close to God will be that you begin to overflow with the life of God. You will be able to comfort others in the same way that God has comforted you (2 Thessalonians 2:16).

Our Self-Image is Changed

You are what you hear, therefore be very careful how you listen. If you are not mixing faith with what you hear from the Word of God, then listening will be unprofitable. Your self-image will reflect what you hear by faith. There are millions who suffer from a poor self-image. Since the fall of man, we have been plagued by a poor self-image, one which stems from our awareness of sin. Every human being is searching for a new self-image "in Adam," but many do not fully understand that when we are born-again, our self-image and identity is found only in Christ.

Satan wants your past failures to determine your identity. He wants what other people say about you to become your self-image. Satan wants you to deny what God says in His Word. The place where we assemble together to wor-

ship and to hear the Word of God is where we begin to learn, from eternal viewpoint, who we really are “in Christ.” The Psalmist said, “I will walk at liberty and at ease, for I have sought, inquired for (and desperately required) your precepts” (Psalm 119:45).

Romans 5:8 displays the divine genius of the unlimited atonement of Christ, in that He loved us and died for us before we believed. Those who are in Christ, by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), have been justified, acquitted, made righteous, and have been put into right standing with God as we await the day of Redemption.

Romans 8:31-34 teaches an evident truth: In the eyes of God, every believer is in a state of positional perfection—he can never be charged with sin. Psalm 103:12 says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.” People cannot condemn or accuse us of sin because they are commanded not to judge. Judging brings error and defilement into the heart of the one who judges, thereby disqualifying a person to stand against another in judgment.

Furthermore, Satan is precluded from passing judgment and condemnation to the believer,

who is “in Christ,” because God does not see our sin. He only sees the blood of Christ that was shed on our behalf.

From these facts we come to the conclusion that God is for us (Romans 8:31*b*). *God is for us!* Do we live in the practical application of this truth? Romans 8:35-39 explains that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God:

“Who shall ever separate us from Christ’s love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity or distress? Or persecution, or hunger, or destitution, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written, For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long; we are regarded and counted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us.... that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things impending and threatening, nor things to come, nor powers, Nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The love of Christ causes us to be more than conquerors because we have already obtained the surpassing victory in everything through the Lord Jesus Christ! John 16:33 explains: “I have

told you these things so that in Me you may have perfect peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer—take courage, be confident, certain, undaunted! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you].”

The work of Redemption is finished. Sin has been dealt with entirely. Jesus has finished the work and now says that He will freely give us all things. The unlimited atonement proves the surpassing greatness of God’s love.

“But God shows and clearly proves His (own) love for us by the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, died for us” (Romans 5:8).

The Old Testament was given to provide examples of the way God dealt with man in a variety of different settings. Zechariah 3:1-4 gives an account of Satan as he stood before the throne of God and accused the High Priest, Joshua. Joshua was guilty of the sin for which he was accused, for it says that he was clothed with filthy garments. The Lord’s response to this situation was to remove Joshua’s filthy garments and clothe him in rich apparel. This is a beautiful

picture of the righteousness of God covering Joshua's sins.

The fact is that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Everyone is truly guilty before God. The choice is up to us whether or not we are going to believe the accusation of our own self-consciousness, the pointed fingers of others, and the fiery accusations of Satan. We can, however, choose to believe God and live in the truth that righteousness has been fulfilled within us through Christ. We must step into the light and confess our sin (1 John 1:9). We sin by nature, but we must believe the second part of 1 John 1:9 which says we are forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness. Recovery from sin takes place the moment we decide to believe God and agree with His truth, then we stand in grace. Concerning our inheritance in Christ, if we are saved, nothing can ever change, even when we fail and sin. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Our self-image becomes rooted in the character of Jesus Christ. His image becomes our image as we reflect His nature. "Now the Lord

is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty—emancipation from bondage, freedom. And all of us, as with an unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in every increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

Our Families Are Transformed

The Word changes as we hear it. It never returns void (Isaiah 55:11). We become particular members in the Body of Christ, and our self-image is changed. Then, God begins to work in the lives of those closest to us. Our families are touched by the stabilizing influence of the Word of God as it becomes the norm and standard around which family life revolves. The value of godly families is immeasurable. They are the salt of the earth, the preservers of Christ’s life in the world. God becomes very beautiful for our situations. Our children have the opportunity of being influenced by the pastor-teacher, Christian school, and the youth ministry. Truly, one individual’s obedience to live by every Word of God

will make a profound difference in the lives of others. “So by one Man’s obedience the many will be constituted righteous—made acceptable to God, brought unto right standing with Him” (Romans 5:19b).

Our World is Turned Upside Down

“...They dragged Jason and some of the brethren before the city authorities, crying, these men who have turned the world upside down have come here also” (Acts 17:6).

One of the greatest privileges Christians can experience is to be a part of a ministry which is affecting the entire world. Our prayers and support play a vital role in sending out laborers to the mission field. If we cannot go to the mission field, we can become an active part of sending those who are able to go. It all begins when we decide to live by every word of God. The Word affects our frame of reference. Then, our cup (or capacity for life) overflows into our self-image, family, close friends, and into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world.

Again, this happens when the love of Jesus Christ is shed abroad in our hearts and His life overflows to others. This is a direct result of faithfully and consistently hearing the Word of God

in a local assembly. This is why Proverbs 23:7a says, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” When we orient our thoughts to His thoughts, we are set free from our natural, limited frame of reference.

Temporal and Eternal Rewards

“But, on the contrary, as the Scripture says, What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and has not entered into the heart of man, [all that,] God has prepared—made and keeps ready—for those who love Him [who hold Him in affectionate reverence, promptly obeying Him and gratefully recognizing the benefits He has bestowed]” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

“And [then] when the Chief Shepherd is revealed you will win the conqueror’s crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:4).

“He who receives and welcomes and accepts you, receives and welcomes and accepts Me; and he who receives and welcomes and accepts Me, receives and welcomes and accepts Him Who sent Me” (Matthew 10:41).

The rewards God has given us in this life are truly more than we could ever ask or think.

“And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or par-

ents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke 18:29-30).

Believers who are overcomers will receive crowns of glory that never fade away. Other crowns will also be given to those who have endured trials and magnified Christ amidst great difficulties.

Every reward will come by living by *every* word of God.

CONCLUSION

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).

We will receive every blessing that those in the front line of the mission field will receive, if we are one with them and faithful to support them with all of our heart.

When we are part of a local assembly that is obedient to the heavenly vision of Acts 26:19, the fruit is endless. We will not know, until we get to heaven, the value of being found faithful to our local church. Finally, remember the strategies of the devil and combat them with a vow to continually draw near to God and His people during the times ahead. God will provide His abounding grace to help us each time we are in need. It is our prayer that the following words of our Lord Jesus Christ will dwell richly in your heart as you choose to follow the Lord’s example:

“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4, KJV).