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OUR FINEST HOUR

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

We have had many inquiries about whether there will be a "Moving Further with the Lord" in 2025. I've felt in my spirit that the Lord had something else planned.

The 2025 school will be on, but a little different and it is called:
"Moving Further with the Lord - Lion Like Warriors".

Information about this school is on our web site, please note the change in the web address:
www.TheAcademy.au

Stay strong and trust in the Lord.

Mark Johnson

September 2024



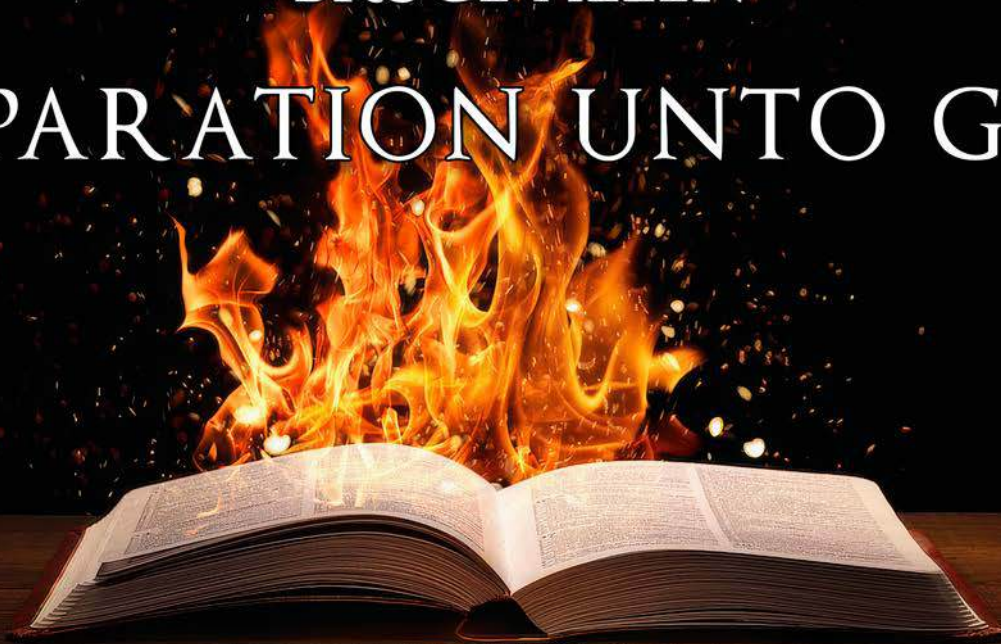
A Living Word Academy of Light
Publication

PO Box 1123
Maleny QLD 4552
Australia

www.TheAcademy.au

BRUCE ALLEN

SEPARATION UNTO GOD



There is a fire that is increasing –
the alarm is sounding, and the cry is going forth!

There is a fire that is increasing. Already it's flames are seen burning on the horizons of many nations. There is a fire that is increasing – the alarm is sounding, and the cry is going forth! There is something different about this fire – it is unlike any fire ever encountered before. Nothing in the worlds firefighting arsenal will be able to quench nor stop this blaze!

No fire department can stop it! No amount of water or chemical solution will be able to put this fire out. It is an all-consuming fire! Nothing can or will stand in its way. Its flames bring men to their knees in terror.

It is the Fire of God come to bring judgment and great awakening! Judgement to those who refuse to heed His voice and turn from their wicked self-serving ways. Revival and awakening to those who, with sincere hearts, will turn to the Lord with all that is within them, forsaking the world and all that it has to offer.

It is a purifying fire, testing, cleansing and shaping the hearts, lives and character of those that are called to be the Bride of Christ!

Cryptic words? Perhaps, and yet we are seeing the judgment of the Lord already at work within the Church. Many Churches and para-church organizations are being evaluated by the Spirit of the Lord, humbled and exposed.

Confusion abounds in much of the Body of Christ with men and women accepting another gospel that isn't the Gospel at all. There is a mixed gospel and doctrines of demons that have infiltrated the Ecclesia. Confusion abounds with the mixed gospel message being taught from pulpits bringing a dulling of the senses to the masses.

Divorce and carnality abound in most churches today, with a pampering of the flesh the main theology of many



of our shepherds. These things are but one of the signposts in the ever-increasing prophetic picture of the end of the age.

And yet for all that, the Lord is on the scene working in the midst of a remnant company of believers. He is bringing them to a place of maturity in Him that has not been seen since the 1st century.

Is it any wonder that the enemy of our souls would be trying everything in his arsenal to thwart what Holy Spirit is doing within the ecclesia? Knowing that his time is short Satan is on the rampage. Suicide, murder, abortion, wars, disease, drugs, divorce, gender confusion, anger, self-centeredness, pornography to name but a few of his schemes, are all on the increase. He is determined to destroy as many as he can before the return of Jesus the Christ.

This is not a time to despair, but instead to dig in, to entrench ourselves in the Word of God and the Love of our heavenly Father. At the appointed time, the "Captain of the Host" will give us our marching orders and we will move forward to defeat the enemies we are facing.

Until that moment we are being groomed and trained to become transformed into the image and character of Christ!

The Spirit of the Lord is coming back for a Bride without spot and without blemish. The perfecting or maturing of our faith is being accomplished in us as we acknowledge and submit to the correction and admonition of the Lord. We will be a holy people! We must be!

We as a people have been in a season of correction and chastening as the

Lord exposes and brings correction to the Body. We have an imperative from the throne; we are to come out from among the world and be as separate and holy as He is Holy. We have been continuously faced with choices to follow and obey Him or continue to follow our own reasoning and the world system. We are in the world, but we are not of this world! BE SEPARATE!

How do we become a people that is separate and holy you ask? What steps or measures are required to develop in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ?

The answer to these questions is as simple as it is profound; Jesus Christ, our Sacrificial Lamb, came to restore us to relationship with the Father. Our focus, now more than ever, must be on abiding in Him. We must come to know Him as never before. This last day church is only going to overcome through that abiding relationship.

Many today are sensing the call of the Spirit to a deeper relationship with the Lord. Our hearts yearn and cry out for intimacy, little realizing that true communion with the Lord is achieved only through diligence and determination. It is one thing for me to say that I want to know Him, it is quite another to walk out that desire in a practical way.

As the Spirit of the Lord woos us, we must of necessity respond in some manner. How then should we respond to the calling of the Spirit of the Lord as He continues to call to us? The answer is found in a familiar parable of Christ in Matthew 13.

Here we find an example of a man finding a pearl of great price. Pearls were considered by ancient societies to be among the most precious of



gems and were highly esteemed as ornaments.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

Matthew 13:45-46

The greatest treasure one will ever obtain in this life is an abiding relationship with our Heavenly Father. It is only as we come to understand that relationship with Him is the most precious thing this life has to offer will we be on our way to becoming acquainted with the Lord.

I am not just talking about salvation. Salvation is something Jesus purchased for us on the cross two thousand years ago. No, what I am talking about is subsequent to salvation – a growing intimate relationship with the Lord of Glory.

Those who heed the call of the Spirit in this must be willing to lay down everything that they hold dear for the sake of knowing Him. This relationship we are being called to is far removed from what most of us have experienced before and it will become the most exciting and transforming life we could ever have imagined!

To have this level of intimacy with the Creator of the universe, to walk with Him and talk with Him daily; to know His heart and to have His perspective; to dwell with Him in the most Holy of Holies – this is the call of the Spirit today. This is what awaits those who will choose to know Him.

But friends, we must make a choice today. The Lord once said to me, “if you’ll make the choice, I’ll make the change.” He will make the change!

Many of God's people are sensing that 'something' is about to happen, something is shifting. Everywhere we have traveled this year (2024) we have heard countless believers all having the same sense of 'something coming.' We do not have time to continue on as usual. With the wars and rumor of wars staring us in the face we need to make a choice to align ourselves with the will and purposes of the Lord for our lives and our families.

As the scripture states,

“choose this day whom you will serve”,

Joshua 24:15

Each one of us only has this day. We are not promised tomorrow. We cannot continue to push off to a later time what we know to do today. I cannot stress this enough – time is short! Our opportunity is fast slipping away – Choose Life! Choose intimacy with the Lord! That is the only place of safety in this hour!

I leave you with a personalized version of Psalm 91 based on the Passion Translation. Let this become your reality as it has mine.

1 Because I sit enthroned under the shadow of Shaddai, I am hidden in the strength of God Most High.

2 He's the hope that holds me and the Stronghold to shelter me, the only God for me, and my great confidence.

3 He will rescue me from every hidden trap of the enemy, and he will protect me from false accusation and any deadly curse.

4 His massive arms are wrapped around me, protecting me. I can run



under his covering of majesty and hide. His arms of faithfulness are a shield keeping me from harm.

5 I will never worry about an attack of demonic forces at night nor have to fear a spirit of darkness coming against me.

6 I don't fear a thing! Whether by night or by day, demonic danger will not trouble me, nor will the powers of evil launched against me.

7 Even in a time of disaster, with thousands and thousands being killed, I will remain unscathed and unharmed.

8 I will be a spectator as the wicked perish in judgment, for they will be paid back for what they have done!

9-10 When I live my life within the shadow of God Most High, my secret hiding place, I will always be shielded from harm. How then could evil prevail against me or disease infect me?

11 God sends angels with special orders to protect me wherever I go, defending me from all harm.

12 If I walk into a trap, they'll be there for me and keep me from stumbling.

13 I'll even walk unharmed among the fiercest powers of darkness, trampling every one of them beneath my feet!

14 For here is what the Lord has spoken to me: "Because you have delighted in me as my great lover, I will greatly protect you. I will set you in a high place, safe and secure before my face.

15 I will answer your cry for help every time you pray, and you will find and feel my presence even in your time of pressure and trouble. I will be your glorious hero and give you a feast.

16 You will be satisfied with a full life and with all that I do for you. For you will enjoy the fullness of My salvation.

Bruce Allen
Still Waters International Ministries

PO Box 1001
Chewelah WA 99109
United States

StillWatersInternationalMinistries.org



Walk into Eternity

JOSE ROCO

God is trying to reveal to mankind that the end times are approaching and that the whole earth will be shaken

There are eternal secrets in heaven which men are striving to learn but this authority has not been given to man because man has not come to the understanding how God wants man to use it.

What the enemy is doing right now is teaching mankind all sorts of unrighteousness on earth.

Why? To lead mankind away from eternal life with God.

God is trying to reveal to mankind that the end times are approaching and that the whole earth will be shaken.

The Coming of the Son of Man

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25 the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

*Mark 13:24-27 (NKJV)
(Matthew 24:29-31; Luke 21:25-28)*

Part of our call is to also prepare the saints for eternity. That in a blink of an eye, we will experience incorruption or we are in the process to experience immortality.

This may sound beyond our understanding to believe because everyday we are confronted with aging and physical ailments.

As a matter of fact, most of us are taking pharmaceutical medications or vitamin supplements to combat our deficient body functions. This is primarily because of the deteriorating environment conditions.

We need :

- 1 Pure air to breathe (no pollution)
- 2 Pure water to drink (no added enhancing chemicals)
- 3 Uncontaminated food to eat (not processed food & no preservative or chemicals).

With these conditions to survive, imagine what can go through our mind if I tell you that we are at the door to enter eternal life.

Eternal life to those who by patient

continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;
Romans 2:7 (NKJV)

Right there is the big question :
Are we seeking for immortality?

If your answer is YES, Then keep reading. If your answer is No, might as well read on to find out something new.

Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

2 Timothy 1:9-12 (NKJV)

That statement from Paul the apostle, draws the line of separation.

Those who want to experience immortality now or go with the flow with the rest not to.

Remember we should never confuse the will of the majority with the will of God.

By Faith We Understand

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Hebrews 11:1-3 (NKJV)

Is there a desire in our faith to experience immortality.

This is part of our salvation: not to experience death.

The more we have the Lord in us, His word and His glory, the more of His Light transformes us into incorruptible beings.

Here are 5 steps to consider in order to attain it now rather than later if we are able to engage our faith to believe we can receive immortality now.Â

1 Please God in all your ways and not please self.

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11:5-6 (NKJV)

What does that mean?

How much of Disobedience to Gods will, or to God's words, or to God's way are in us?

By answering this question we begin to know or judge in a scale of 1-10 how we have lived not pleasing God.

Every day we need to ask the HS how can we please God.Â

Jesus in His obedience to Gods will had to go through some rough inconveniences and sufferings to please God.

who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

Hebrews 5:7-9 (NKJV)

Jesus in His endeavour to please God the Father, He learned obedience through Godly fear.

Which brings us to the second step to consider.

2 Move with Godly Fear.

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is



according to faith.

Hebrews 11:7 (NKJV)

What does that mean?

It means that whatever God has called us for, we do it with a Godly fear or reverence.

This way we watch what we say and watch how we accomplish the things God has called us to do.

What are we declaring in our lives today? Is it death or life?

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV)

Which brings us to the third step

3 Know and believe that nothing is too difficult for God to do.

Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?

Jeremiah 32:27 (NKJV)

~Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

Jeremiah 33:3 (NKJV)

Whether we are going through a dangerous situation or not, know that nothing is too hard for God to do, especially when we cry out to Him in prayer with a sincere heart.

Can we actually keep these two scriptures in mind when we do things and believe?

Which brings us to the fourth step

4 Keep your hearts pure and sincere at all times in thoughts and actions.

Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

Matthew 5:8 (NKJV)

There is nothing impure in God's domain. Only incorruption or immorality can exist in heaven.

However, The earth is filled with corruption.

Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and

labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Romans 8:21-23 (NKJV)

In the current society that we live right now keeping a pure heart in words & deeds is a challenge indeed.

We need to be constantly vigilant in our thinking and doing.

For some it is easy but for the majority it's a challenge.

It's a way of life but we all need to start at some point.

Why don't we commit ourselves to live a pure life according to the word of God?

Which brings us to the fifth step

5 Put On

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Romans 13:12-14 (NKJV)

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.

1 Corinthians 15:53-54 (NKJV)

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Galatians 3:27 (NKJV)

and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:24 (NKJV)

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Ephesians 6:11 (NKJV)



Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints"

Ephesians 6:14-18 (NKJV)

and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Colossians 3:10 (NKJV)

Character of the New Man

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Colossians 3:12-15 (NKJV)

Here are enough scriptures showing us the importance of putting on the

things of the spirit in the course of our life time here on earth.

Let us make another commitment to Keep on doing it.

Conclusion:

There is so much more that God wants us to consider at this point of time.

There is a lot of preparation and changing on our part.

Consider seriously, what is coming to the earth when Jesus Christ reigns during the Millennium.

For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

Habakkuk 2:14 (NKJV)

The earth that we lived in now, cannot remain the same. Whole of creation is waiting for the sons & daughters to be revealed.

because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

Romans 8:21-22 (NKJV)

I hope this message will bring Godly fruits into all our lives.

God Bless you all Ps Jose

Jose Roco
Mahanaim Life Ministries
Narellan, NSW
Australia

mahanaimlm@gmail.com
www.mahanaimlm.com



BEING PREPEARED

NEVILLE JOHNSON

Isaiah prophesied about these days in which we live.
Both righteousness and evil are maturing.

As we ponder the turbulent events of today's world, we cannot help but wonder what our response should be, what lessons we need to learn. We know that we are heading into turbulent times, times of great darkness:

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

Isaiah 60:1-2

Isaiah prophesied about these days in which we live. Both righteousness and evil are maturing. Darkness will cover the earth at the same time as the glory of the Lord will be seen upon His people, His Church.

The consequences of generations of sowing good and evil are beginning to return upon this generation like no other. All the pigeons are coming home to roost in our day.

The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

Proverbs 11:18

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Galatians 6:7

As the power of sowing and reaping begins to unfold in this generation, the world is becoming both a wonderful and fearful place to live in. The book *Tale of Two Cities* (1859) by Charles Dickens opens with the phrase: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times," a fitting description of the times in which we live.

Isaiah said that when this gross darkness covers the earth, the Lord will arise in power and glory and a harvest of souls will be reaped like never before in the history of the Church:

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

Isaiah 60:3-4

The prophet Amos said:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt

Amos 9:13

We are living in the most fearful and wonderful days which present the Church with the greatest challenge in its checkered history.

The judgments of God are always redemptive

With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

Isaiah 26:9

The coming harvest will be so great, that it will compel a complete renovation of the Church as we know it. Many traditions which the Church has been burdened with will evaporate as new wineskins are needed to embrace a new day.

Lessons need to be learned from the recent disaster in New Orleans .

Firstly: The US government was not adequately prepared for it.

The Church is not prepared for what is coming. As judgments begin to unfold across the earth in the days ahead, we need to be prepared to take advantage of these times, turning them into redemptive opportunities.

Secondly: A spirit of confusion caused

delays in responding to the situation. This resulted in the loss of many lives. There was no well-thought-out plan and no clear chain of command in place.

The Church has to know what to do and how to do it and have the resources to respond to situations like this. Christian emergency response teams need to be trained and have the resources available to them for the opportunities these disasters give to us. Disasters will increase across the earth; God has clearly warned us in His word and through true prophetic voices that these judgments will increase in both ferocity and frequency.

This is the time for those truly called to the Joseph ministry to begin to rise and prepare for what is coming.

Never before has it been so important for us as individuals to be able to hear the voice of the Lord. Your survival in the days that lie ahead depends on it.

Christians died in the 9/11 disaster; Christians died in New Orleans. It is of utmost importance that you can hear the voice of the Lord in your heart and learn to respond to it.

God told Abraham ahead of time that He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorra, and Abraham was able to get Lot and his family out before it happened through his intercession.

God told Noah to build an Ark. If he had not heard God or had not obeyed, he would have died.

YOU MUST LEARN TO HEAR THE VOICE OF THE LORD IN YOUR HEART FOR YOURSELF.

Neville Johnson
Living Word Academy of Light
PO Box 1123
Maleny 4552 QLD
Australia

www.TheAcademy.au



This article is taken from the book:
Secrets of the Kingdom Volume 2
by Neville Johnson



BOBBY CONNER

Honey from the Rock

There is no more vital sustenance
than the Presence of our Lord.

It is time for us to Learn to Drink His Honey!

The Spirit of God is teaching us how to drink honey from the Rock—how to drink in the Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ!

This truth is revealed in Deuteronomy 32:10-13 (AMP):

“He found him in a desert land, in the howling void of the wilderness; He kept circling around him, He scanned him penetratingly, He kept him as the pupil of His eye. As an eagle that stirs up her nest, that flutters over her young, He spread abroad His wings and He took them, He bore them on His pinions. So the Lord alone led him; there was no foreign god with Him. He made Israel ride on the high places of the earth, and he ate the increase of the field; and He made him suck honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock...”

Deuteronomy 32:10-13 (AMP)

Let's consider this last line: “He made

him suck honey out of the rock....” The word suck, the Hebrew *yanaq*, refers to the sucking of a baby when it is nursing. When God “made him suck honey out of the rock,” Scripture is describing the action of making a baby nurse. What is this child drinking? The child of God is drinking in the honey of His Presence!

What a glorious God we serve! El Shaddai, named The Many Breasted One, invites us to nurse. There is no more vital sustenance than the Presence of our Lord. There is no more glorious experience than this intimate exchange. And there is no more urgent need than for us to learn how to drink in the manifest glory of God! “Oh taste and see the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8).

How do we drink of His Presence? Just as babies must learn how to suck a breast—a survival instinct that may be awkward at first—we, too must learn how to suck the honey of our Rock, Christ Jesus.

We begin the flow of honey by simply praising the Lord with childlike adoration and trust. Adore Christ for who He is. Thank Him for what He has done. Acknowledge His grace poured out at Calvary. Rejoice in His glory at the Resurrection. Whatever is on your heart to offer to the Lord, speak it out loud to Him. Express your appreciation, gratitude, awe, wonder. Praise is vital for initiating that glorious flow of His Presence.

Don't fret about whether or not you can "suck" His honey! The Spirit of God will Himself teach each one of us how to drink from the Rock, the Person of Christ. And not only will He teach us how to begin to suck: He will also teach us how to continue to drink, moment by moment. In so doing, we will learn how to abide in God's holy Presence, through good times and bad, in the midst of profound blessings and when difficult news arrives at our doorstep.

Beloved, to the extent that we learn to drink the honey of the Lord, we will experience His manifest Presence—and in His Presence, fullness of joy abides!

"You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

Psalm 16:11

Don't misunderstand this fearsome truth: the Lord promises that He will "never leave" us.

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'"

Hebrews 13:5

His Presence is always with us because the Kingdom of God is within us.

"Nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

Luke 17:21

We walk by faith, knowing this truth; however, we can also experience the Lord's manifest Presence the more we enter into praise and drink of His glory. God's promises will never fail! God will never forsake His people! He will provide and protect us! Christ Jesus is our High-tower—and He is our Rock.

Our Shelter from Adversity

The Hebrew word *cela`*, translated rock, refers to a crag or a cliff—a place under which we may find safety, shelter and security. This type of rock protects, it does not crush. This rock covers and shields. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew root of this word actually means lofty. Hidden within the word *cela`* is the lofty root: hidden within this shelter of the rock is the "high tower" of Christ. He is the lowly crag and the lofty haven; He is the lowly Lamb and the Majesty on high.

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior—from violent people you save me."

2 Samuel 22:2-3

What lesson is the Lord revealing here? Find your refuge in Christ, no matter how bitter your trial! Let your fiery ordeals drive you ever closer to Jesus as you suck the honey from His Rock—to sustain, nourish and refresh you in the desert places. The adversity in your life can make you bitter, filled with doubt, fear and unbelief, or it can serve to drive you ever nearer to the bosom of the Lord, to dwell under His craggy cliff of protection, safety and love.

Beloved, choose life. Choose to suck



honey from the Rock!

Ponder this truth deeply in your spirit: the unspeakable joy of His manifest Presence is ours to experience even in the most trying situations. When the desert is scorching and hope seems to be lost, we can drink the honey of His love. When the winds of change blow us about and we feel we can no longer stand on our own, we can rest in Christ, reclining under His cliff.

Yield to God and drink. Believe His word and suck. As we learn to rest in His promises and release our fear, doubt and unbelief, He will turn every single tragedy into triumph.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Romans 8:28

This is rock-solid truth.

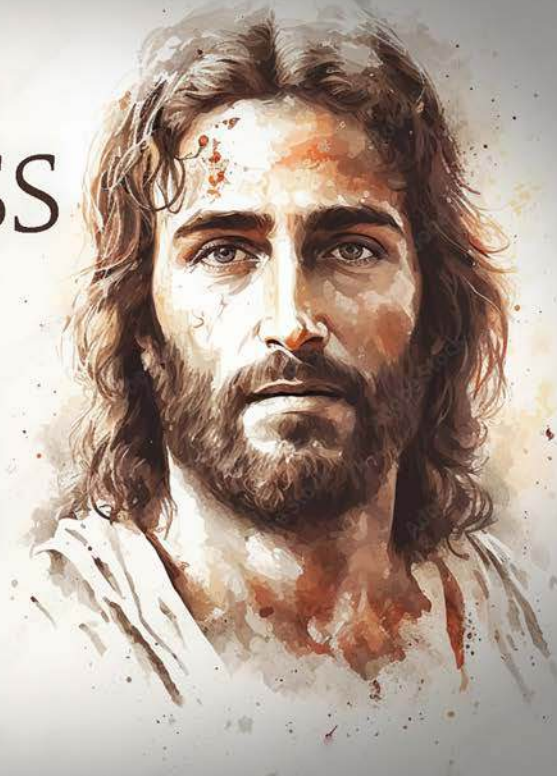


Bobby Conner
Eagles View Ministries
P.O Box 933
Bullard, TX 75757
903-894-6481
manager@bobbyconner.org
www.bobbyconner.org



CHRIST-LIKENESS OR CARNALITY?

JOE SWEET



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we are perfect and can bridle our whole body

Our words reveal our true spiritual condition.

"If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless."

James 1:26

"For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body."

James 3:2

This is an incredible statement. If we do not stumble in our words, we are perfect and can bridle our whole body. If we do not bridle our tongue, our religion is useless.

Ways That We Sin With Our Words

We must earnestly and swiftly put away all unrighteous words if we are to walk in the fullness of God's grace. Following are some of the ways that we sin with our words.

1) Repeating things

"He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends." **Proverbs 17:9**

God hates when we sow discord among the brethren (**Proverbs 6:14**). One of the primary ways we do this is by repeating things that are no one's business. It is not our business. It is not the other person's business. It is wrong. It only fosters gossip and strife.

Too often we hear something about someone else, or another ministry, and repeat it. We repeat things that are not verified. We pass on the "dirt" as if it was true. This is harmful. It is not the love of God.

"A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter."

Proverbs 11:13

"He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with



his lips.”

Proverbs 20:19

Years ago our friend, Bobby Conner, read in a book about a man of God who ministered with signs and wonders in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. The book said that this particular man of God died from alcohol abuse. Bobby thought that what the book said was true, so he repeated the information in one of his teaching sessions. Afterwards, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Bobby in his room and rebuked him saying, “You just lied about My servant. He was a righteous man and was murdered. You will find out when you get to Heaven.” Needless to say, Bobby publicly repented for repeating what was not true about that man of God.

2) Criticism

A fault-finding spirit is an offense to God. Fault-finding is the opposite of what we are supposed to be doing. When we are abounding in love, we look for and affirm what is excellent in others.

“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

Philippians 1:9-11

Because of our pride, insecurities, and/or failure to walk in love, we criticize others. We do this thinking, consciously or subconsciously, that somehow this makes us feel better about ourselves. It does not make us better. It makes us worse. Criticizing others keeps us from abiding in Christ. It grieves the Lord and disconnects us from the life flow of the Holy Spirit.

Criticism and fault-finding block our prayers from being answered.

“Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’”

“If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness”

Isaiah 58:9

When we are tempted to criticize, we should ask the Lord to show us how He loves and sees others. Ask the Lord to show us what is excellent in the other person. If we think we see a fault, that is when, in the love of God, we should pray for the other person or ministry.

To criticize another is to place ourselves above them and look down on them. When we exalt ourselves by criticizing others, we position ourselves to be resisted by God.

“God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.”

James 4:6b

3) Passing judgment

When we draw a negative conclusion about someone else's heart or motives, as if we know them (and of course we treat them accordingly) we are not loving them; we are passing judgment. When we judge another, we put ourselves above them. When we walk in this kind of pride, God resists us. By judging others, we bring judgment upon ourselves.

“For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”

Matthew 7:2

Rather than passing judgment on



others, we should judge ourselves.

"For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged."

1 Corinthians 11:31

"Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Matthew 7:5

The late, great gospel minister, T. L. Osborn, was used by God to shake nations with the power of God for more than 50 years in over 80 nations. Since the 1940s, in every nation he went to, the lame walked, the deaf heard, the blind saw and the broken-hearted were healed. Entire cities and regions were rocked by the love and power of God as multitudes turned to Christ.

I have listened to many hours of his recorded messages. Once my younger brother and I met him and were able to spend some time alone with him. Being with him, I was struck by observing that T. L. Osborn seemed to be the most loving and non-judgmental person I had ever met. He also walked in more of God's power than anyone I had ever met.

Back in the 1980s, I heard T. L. being interviewed on a Christian television program. The interviewer, who was a somewhat feisty man, asked T. L. a leading question: "Wouldn't you say, brother Osborn, that the reason you see so many healings and miracles in your overseas meetings, and we see so few healings and miracles here in the USA, is because the Christians here are lukewarm and generally prayerless?"

I thought to myself, "That's an easy question to answer. Of course, most of the church in the USA is lukewarm

and prayerless." I'll never forget T. L.'s response. With a broad smile, full of love and devoid of any judgmental attitude, he said, "You know, I think everyone is trying their best."

At the time, I was thunderstruck. That was how he really saw people. He believed the best about others. I remembered being with T.L. and seeing the love of God in him. His words were full of grace and without harm. I realized walking in non-judgmental love was one of the primary reasons T. L. Osborn walked in so much of God's authority and power.

4) Giving Our Opinion

It is not always a sin to give our opinion, but it is one of the ways that we most often sin with our words. Do we really need to chime in and give our opinion? Most of the time, the answer is "no." Often, as soon as we start to give our opinion, we begin sinning with ungodly criticisms and/or judgments. It is wisdom to realize that the less we say, the less we sin.

"In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise."

Proverbs 10:19

Jesus didn't speak on His own initiative. He spoke as He heard from the Father. We are to follow His example.

"For I have not spoken on My own; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak."

John 12:49

Often when we speak on our own, our motive is to glorify ourselves, not the Lord. It is better to walk humbly and not always give our opinion.

"He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory



of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.”

John 7:18

5) Debate

Debate is another way that we get ourselves out of the Spirit and into the flesh.

“But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.”

Titus 3:9

When I was in India in 2006, I was blessed to meet and fellowship with the late D.G.S. Dhinakaran. He was a mighty man of God who was full of the Holy Spirit and power. The average attendance at his outdoor Gospel campaigns was 300,000 to 500,000 people. Great healings, miracles, signs, and wonders occurred at all of his meetings.

I once heard him say that he had resolved to never debate or dispute with anyone, but rather to abide in the peace of God. He said, “If someone comes to me and tells me that the donkey that Jesus rode on had three legs, I will just smile, nod my head, and agree. I am not going to argue.” This is wisdom. There are conversations that we do not need to get involved in. We don’t need to give our opinion. It is better to be quiet, to stay in the Spirit, and to walk in the peace of God.

“Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

James 3:18

6) Gossip

Gossip is when two or more people are talking (not in a positive way) about a person or ministry who is not there and cannot defend themselves. It is when the brethren are together in unity that God commands the blessing (**Psalm**

133). Gossip destroys the unity of the Spirit and gives demons access to oppress and bind the church. Professing Christians who gossip may possibly be the number one tool that satan uses to keep the body of Christ in a place of disunity and weakness.

“An ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a burning fire.”

Proverbs 16:27

“He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a gossip.”

Proverbs 20:19 NASB

Do not gossip. If we “sow” gossip, we will certainly reap corruption. Don’t associate with a gossip. If we do, we will be partakers of their sins and reap what they sow.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”

Galatians 6:7-8

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

Matthew 12:36

7) Slander

Slander is the malicious maligning of a brother or sister. Slander can be done by only sharing partial truths and with knowingly false statements. It is a grievous offense and brings God’s judgment.

“Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, him I will not endure.”

Psalm 101:5



There is a price to pay for malicious gossip. The one who slanders will be destroyed. Don't do it. The one who listens to a slanderer is just as wrong and defiled as the one slandering.

"An evildoer gives heed to false lips; A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful tongue." **Proverbs 17:4**

"The wicked is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, but the righteous will come through trouble."
Proverbs 12:13

"Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it."

James 4:11 NIV

8) Complaining

Complaining is not a little sin. It reveals the ingratitude and self-centeredness in our hearts. Because of complaining, the Israelites wandered aimlessly for years and eventually died in the wilderness. Complaining will keep us from inheriting the promises of God.

And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²⁷ "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. ²⁸ Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: ²⁹ The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. ³⁰ Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in."

Numbers 14:26-30

Verse 28 tells us that we will get what we complain about. The complaining of the Israelites resulted in their deaths in the wilderness. I wonder how many people waste away in the "wilderness" and never enter their "promised land" because of complaining?

A lifestyle of giving thanks to God brings us into His presence (**Psalm 100:4**). Complaining keeps us out.

"Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

Philippians 2:14-15

9) Lying

"Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds"

Colossians 3:9

There are many ways to lie. We can exaggerate or minimize. We can lie to avoid confrontation or lie to spare someone's feelings. We can conveniently forget. We can purposely leave out details to give our story a different meaning.

"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight."

Proverbs 12:22

God delights in integrity and honesty.

"He who would love life and see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. ¹¹ Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord



is against those who do evil.”

1 Peter 3:10b-12

If we want to “love life and see good days,” we must keep our lips from lying. The face of God is against those who speak evil or speak with deceit.

It has been said that “the liar’s punishment is that he cannot believe anyone else.” This is true. Those who practice lying eventually lose touch with reality as they are deceived by their own dishonesty.

The more we are dishonest, the more we become deceived.

“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

2 Timothy 3:13

The worst consequence of lying is that we lose fellowship with God, who is Light (**1 John 1:5**). We lose His favor. We walk in darkness and do not know where we are going. The very face of God is against the person who speaks lies. Who can ever succeed in anything if the face of God is against them?

“A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish.”

Proverbs 19:9

“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.”

Proverbs 18:7

When we lie, we are manifesting the character of the devil who is the father of lies.

“When he (the devil) speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

John 8:44b

“But the cowardly, unbelieving,

abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Revelation 21:8

10) Not Keeping Our Word

To not keep our word is a form of lying. The Lord taught us to keep our word when He said:

“But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.”

Matthew 5:37

If we say we are going to do something, then with everything in our power, we should keep our word. This is basic integrity where our actions line up with our words, and vice-versa.

If we have committed to be somewhere at a certain time, then to keep our word means that we do everything within our power to be on time. If not, we are breaking our word. Of course, there can be occasional legitimate excuses from unforeseen interruptions that make us late such as a flat tire or medical emergency. However, these are not the norm. When we are late because of being disorganized, a lack of diligence, having wrong priorities, or just not caring, this is wrong.

Not only do we hurt others by not keeping our word, but we also displease the Lord and hinder our spiritual growth.

“The integrity of the upright (doing what is morally right and keeping our word) will guide them, but the perversity (lack of integrity) of the unfaithful will destroy them.”

Proverbs 11:3

When we fail to keep our word, we



disqualify ourselves from living in the manifest presence of the Lord.

Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? ² He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; ³ He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach (get offended) against his friend; ⁴ In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change; ⁵ He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

Psalm 15:1-5

This Psalm tells us how to live if we want to “never be moved” from the manifest presence of God. When it comes to our words, we are to:

- a) speak the truth
- b) not backbite
- c) not take up a reproach (get offended)
- d) keep our word even if it is costly and painful to do so

My father, Rowland Sweet, was born in 1910. It seems like he was born in a time when integrity, hard work, and keeping your word were more highly valued by more people than they are today. When I was a boy, my father was a successful residential home builder, general contractor, land developer, and architect. He had about 300 employees and built about one thousand homes a year in the 1950s and early 1960s.

In the 1960s, an economic downturn occurred, similar to what happened in 2008, that adversely affected the residential home market. Long story

short, he ended up with about one million dollars in debt and was out of the building business. I didn't really understand what happened as a boy, I only knew that we went from private school to public school and moved to a smaller home.

Several years later, when I was about 15 years old, I asked my father about what happened. He said that home sales came to a screeching halt. He had been turning over homes in about 90 days. That meant the time from when construction was completed until a home was sold was about 3 months. When the market dropped, he was sitting on 400 homes for over two years that did not sell. It drained all his capital, and he ended up with about one million dollars in debt. (The value of one million dollars in the early 1960s is equal to about ten million dollars in 2024.)

He went on to say that it was a very difficult time for him. It took him eight years to pay back the one million dollars while still taking care of his family. I remember thinking how huge of a debt that was and asked my father, “Why didn't you file for bankruptcy? Then you wouldn't have had to pay all that money back for eight years.”

That was the wrong question to ask. He wasn't angry, but his eyes flashed with intensity. It was as if he was thinking, “How could you even ask such a question?” Swiftly and firmly placing his hand on the table, he looked me squarely in the eyes and said, “Because I gave my word!”

That's what Psalm 15:4b means when it says, “He who swears to his own hurt and does not change.” Verse 5b says that “He who does these things shall never be moved.”



A Confirming Word from the Lord

In January of 2022, I was in our church sanctuary in Lancaster, California recording two video messages for a conference in Australia. In the first message, I was teaching from Psalm 15. The Holy Spirit had emphasized to me the importance of the latter part of verse 4 which says “he who swears to his own hurt and does not change” will not be moved from the presence of the Lord. I highlighted the importance of keeping our word, even when it costs us. I stressed that we must keep our word if we want to be able to stand on His holy hill. I had just finished recording this first message and told the recording team that I was going to take a five-minute break in my office and then come out and do the second recording.

As I sat down in my office, I saw a missed video call from my daughter, Jessica, who lives in Texas with her husband and children. She had called while I was recording my message on Psalm 15. I called her back. After saying hello, and seeing me wearing my headset microphone, she asked, “Dad, why do you have your microphone on? What are you doing?”

“I just finished recording a message for Mark Johnson in Australia,” I told her.

“Did you preach on Psalm 15, verse 4?” she asked.

Shocked, I said, “Yes, I did. How did you know?”

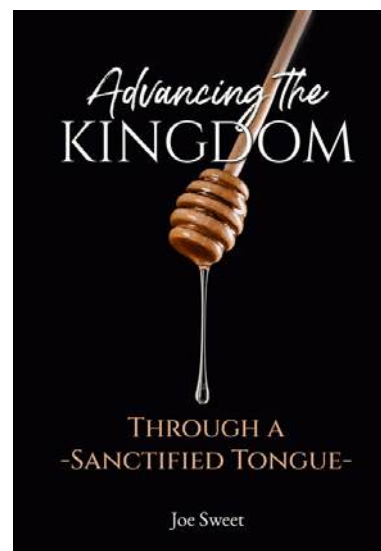
“That’s why I called,” she replied. “I was standing in my kitchen and heard the voice of the Lord say, ‘Psalm 15, verse 4. Call your dad and tell him that.’”

Wow! Needless to say, I got the message. That verse is important! If

we want to stand in—and not be moved away from—the presence of the Lord, we must resolve to keep our word even when it costs us or it hurts. Keeping our word is important to Him, so it must be important to us.

The above article is an excerpt from the book “Advancing the Kingdom Through a Sanctified Tongue” by Joe Sweet.

A copy of the book can be downloaded without cost, or a hard copy can be purchased (for just the cost to print and ship) at : www.ShekinahWorship.com



Joe Sweet
Shekinah Worship Center
42640 10th St.
West Lancaster, CA 93534
swc-office@verizon.net
661-940-8378

www.shekinahworship.com

