

CHAPTER D36

LETTERS ON CHRISTIAN LIVING

ADVICE TO A NEW CHRISTIAN

Harry:

If I could go back in time I'd want to take some of the wisdom I've accumulated over the years with me. So I'll pass some thoughts on to you in the hope that they might help you in your new walk with the Lord.

As a young Christian just getting started I didn't know anything doctrinally. I knew I *felt* better because I was "coming out of the closet" about my new relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. No, I hadn't been ashamed of my Catholicism, but I knew things were now different and better. In my excitement and zeal I wanted to help others – especially Catholics. And in my bright-eyed ignorance I made an assumption that at least a majority of Catholics were truly motivated by a love for the Lord and would therefore respond to some of the truths of the Bible in the same "Christian" way I had, because after all, didn't we all love the Lord? I wasn't prepared for the answer and it gutted me – it's "no."

I had no clue as to how massive this spiritual war is and how much darkness surrounds us. An early action of mine was to research the history of the Catholic Church and its doctrines. I combined that with the stuff I'd learned studying the Bible in an essay on why I left the Roman Catholic Church and mailed it to my family. Not only did they not read it, they spoke contemptuously of me for the first time in their lives. I was unaware of either fact until we later got together at a family reunion. During a free-flowing conversation in the living room I started to say, "Well, you're probably wondering what happened to Robin and me..." That was as far as I got. What happened next was so bad, so sudden, and so unexpected that I later went to my room and cried for the first time in years. I became the black sheep of the family and was shunned by all. I was unprepared for Christian warfare; I was a wide-eyed babe in diapers. But the Bible says God is a man of war, and He has since taught my fingers to fight and my hands to make war.

And now that you are a young Christian be very careful about doctrine, Harry. When you find yourself wanting to earnestly contend for the faith or witness to someone, you will be tempted to use the stuff your new church tells you to say, or to use the stuff you've read in my book. But until you know the Bible and the truth or error of what you've been told, you have no idea if we are right or not. Be very careful: Do not choose to accept or believe any person or doctrine merely because you like, trust, or agree with him or it. You should carefully prevent yourself from opening your ignorant mouth or from aligning yourself with any doctrine or position until you know from God's Book what you're doing. *Only in that way* are you following the Lord instead of men. Remember, until you know the entire Bible *you are ignorant*. You will need self-control to keep from going around spouting what you *think*. Christianity is full of annoying, opinionated, self-righteous people who take great delight in proving how stupid they are by opening their ignorant, carnal mouths.

I know you are looking forward to witnessing to people at your Catholic high school reunion. But remember, the only thing you really know for sure at this early stage is that your classmates – like you – should be in the Bible if they have any desire to serve the Lord. Be careful as a new babe in Christ; know your limitations and don't exceed them. Feed on the word and you will grow. I will never tire of emphasizing that. Be wide-eyed and openly delighted with the Bible, but do not exceed your limitations. Be openly interested in doctrine, but don't be dogmatic at this early stage of your Christian walk.

In order that your knowledge might grow rapidly it's a good idea to be issue oriented. There are many, many issues and doctrines that divide Christians. You have no idea which doctrines – if any of them – might be correct. Find out what is Scriptural by learning the Scriptures, not by having somebody tell you something is Scriptural.

Ask those who espouse certain doctrines to explain their position with chapter and verse. Surprise, surprise, Harry – most can't do it. Ask them why they were not afraid to open their ignorant mouths, tell them children should be seen and not heard, and suggest they remain silent until they have learned the Bible.

I am not suggesting that you be disrespectful to your preacher – or any other authority over you. Be very conscious of authority: If you join an organization, I don't care if it's a church or a garden club, you become a *member* of that *organism*. And as a member of that *body* it is your Christian duty to faithfully obey your head, the authorities in that organization. If you don't you are in rebellion against God, and your Biblical sense of duty shouldn't allow you to be that way. Be respectful of your preacher – even though you realize he is probably a carnal captive of Babylonian Reason. And be the best worker your employer has. If your employer *requires* you to join some organization it is your Christian duty to obediently join that organization and faithfully serve and obey it in any way it might *require*. But any organization you are not required to join will have to first glorify God in the name of Jesus Christ in order for you to even consider joining.

Most Christians do not know the Bible because they don't want to. All they want to know about Christianity is "the answers." They want a cheat-sheet, a shortcut, so they can know the answers without really getting to know the subject. That's why they are so quick to accept what their church tells them [or what they read in this or some other book] without first ensuring that it agrees with the entire Bible. But even if they are given the right answers it does them no good; we must get our beliefs from the Lord. That is why I always stress that you must sit at His feet and be His disciple. You must get to know the Shepherd's voice – not mine. By learning only canned denominational answers Christians expose themselves as tares – not wheat – because a man's relationship with the Bible is an exact picture of his relationship with Jesus Christ.

People don't need the right answers from you and me, Harry; they need to know to Whom they should go for those answers. Through the Bible and only through the Bible do we establish and develop a relationship with the Lord. And only in that way can we grow into the kind of confident walk with Him that He expects.

Do not try to "make room" in your day for Bible study. If you do that the events of the day will take over and you'll run out of time and – like the virgins who found themselves without oil for their lamps – will hope you'll have time for the Bible some other day. Because of that I have for decades made the Bible the first thing I do in the day. I didn't make it an option and try to fit it in; I just did it. For example, when circumstances required me to get up very early in the morning it didn't matter if I was at home or in a hotel; I set my alarm earlier than very early so I could have enough time to spend in the word before my day began. The word of God is my life.

A REPENTANT QUESTIONS SHIT

Andy:

I enjoyed your thoughtful letter; it is rare today for Christians to be as openly honest and humble as you. It takes strength and love for the Lord to be that way.

The discussions we had showed me that you've been backslidden for a number of years. But the truly rare thing is they also convinced *you* of that fact. Most Christians lack the strength to either face themselves or to repent. Almost none of them reacts the way you did. First, you went to your hotel room, threw yourself on the bed and cried David-like tears as you took it to the Lord in prayer. Second, when you got home you immediately had a heart-to-heart talk with your wife about instituting some Biblical changes in your lives. Third, you established a time of daily Bible reading with your small children as a first step towards training them up in the way of the Lord. Fourth, you overcame any Natural reactions of defensive resentment towards me and thanked me.

That type of behavior along with the Christian character it reveals affects me deeply – perhaps because it is so rare among Christians. The Lord is looking for men like you, Andy, whose actions are motivated by humility rather than pride. Thank you for your good example, for being an inspiration to me, and for reminding me of how I can be and should be when I backslide. You have helped me; we have helped each other; and that is what Christianity is all about.

Your question about the value of my chapter on “foul” language is a good one, especially since I knew when I wrote it that many Christians these days are offended by certain English words that the world has taught them are “socially unacceptable” and that their pastors have told them are sins. There are a number of reasons I deliberately decided to shock and offend Christians:

1) The Bible has taught me to be Christ-like. For example, Christ and His disciples knew it was considered sinful by their Christian brethren to eat with unwashed hands. But instead of having His disciples wash their hands in order to not offend the misguided brethren, and instead of quietly apologizing for offending church tradition, Christ dramatically and publicly unleashed the dogs of war, kicked some self-righteous, hypocritical ass, and had the incident recorded for eternity in His Book. Knowing Him as I do, I realize He knew all of that would happen long before He was born of a virgin. It was all planned for our edification.

He made such a big deal out of it because of the principles behind invented sins. Apply today's invented sins about certain English words to **Mt 15** to see what I mean. That's why Christ deliberately baited the Christians of His day, and that's why I deliberately bait Christians today by saying things (when I think the time and setting are appropriate) they find objectionable, such as Xmas and shit.

2) This topic has added value because it's a shocker when a Christian who knows the Bible and loves the Lord uses “the f word.” It's not always a rewarding experience for me because I am sometimes crucified by the very Pharisees I'm trying to help, but let me relate a time when it worked out well:

A young Christian, Harry, invited my wife and me to go eat at a restaurant with his wife and their two adult children. When the waiter came I was the last to order. I noticed everyone ordered iced tea or water to drink. I wondered if they all thought it was a sin to drink intoxicating beverages (except my wife, of course), if it was just a coincidence, or if they ordered iced tea just because they didn't know if it was OK to drink in my presence for some reason. I ordered a beer in order to teach an unspoken lesson, and we enjoyed a nice meal. Weeks later Harry told me they all usually have a drink at times like that. But when his family saw him uncharacteristically order iced tea, they realized he was being very careful in my presence so they followed his lead. When he saw me order a beer even though I didn't know what he and/or his church taught about booze, he realized it's OK for Christians to be themselves around other Christians because everything we do is supposed to be based on the Bible. And if that starts a doctrinal discussion, good – that's what we're here for.

3) “Foul” language is an easy topic. It's very basic, it's not complex, and it's not a big deal. And when Christians haven't even learned in church simple stuff like that, they might care enough to wonder what makes them think their church is qualified to teach bigger, more important, and more complex doctrines. And just maybe they'll wake up and start relying on the Bible for a change.

4) You are probably right: If some poor preacher said “shit” in church, everyone might get up and walk out. I don't want Satan's world and it's traditions to have that kind of power over the church anymore. I want Christians to cut the phony, self-righteous crap out of their lives and start letting God's word govern them. Here's a mature Christian reaction to a pastor who uses English words instead of foreign ones in the pulpit: “Wow! I can't believe he just said “fuck”! What a horrible sin! But wait, let me practice using some discernment for a change...hmm, the Bible doesn't say there's anything wrong with what he just said; it's just one of society's secular “morals.” It's OK for *pagans* to invent and live by rules like that, but if *we Christians* do it we'll make the word of God of none effect. He said fuck in a room full of Christians because he knew we were either already strong, and therefore had our shit together, or we needed to be that way. I'm going to thank him for jolting me into a more Christ-like way of thinking by deliberately risking ridicule at the hands of immature Christians who live in accordance with the world instead of the word.”

5) This subject is necessary because Christians are running around in sin by constantly cursing. I often hear ugly, hateful, and sinful curses such as, “I hope President Clinton chokes on his own cigar!” That's a real sin. Would I love the brethren if I let them go on living in sin without trying to get them to repent?

6) There are benefits to understanding doctrine correctly. For example, once Christians who believe in the false theory of eternal security find out what taking God's name in vain *really* is they'll learn that eternal security isn't Scriptural.

7) If Christians who say and/or think “wirty dords” every now and then actually believe those words are sinful, they are sinning when they use them. Those poor victims of false doctrine need to be rescued from the ditch and set free.

Look at another sin that illustrates one of the dangerous aspects of tradition – sexual intercourse in any position other than the “missionary position.” Today that old traditional “sin” is falling by the wayside. Why? Has your preacher been thundering the truth from the pulpit and telling people it's now OK to use any position you want because it's OK to enjoy sex? No, he hasn't. But *society* is changing its “moral values.” Christians, therefore, who first began quietly using other positions thought they were also quietly ignoring the sin they were committing. Over time Christians have accepted the philosophical tenet that man is the measure of all things. Therefore, whenever *they* choose a course of action today, they then ignore what the Bible says, they ignore what preachers say about enjoying sex and the missionary position, they ignore current views about “foul” language, and they ignore anything else that is or was supposed to be a sin if it suits them. Tradition truly does make the

word of God of none effect. I now have a better understanding of why Christ hated it so much that He went out of His way to combat Christians who believed in it.

My book could have been much longer because Christianity is so bad in so many ways. I have tried to keep it from being too intimidating in length by carefully choosing the topics I think will most efficiently help sincere believers like you grow and overcome the philosophy, traditions, and false doctrines the church has been accumulating since before the days of Augustine.

Len

WHY NO BIBLIOGRAPHY

Richard:

I've tried to be very clear and very direct in my book about all matters of faith and practice because I know of no other source for Christians to learn this material.

Why is this stuff not taught and not known? Because it requires much Bible study. Interest in the Bible is almost gone because most Christians do not believe the word of God exists. Therefore, religions thrive because they just preach denominational answers and give out a few verses that make those answers look plausible. The preachers don't know the Bible either because their Bible schools taught them the same way they now teach their pewsters: They were given the denominational answers necessary to pass the quizzes and were given a few verses to back them up. And now as pastors they are so busy trying to entertain everyone and come up with new sermons that they haven't got any more time to study the Bible than they did when they were ignorant Bible school students timidly accepting anything the denomination told them.

And how long do you think their pewsters would continue to employ them if the pastors said, "Brethren, today we're going to discuss marriage, masturbation, incest, and polygamy"? Even if people did study the Bible and learn the truth, they are so afraid of being different by appearing to violate "social mores" that they'd quickly change their minds about shouting God's truth from the rooftops. To be different in today's society is thought to be wrong. No one wants to be different.

Any desire to be doctrinally correct is cancelled out by the lack of desire to sit down and study the Bible. Everything always starts and ends with the Bible. There are no shortcuts, and knowing the Bible is a prerequisite to serving the Lord – not a supplement. The missing element in Christianity is the Bible, which means modern Christianity is baseless and impotent.

You asked why I don't have a bibliography in my book, and if I can supply you with one. The only bibliography that matters is the Bible, and I have included all the Scriptural references in my book. But the historical stuff I've not documented in a bibliography for several reasons. First, a bibliography will not impress proper Christians who know the *only* source of truth is the Bible. Second, bibliographies don't really impress anyone because, for all they know, the books I read were lousy; there may be other better books that contradict what I said. Third, I got this stuff in public libraries and bookstores over the years as part of my own Bible studies and Christian research. Therefore much of it was jotted down on notebook paper for my edification and stuck in various files. Most of my notes don't record the source because I had no intention of writing a book until many years later when I realized one was needed. I don't remember where I got it and am too lazy to try to find out. Fourth, because I didn't have to dig at all to find this stuff it can be easily verified by other sources in libraries and bookstores. This stuff is accurate, it's not a secret, and it's not some complex mystery that requires intelligence and diligence to uncover. Fifth, I wrote an essay on why I left the Roman Catholic Church with an impeccable bibliography with unimpeachable sources. That bibliography impressed and convinced no one because there is always a way to dodge the truth. Sixth, I'm here to glorify God and His Book, not me and mine. Seventh, I only went to the libraries to research this stuff because I learned it first in the Bible. God told me the truth, I only went to the library to see if history admitted it and, if so, to find out some of the details of how it happened. I was actually stunned when I found it's all openly recorded. And the fact that all of this historical stuff – such as how dramatically philosophy doctrinally changed Christianity – is widely and openly known showed me something about blindness. I am truly and humbly thankful to the Lord for opening my eyes and then allowing me to share some of what I've learned. *The Age of Reason* is not a "modern" book: It was conceived while I was shepherding my flocks in the wilderness, and it took seven years to write. The manuscript was written in longhand by firelight, was completed after a deadly ailment, and is a discerning, timeless, unbiased account of Biblical Christianity. It is neither leavened by Reason nor intimidated by the powerful condemnation of modern Enlightened Christianity. I believe God used my isolation in the wilderness in order to strip away the blinding influence of morality and religious tradition so He could teach me to think outside the pew. *The Age of Reason* is an honest, unpolished attempt to preach repentance by sharing the light God has given me via His Holy Scriptures. Perhaps it is fitting that a book so original not credit man in a bibliography for some of the trivial (and unreliable) historical information, and instead glorify God for the truth, authority, and sufficiency of His Authorized 1611 King James Bible.

Let me give you an illustration of how ineffective a bibliography is. It was my experience with the Tripoli Treaty and the official government book in which I found it that first showed me how little people care about bibliographies: (I don't need a bibliography for the material in the Tripoli Treaty because I have included a copy of the treaty in my book and written its source on the first page.) Years ago I read about the treaty's un- and antichristian nature in a footnote in a history of the world. I jotted down the name of the treaty and later went to a large Christian university to see if I could find it in their library. The head librarian, a woman about 60 or 65 years old, saw me looking rather lost, and came out of her office to offer her assistance. I thanked her, told her I was looking for an old treaty our founding fathers (no, I did not say "f-ing fathers") had made with the old nation of Tripoli, and admitted I didn't even know how to begin. She very politely took me first to the microfiche files, then to the card catalog, and then to the shelves where she pulled a big dusty old tome off the shelf, laid it on a table, and turned to the treaty. I thanked her and she went back into her office. I was shocked when I found the history book had been correct about the treaty. This was an undeniable truth of American history that wasn't well known. I wasn't reading a second-hand story about our f-ing fathers; I was reading their own writings. I innocently went into the librarian's office, thanked her again, and showed her Article Eleven. I was just one amazed American Christian pleasantly sharing some history with another American Christian. Wrong! She got offended with *me* for what our f-ing fathers had done! Did she care about or was she impressed with the fact that she not only had the Tripoli Treaty in front of her on her desk, but she also had the *very source book* (that she had herself found) instead of just its title in a bibliography? Did she say, "Wow! I'm shocked; this document suggests that Christianity may not be teaching us the correct and Christian view of our founding fathers and American history!"? Did she say, "Wow! This U.S. government book sure makes an impressive bibliography!"? No! She suddenly got all tight-lipped and prissy and practically kicked me out of her office. Out on the main floor a young pleasant female student who worked in the library politely helped me make a copy of the treaty. I jotted down on the copy the title of the book from which I'd copied it

and stuck it in my files with all the other stuff I was beginning to accumulate. And that's the story of how the closest thing to a bibliography in my book is something I quickly wrote on the cover page of my copy of the treaty right after I got my ass kicked by an elderly librarian! [Author's note: My old original copy of the Tripoli Treaty with my hen scratch on it was later replaced with a better copy Richard found on the Internet and sent to me.]

I do still have about 20 books on my shelf here at home that were used to write some of the historical stuff. If you'd like I can send you a list of them, or you may browse through them the next time you visit.

Len

XMAS

Harry:

I glanced at the Xmas info on the Internet you asked about. It is accurate, which is not surprising because the info is widely known and easily available. The only reason you and I didn't know it before we got saved is because we were never really interested in the truth of the Bible.

It's OK to use pagan words to describe pagan seasonal events such as "Easter" (**Ac 12:4**). It is therefore perfectly acceptable to use the word "Christmas." I often use "Xmas" not only because Christ told us to leave Him out of pagan celebrations (**Dt 12:30**), but because I delight in seeing if I can get a rise out of sanctimonious, tradition-bound, ignorant people who sometimes rebuke me for "leaving Christ out of Christmas." In that way they can't avoid a discussion about Xmas because they are the ones who made an issue of it!

Here's what I humbly advise you to do if I may be so bold, sir. Since it's so late in the year go ahead and put up a tree and do all the normal Xmas stuff you usually do (assuming you celebrate Xmas). You've got too many other things to worry about as a young Christian without having to start messing with details like Xmas. But because you've already seen things that suggest Xmas may in fact be an abomination to God, enjoy Xmas with your family with that in mind, and talk the situation over with the Lord in a mature, honest, "I'm not sure what I'm doing, I only want to please You, so please help me learn and grow" type of conversation. Be the same way with Jill. And if you normally send out a picture of you guys in front of your tree singing carols, stick one in the mail to me with a needling, humorous, comradely note like, "Wish you were here!" And do it knowing not just what I believe, but do it confidently in the knowledge that brother soldiers like us enjoy a bond in Christ that will allow me to understand and appreciate your humor because stuff like Xmas is as water off a duck's back to men of war. Rest assured, brother, I am not offended by any of this stuff; it honestly doesn't affect me.

Just continue studying the Bible. Concentrate on those issues that interest you at the moment. Eventually you should be knowledgeable about *all* issues in Christianity – even more so than you are knowledgeable about the various systems on the airplane. Once you've familiarized yourself with the entire Bible and have familiarized yourself with all issues and doctrines, including those in my book, you should read the entire Bible again. That way, being aware of and interested in the various issues and doctrines, you can see what supports or disproves them in the Bible. Only then can you claim to know what you're talking about when discussing Xmas, democracy, sex, marriage, salvation, mortality of the soul, tongues...and the list goes on to include everything in life.

Only then should you start to meaningfully externalize your Christianity. Until then you should concentrate on your growth and that of your family. Do not think you've got a lot of good milk to give others until you've matured and grown breasts yourself. Enjoy your childhood. Enjoy learning this stuff. Carefully cultivate your heart and mind, knowing you are studying for three reasons: First, to have a purely Biblical relationship with the Lord. Second, to know correct Bible doctrine so you can help other Christians. And third, to become qualified to someday rule and reign under Christ.

Len

IMMORTALITY OF UNREGENERATE SOULS

Andy:

Do I have any reflections now that we're back from the Middle East? Nothing earth shaking: The Vatican and the ruins of the Roman Empire are more grandly impressive than Israel. My love for the Bible made me want Israel to be somehow more awe inspiring – or even just attractive. I think I wanted Israel to be more like what we sometimes try to make a communion ceremony – kind of a mystical, meaningful, fulfilling experience that will somehow make us feel closer to or more in touch with God. But Israel, like a communion ceremony, is just a thing. Northern Israel and the area around the Sea of Galilee were pretty and came closest to meeting my hopes/expectations. But the southern parts (Jerusalem and Bethlehem) were rocky, dusty, crowded, commercialized, and disappointing.

In a way I felt like a husband or parent whose loved one gets older or ill and becomes less attractive: Your love produces a protective tenderness that makes you more attentive. I found myself telling the Lord I still loved Him and His Book even if I was disappointed with His homeland. And that's a healthy attitude because when I stand or sprawl before the Lord for the first time, it'll help me still want to serve Him fully even if I don't particularly like the way He looks, acts, and speaks. That's the way I am with the Bible; it doesn't matter if I like what it says or not: I shall humbly submit to it.

The Roman Catholic Church has a shrine or church everywhere something happened – whether it happened there or not. For example, at the site of the Lord's sermon on the mount overlooking the Sea of Galilee, there was, for many years, a church that would rake in all the tourist dollars. But as the years went by, a highway was put in and most tourists began showing up in buses. The site of the sermon and the church were about a mile off the new road and down the hill, which resulted in most tourists standing up at the road and admiring the spot from afar. So Rome razed the church, announced that the sermon site was really up next to the highway, and built a new church there.

In Old Jerusalem, along the route Christ supposedly took on His way to the cross, the tour guide told us that ahead on the left we would eventually see – on the corner of a stone building – the actual spot where a tired Christ put His hand in order to rest. Because of the crowded conditions and the hustle and bustle we all had to walk single file and were so far behind the tour guide we didn't know exactly where the stone was. And then there it was! A large stone on the corner of a building obviously polished and worn into a slight concavity by centuries of being touched by adoring Christians! You should have seen the looks on the faces of Christians as they went and worshipfully touched the spot! Talk about a meaningful religious experience that makes you feel like you're close to God – that *had* to be it! (But you know me; I've been duped by Rome for too many years to allow myself to fall for that crap.) Anyway, about three minutes later we came to the "real" stone on the building, properly marked with a plaque and everything. In other words the previous worn spot was a commonly-made mistake. Were

the Christians on this holy pilgrimage impressed with this “real” spot? No! All they did was go over and perfunctorily touch the stone! I then realized they didn’t go to Israel *to see or find the truth*; they went there *to have a religious experience – and they’d already had it!* It didn’t matter that it was false – because they don’t really believe anything anyway. And that’s the way most Christians will react to my book; it doesn’t matter if it’s true because their religion already makes them *feel* Christian.

I was more impressed when the guide told us that “somewhere in this valley”, with the Philistine army over on that rise and Saul’s army on this other one, David and Goliath fought. The scene is not impressive – but David’s love for the Lord was. David faced Goliath because he had a good relationship with God because he knew and believed the Bible. And there I thought about the fact that even if the daily bread of Bible study doesn’t seem like much, and even if our daily walk with the Lord doesn’t seem impressive, they are the foundation of our relationship – indeed, they *are* our relationship with the Lord and are the stuff of heroes.

Beware of the majesty of Rome and of the leaven of the Pharisees; many will be deceived thereby. Our kingdom is neither in Israel nor in this world – it’s the one described in the Bible.

I hadn’t known before that even Turkey, which is 99% Moslem, is now a *secular* democracy. We truly do live in the Age of Reason.

I’m glad you’re studying the issue of the immortality of the soul. You are quite right about how many of our traditional Christian doctrines are derived from and are therefore dependent upon the immortality of the soul. When I first became interested in the doctrine I was surprised that there is no literature on the subject. You will try in vain to find a Christian treatise, study, or explanation of the doctrine or where it came from.

That’s why your preacher was never given a Biblical understanding of the subject when he was a Bible school student. And that’s why your preacher has never taught a single Sunday school lesson on the immortality of the soul. If you ask him about the doctrine he will not only be unable to give you a satisfying answer, he won’t even be able to find anything for you to read on the subject. (Watch him: You will notice that it doesn’t bother him that he has always been ignorant about this major and far-reaching doctrine! He now *knows* he has been and is a blind Pharisee leading the blind – *and he doesn’t even care!*)

You and I grew up “knowing” the soul is immortal *even though we were never taught a single thing about it*. Then when we got saved we found that Christianity taught us the same thing the unsaved world had taught us about the issue – *nothing!*

I appreciate the fact that you have been looking in the Bible for answers. Most Christians would just shrug their shoulders and return to their Sunday reading – the comics in the newspaper. The church will endure to the end as long as faithful believers like you continue to study and stay in the word. You refresh my bowels, brother.

Len

MORE IMMORTALITY OF UNREGENERATE SOULS

Richard:

Andy has also been looking into the immortality of the soul recently. Perhaps he will be good for his sister. He considers her to be knowledgeable about the Bible, and ever since he read my book he has started having lengthy phone conversations with her about doctrine. For example, he told me she was unable to adequately answer his questions about eternal security.

He is right in saying if the immortality of the soul is false so are a number of other major doctrines believed to be sacred by many modern Christians – such as eternal security and pagans going to hell. That fact can easily intimidate Christians into thinking the issue is too big to tackle by adopting the “how can Christian leaders [like the Pharisees!] have been that wrong about so much for so long” attitude.

You mentioned that when you and other Christians are discussing the doctrine of the immortality of the soul they always react to your showing them verses that say the soul *can* die, that only Christians go to hell, and that the unsaved are without everlasting spirit life, by asking you why there aren’t *more* of those kinds of verses in the Bible.

Their reaction is that of apostates for whom the Bible has no real authority. If they believed the Bible to be the word of God they wouldn’t react to the verses by whining and asking evasive questions whose real purpose is an attempt to hide the fact that it doesn’t matter how many verses say it – they will reject them and blindly cling to tradition. Next week they won’t even remember the issue, will never look into it, and will never bring it up.

If they were mature Christians, which by definition means they truly love the Lord in accordance with the Bible, they would respond by having some of the following questions:

- 1) Why is it that we tend to ask for *more* verses that prove the unregenerate have mortal souls, instead of asking for *any* verses that show they have everlasting life?
- 2) Why is it that we cannot defend a major, universal Christian doctrine that is so important and far-reaching by at least being able to come up with even a single verse that proves the unsaved go to hell – which would mean they did have everlasting life/immortal souls?
- 3) Why have we been faithfully attending churches, doctrinal seminars, and Bible schools for so many decades and were never taught anything about the doctrine, and have never had a single pastor, have never heard any preacher, and have never heard about any preacher who taught about the doctrine?
- 4) After having been shown Bible verses that consistently show souls are mortal, hell was created for God’s people who go bad, being born *of the Spirit* is the *only* way to get everlasting life – *not* being born of the flesh, and only those who are born of the Spirit go to hell, why is it that we have a strong Natural tendency to cling to a doctrine we’ve *never been taught anything about* and that has *no verses* to support it? (It’s because the Bible is right: tradition really does make the word of God of none effect.)
- 5) When discussing immortality why have we never distinguished between Spirit-born and flesh-born souls?

As Swordbearers we should be more bold and forceful in wielding the Sword of the Lord by saying things like, “OK, I showed you my verses, now you show me yours...You don’t have any!? You blind hypocrite! How can you accept, believe, and defend any doctrine that has zero Scripture to support it? I’ll tell you what, in order to help you be a better Christian I’m going to ask you to show me verses that show the unsaved have immortality every time I see you until you either produce some verses, admit you are an apostate who doesn’t care, or accept the truth.”

In other words, Richard, since we’ve got Scripture on our side and they don’t, make that point very clear. Repeatedly.

Len

MARS HILL CHRISTIANS

Richard:

Your dialog with your new pen pal, Dr. Morton, is frustrating for you only because you do not yet recognize the signs that typically characterize people from Mars Hill. You've been expecting him to demonstrate interest in and submission to the Scriptures because you accept his outward credentials as theologian and preacher. But he is lacking in Christian character and therefore is merely a philosopher from Mars Hill wanting to engage in interesting dialog with a Swordbearer so he can congratulate himself on how broad-minded, tolerant, and sophisticated he is.

I'll go through his letter that you forwarded and show you some of the typical things Christians like him say so you can recognize their whitewash more quickly in the future. I'll show you why you and he can never get on the same page, and I'll show you what you might possibly use as a starting point with Mars Hillers.

Because Christians from Mars Hill like Dr. Morton are unbelievers in the existence of the word of God, they – unlike you – have no authority and speak with no authority. They have no Sword. Therefore they know what doctrines they prefer, and they know what doctrines make sense when tradition and Reason are applied to them, but they do not know the truth. That leaves a feeling of uncertainty, of fear, deep inside them that they cannot overcome no matter how they strut and bluster. (They have different ways of trying to hide their insecurity: Some get loud and overly chummy and some get aloof as they try to play the role of an intellectual professor.) When they get into a discussion with a Swordbearer, therefore, they either marvel that you stand tall and speak with fearless authority or they resent you – or both. They quickly recognize that you are different from them because your black-and-white statements are not wishy-washy like theirs. Some of them are careful not to offend anyone's opinions, and some treat anything that differs from tradition as heresy.

Let me pick out some typical Mars Hill quotes from Dr. Morton's letter in order to give you an idea of the vocabulary they use and the kinds of things they say:

- He says "interpretive issues" instead of Bible doctrine.
- "I can appreciate your comments on Calvin...many people feel the same." (He cares about and values the opinions of others.)
- He likes to refer to "most theologians." He thinks it makes him seem learned and sophisticated to know about the opinions of other Mars Hill types.
- Because he believes in eternal security he thinks *heaven as a destination* and *everlasting life/immortality* are synonyms. Therefore, when referring to the belief that God's people can fall from grace and go to hell – like Lucifer – he labels it "conditional immortality." I don't know if he is aware of the ignorance of that term; immortality by definition is not conditional. For example, Lucifer and other spirit beings do not lose their immortality when they go to the lake of fire because they live there forever. But his use of a nonsensical term like "conditional immortality" at a minimum suggests he doesn't understand the difference between the saved and the unsaved.
- His use of common expressions like "is not in 'the' Greek text", "italics in our English translations", and "the translators added it" prove he is an unbeliever in the existence of the word of God, and suggest he does not understand how many hundreds of differing Greek texts there are.
- His pompous use of names like Clark Pinnock, John Stott, and Ed Fudge adds nothing to anyone's understanding, and merely shows he prefers to read and quote authors empowered by Reason rather than men like Jeremiah, David, Paul, and Moses who were empowered by God for our edification.
- Notice that, like the scribes and Pharisees, he doesn't speak with authority, and he doesn't quote the Bible: "Trichotomists build much of their argument on...", "Dichotomists, however, respond by...", "Whichever view is correct, it is always risky to use disputed passages in the Bible to support doctrinal leanings in theological circles."
- "On that point we seem to agree." You don't; he put words in your mouth that you didn't say. He's pompously trying to appear superior in the areas of intellect and learning rather than humbly trying to help a brother in the Lord.

Dr. Morton is simply fighting for what he was taught when he was a student in theology class. He was taught that the Bible is an old, out-dated, ineffective, error-filled sword. If I were insecure I might also be tempted (not!) to waste everybody's time saying absolutely nothing by taking lessons from Dr. Morton on how to have Bible discussions with fellow believers. Let me see if I can talk like a Mars Hiller: "Ah, Richard, most recognized scholars, such as Thumb Sucker and Nose Picker, would disagree by suggesting that the preterit tense in that reading doesn't have adequate manuscript support. You may be familiar with the writings of Butt Kisser and Ass Hole, whose theological tendencies were more popular during the pre Dead Sea Scrolls era, because you seem to share some of their preferences. All of these great thinkers have had their day in the sun, but none of them has truly had access to all the information necessary to dispel the fog of uncertainty that enshrouds the Hebrew and Greek texts. Unless you've been introduced to the confusion of their writings and tried to follow the labyrinthine paths of their arguments, you cannot fully appreciate the towering intellect and the scholastic dedication of these great minds. But those of us who *have* skimmed a few pages of their works have come to believe truth is not really discernable from what we have available today. That kind of broad-minded maturity only comes with much study. The more you study the more you realize none of these great men really made much impact over time. Then you get overwhelmed by the sheer number of arguments, and by the huge numbers of apologists supporting different positions with volumes and volumes of the most somniferous material you'll ever encounter. Then you realize the true value in studying these men is to conclude that we really can't know anything for sure. My education has broadened me, Richard, and that sophistication enables me to listen to your Bible verses with fond amusement because you are still at that ignorant stage where you think the Bible is the word of God. Enjoy your youthful zeal and certainty while it lasts but eventually all these men will convince you of the wisdom of the ancient philosophers: *What is truth?* Once you reach that intellectual level you'll begin to listen to your heart by loving all men and respecting all arguments and positions. That kind of love and tolerance is only possible if you climb the mountain of scholarship. I think God deliberately put the truth out of our reach in order to teach us that no doctrinal position should be believed with dogmatic certainty. Only with that realization can we truly embrace all men and their ideas as they search for the truths we have come to know. Therefore, Richard, the important thing is for us to remain close to each other by not getting dogmatic about interpretive issues. If you just stick more or less to the fundamentals of the faith and the Golden Rule you'll avoid becoming one of those narrow-minded, unsophisticated, hard-hearted, dogmatic idealists who think God's truth can be found by studying only a Bible version. Don't

be like that, Richard; you'll only divide God's children, create back-door revivals, and end up as a lonely, embittered, forgotten old man. Take it from me, the road to popularity is paved with compromise."

They don't come right out and say it that way, Richard, because their blindness makes them unable to see that is the path they are following to destruction. But you'll be able to recognize that is the same way you and I would be if we didn't believe in the existence of the word of God and therefore had to respectfully turn to the writings of men in our search for truth and wisdom.

Let me say this about **praying** while I'm thinking about superficiality. I think our phony prayers either reflect our relationship with God or Christians have never been taught how to pray. A prayer is just straight talk with God. One day my wife and I stopped to say hey to some Christians we knew. During the visit a Christian they knew stopped by and wanted us to pray that his hand would heal OK because he'd accidentally shot himself. When he and the other guy prayed, my wife and I silently prayed along, but everyone else was constantly saying stuff like: "Oh yes, Father", "Yes, Jesus", "Oh, Jesus", "Thank you, Jesus" and "Oh, Father." But during my turn to pray aloud not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse! Because nobody has ever taught me how to pray, and because my method of prayer was different from theirs, I assumed they thought I wasn't good at praying. To give you an idea of how I prayed, turn to and read aloud **Mt 6:9-13** in a normal voice. Now I'll say the Lord's prayer the way these people prayed: "Oh Father, we come to you, Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Father. Thy kingdom come, oh, Father. Thy will, Father God, be done in earth, as it is in heaven, oh yes, dear Father. And, Father, give us this day, Father, our daily bread, and we'll thank you for it, Father...etc." And while they prayed that way, their tone of voice was going up and down like a dingy on the high seas, and the people were constantly saying the above asides. Now, ordinarily I wouldn't care how people prayed, *but they obviously didn't like my Mt 6:9-13 method of praying*. Is there something wrong with doing things the way the Bible teaches us? Why doesn't my voice dramatically rise and fall like a dingy? Why, when my sister and I wanted the car in high school, didn't we go to our father and pray: "Oh Father, we come to you now, Father, to humbly beseech you, Father, that in your infinite mercy, Father, you might grant and ordain, Father, that we might have the car keys, Father, and we'll thank you for them, Father – oh yes, Father Dad. We're decorating the gym, oh Dad – yes, Father – and should be home, dear Father Dad, before lunch, oh Dad. So give us the keys, dear Father, and give us traveling mercies, Father, that we might be safe, oh Dad...etc." I don't talk to any real person like that and I don't talk to my real God like that. And I think that's the way the Pharisees prayed.

Anyway, getting back to Dr. Morton: Like many Christians, he will never be convinced by any Scripture because he doesn't believe it is the word of God. Therefore, I believe doctrinal discussions cannot really accomplish anything unless both parties first accept the Bible as the binding authority in all matters of faith and practice – not a dead language dictionary, not a book by man that tells you to disregard the words in italics when it's convenient, and not the marginal notes added to Bibles by guys who don't believe the word of God exists.

If you get into a *lengthy* discussion it is possible that someone might become so impressed with the amazing consistency of doctrines from the KJV, and with how they all complement and fit with each other, that they will actually listen to what you say. But in today's democratic egalitarian society in which uninformed opinions are daily treated as valid in public opinion polls, many Christians are so full of pride and are so used to putting on the pious act that they'll resent you when you begin to teach. They want to defend themselves as just as knowledgeable about the Bible by arguing as an equal rather than learning as a student. The Scriptural characteristics of humility and a true hungering and thirsting after Scriptural truth are very rare. Christians seem to either think it would be demeaning to learn some Bible from you, or that a serious doctrinal discussion might expose them as embarrassingly ignorant about the Bible.

But even people who have a respectable knowledge of the Bible are so full of tradition it is difficult to get them to treat Bible truths seriously – because the truth so often conflicts with their denominational leaven. They just want to argue because they sincerely think they're defending God's truth against error.

For these and other reasons I wrote a book. That way in the privacy of their own homes, without losing face, people can study and learn. That's why I often took the time to answer popular objections. *If they study the Bible* as they read my book they may become excited and impressed at the way the word of God reveals itself to be so perfectly designed and worded. But those who do not have a supernatural attraction to the Scriptures will not bother to look up the Scriptural references and will simply read the word of man part to see if I agree with them or not – and will fall by the wayside.

My book was written because Christians are so egalitarian, tradition-bound, ignorant, and faithless that they cannot be reached with occasional discussions – they need to commit to a full Bible study. Look at you, comrade; you've never told me how you felt when you first got my book – but I can guess. For years I'd grown increasingly frustrated with you. My attempts to reach, motivate, and help you did nothing but make you cringe when you saw me, and walk away if you didn't think I'd seen you. But when you got my book you were curious. That's all. You probably expected a combination of things when you read it: You thought you'd be amused by how dumb some of it was, how basic some of it was, and how weird some of it was. You probably thought you might find yourself in the uncomfortable position of not knowing what to say to me about a book that pretty much said nothing of value. Those are ways we'd all react.

That's the way Dr. Morton is reacting to you, and that's the way most Christians will react over the years. Your motivation to help them should not depend on gratifying responses from them. If that had been the case with me I'd have given up on you years ago. Reach people out of Christian duty, knowing your only thanks is likely to come from our King.

Some people who have gotten my book had discussions with me about it when I was still writing it. Expressing interest, they asked for a copy as soon as it was finished. And of the people who got a copy, *very* few have ever been in contact with me again. Assuming – for the sake of illustration – that my book reveals wonderful truths about the word of God, we learn something about my book: It has no real value. It is not the answer. It is not what men need. They need the Bible, not the Bible plus my book. But didn't my book get you motivated and straightened out? No, it wasn't my book, and it wasn't a relationship between us that motivated you – it was your relationship with God and His Book that energized you. In fact, if you and I were now to slack off on the time we spend in the Bible, we would, deprived of the energizing sustenance that comes from the Vine onto Whom we are grafted, weaken and wither.

When Robin read Dr. Morton's letter she said the same thing she has said to me about so many Christians with whom I've had discussions over the years: "He needs to relearn the entire Bible." Dr. Morton's behavior is not unusual; tradition has had a long time to do its mischief, and Reason is not easy to overcome. So do the best you can with Dr. Morton, and let them that have ears to hear, hear.

READING THE BIBLE

Harry:

Yes, God's covenant with Abe is referred to in both places. It is also referred to in other places because it is so important. And it is reaffirmed with Abe's son and grandson.

If you were asking me to confirm the typology of the furnace and the lamp my answer would be guarded, not dogmatic. Yes, I agree with the identities as you mentioned them because it makes sense. But because of the mood or tone of the affair established by fowls, deep sleep (as in death), horror, darkness, and the general air of spooky mystery, I think there's more going on than meets the eye.

So, the way I handle things like that is to note the covenant God made and the details of the covenant. The rest I tuck into the back of my mind and wait for the Lord to reveal more if He wants. The usual method in Christianity, on the other hand, is to want to quickly assign dogmatic answers to everything, which often results in over-simplified answers. I make a deliberate effort to protect myself from people who want to put words into my mouth. And that includes the teaching of scholars who say dividing animals was the way they did it back then. That may be true – the Lord may have simply used a procedure Abe would understand. But it also may be that the divided animals have some other significance we've missed or are not to know about yet, and that scholars have eagerly found things in history they can apply to this in order to tie it up in a tidy little explanation. The Bible is complete. It is a stand-alone document; it doesn't need history to supplement it. We must be careful not to allow history or anything else to tell us what the Bible means.

So, when people tell you they think it means this and that, you may reply with, "Hmm, yeah, I can see that." But if they ask you for a definitive answer, it's often best to reply with, "I don't know." If that answer convinces them it's better to go to scholars for answers, fine. But remember, knowing everything about that incident is not important; if it were, God would have told us. It doesn't affect our service to Him one way or the other. And that brings up an important point:

Christians often spend a lifetime pursuing answers to questions that can't be definitively answered. They become trivia buffs about stuff that doesn't affect their Christian walk. They do it so they can ignore the important stuff. That's why Christianity today is so ignorant about the crucial doctrines in the Bible. And that's why prophecies about end-time events are so hugely popular with Christians; they'd rather spend their time discussing the European Common Market and the possible significance of this and that than spend time learning the Bible.

Each time you go through the Bible you learn stuff. Then when you go back and read it again, the stuff you've learned adds to your perspective and more details begin to fall into place. The Bible is a big puzzle. We must learn about each piece before we can know where it goes. The more we learn the faster the pieces fall into place. Because Christians spend so much time pursuing trivia and many other things that are not important to their service to God, they never learn enough about the pieces of the puzzle to know it is a big puzzle. They focus on the piece itself as if it were important. It isn't; it's just a piece of some larger picture. I guess what I'm trying to say is, we need to focus on stuff we can *use*. Stuff we can *apply* to our lives or to something else in the Bible. If something has no *application* it doesn't really help us. Why? Because with no *application* it is just *knowledge* or *trivia*. However, anything that can be *applied* to our *lives* allows us to be *doers*. Trivia results in inaction. Beware of trivia.

A servant is not a servant if he doesn't *serve*. When we read the Bible we must ask God, "How may I serve you, Sir?"

Len

MORE MARS HILL

Richard:

This preacher with whom you've been corresponding is excellent training for you because he is quickly introducing you to a number of typical Mars Hill characteristics and tactics. Dr. Morton is very insecure; in spite of massive amounts of traditional theological training he is unable to stand up against a Swordbearer. As I demonstrated in the chapter *Contending for the Faith*, even people well trained in theology and in the mechanics of verbal sparring are outclassed by the two-edged Sword of the Lord. Dr. Morton is used to people who treat what he says as valuable information from a sincere and dedicated theology scholar. But you show no fear of his precious ERROR manuscripts or his precious degrees or the human authors he so loves to quote. On the contrary, you keep coming back with the same Old Sword in your hand, which shows him you feel no need to supplement your arsenal with worldly weapons like he does. And he cannot understand that kind of belief and confidence in the word of God, so he reacts defensively by puffing up his pride and dodging the issues by trying to put you down. And when they start getting personal, Richard, they're just trying to save face in advance of "bugging out" – he's about to turn and run. And when they turn tail they almost never come back.

His latest letter contains the same worldly weapons he has used all along. But now he has begun to rely more heavily on the ERROR manuscripts and the dead languages. Why? Because his NASV cannot compete with the AV1611. His retreat to the intellectual quagmire and contradictory content of the ERROR manuscripts is a normal last-ditch maneuver; when all else fails, pull out the best weapon you have. To Dr. Morton and to all unbelievers in the existence of the word of God, there is no more authoritative source than the corruption of the ERROR manuscripts. By going there he hopes to avoid the dogmatic authority of the King James Bible, and to pretend he knows what he's doing and you do not. It's a good move on his part because not only do all scholars "agree to disagree" about the Greek and Hebrew texts, but they all agree to render lip service to them as the "authority" in Christianity. The ERROR manuscripts are wonderful tools for those who don't have the word of God and don't want it, because they allow the unbeliever to do that which is right in his own eyes, avoid the dogmatic authority of the KJV, and appear to be sophisticated – all while giving the appearance of submitting to the "authority" of (what they call) "the Word of God." Dr. Morton, depending on the content of the courses he was taught as a Bible student, may not even be aware that the ERROR manuscripts contain more than just the "misspellings, differing sentence structure, and rounded figures" he claims they have. If he does know it, he's a liar. If he doesn't know it, he received a poor education as a theology student, hasn't spent ten minutes doing any research on his own, and hasn't even been interested enough in this stuff to *think* about it.

When he wrote "...men like yourself, who may have no formal training in the languages and theology...", he meant it as a putdown – regardless of what the rest of his letter says – and he is about to bug out on you. Since he has not only pretended to be an authority who has "formal training" in "the languages and theology", but has also revealed himself to be a poor student, it would be interesting to play his own game and show him the low practical value of his courses by first flattering him with, "Wow, that sounds pretty impressive. What were some of the courses you took?" He'll be only too happy to name a few of the more impressive-sounding ones. And then you innocently ask something like, "What percentage grade did you get on your final

exams in *Comparative Religions 101* and *Koine Greek 201*?” Since that brings the fact that he used to be a theology student down to earth and shows that he has clay feet he will wonder about the relevance of your question. “Well,” you respond, “you’ve presented yourself as a formally-trained theologian. Therefore, I need to know how to weight all the statements you make when you and I discuss Bible doctrine. For example, it would be helpful if I knew if you answered enough questions right to get a passing grade. And if you did pass, I need to know what exact grade you got. That will let me know what percentage of the curriculum you still misunderstood the last time you were formally tested on it years ago when it was still fresh in your mind. That way when I catch you saying something wrong, I’ll be better able to evaluate if it’s the result of information you never learned during your school days or if it’s the result of memory attrition over time.”

But you’d only want to say something like that, Richard, if you thought it was appropriate to answer a fool according to his folly in order to show him how dumb and unimpressive his pomposity is when examined in the light of day.

Dr. Morton also said, “Richard, I *enjoyed* your *ingenious* refutations of the *clear* passages that I used to explain eternal security.” He’s lying; he’s dissin’ you, bro. He’s about to bug out – and you’ll never hear from him again.

I don’t think his method is a loving one; I think it’s veiled, deceitful, and unhelpful. But people like Dr. Morton have received no formal training in how to behave around other Christians. He was taught nothing about it when he was a theology student, and he has been taught nothing about it by his preachers. Therefore, he has had to accept what the pagan world teaches: “Loving people means always getting along with them and always exhibiting what polite society would call a *good personality*.” If that is true Jesus Christ and all of His prophets had bad personalities because they managed to offend most of their fellow Christians. Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, and Elijah were some of the worst offenders because some of the things they said to people in public are absolutely unacceptable to effeminate Christians today. Dr. Morton’s acceptance of the traditional pagan beliefs about “personality” and “gentlemanly behavior” causes him to hatefully use veiled insults with you rather than lovingly and openly reprove, rebuke, and use the rod of correction. And that’s why he resents your confrontational directness. We all claim to be Christian soldiers marching as to war, but it appears that medics and “care givers” populate our modern “army” rather than the dedicated, well-trained Swordbearers the Bible produces.

You wrote the following about this theologian: “...not reading all of what I’ve said...or he’s very established in his own belief system and isn’t really listening.” That’s pretty much the way Christians handle doctrinal discussions, Richard. They do not have an inner sanctum that constantly watches, listens, and evaluates everything with Scripture. All they have is a bunch of doctrines some men told them are true, and they have some verses they don’t understand with which to defend that leaven. Many centuries of tradition have caught Christians in a very tangled web of tradition that even makes the AV1611 of none effect. (That’s why the Enlightened doctrines taught in “King James only” churches are identical to the doctrines taught in churches that use the ERROR versions.) Therefore, guys like Dr. Morton have a million ways to foist, foil, and parry your thrusts. My combat experience has taught me that, just as Paul demonstrated on Mars Hill, it’s a waste of time continuing to deal with Mars Hill types. Just walk away; if they want to talk Bible they know how to contact you.

Do not think, however, that these words are meant to discourage confrontation; I *want* you to engage in combat so your fingers can learn to fight and make war (**Ju 3:1,2**). But neither am I trying to get you to prolong something you might think should end. I’m just trying to help you gain some perspective that I didn’t acquire until later. I’m trying to help you learn faster than I did; to help you think about things during and after your “fights.” I’m not trying to stick my nose into your fights; they are yours to fight. I’m just trying to be a comrade helping the cause of Christ. So here are some observations:

You are excited about some of the stuff you’ve learned. That’s good. But Dr. Morton is not excited about anything you’ve learned; in fact, he thinks you are way out in left field. In your discussions with him you have briefly covered a *number* of topics. Dr. Morton doesn’t know enough Bible to understand your quick arguments. And even if he let you go into much more depth, he will “know” you are wrong because you are going to contradict a number of traditional doctrines along the way. As soon as you do that, his mind will begin working on his rebuttal, which will be based on the assumption that tradition is correct and that his understanding of the Bible is correct and complete. If you have enough time you will begin to pin him down with what the KJV *says*, at which point he will simply step off the playing field and dodge the word of God by saying things like, “Oh, Richard, I *so* enjoy your clever arguments! But your lack of formal training in *the languages* is causing you to make too much of the Greek present tense. Laymen like you don’t realize Greek syntax can be *stylistic*. Occasions when the aorist tense is used must be considered. For laymen like you, Richard, that means *past completed action*. I was pretty sure you didn’t know that but deliberately tried to talk over your head instead of using plain language because my real objective is not to teach you about dead languages, it’s to make me look smart and you look like a moron. If I really knew anything about the KOH and KOG issue I’d have said something constructive, definite, and helpful. But I tried to appear sophisticated while at the same time insulting your basic Bible knowledge by having my computer’s concordance dump into my letter the Bible address of every single verse having *KOH* or *KOG* in it and telling you to review them because I want to imply you’re too stupid to have already read them or looked them up. I’m thinking in my next letter of upping the ante by listing the 66 books in the Bible and suggesting that you review them.”

Because you and Dr. Morton do not agree on an authority to correct and guide your discussions, and because you allowed the discussions to quickly scatter over many topics, Dr. Morton had way too much maneuvering room. Therefore, since he quotes the NASV and loves to glorify the ERROR manuscripts, it might have been better early in your discussions, before he got tired of you, to cut his legs out from under him by destroying the NASV by pointing out that its blasphemous errors came from the blasphemous ERROR manuscripts. Remember, you are merely telling him the truth as revealed by the word of God – so don’t hesitate. After learning the truth of the Bible version/old manuscript situation, it is impossible for someone who truly loves the Lord to continue treating lightly any errors in “Scripture”, to continue proclaiming the false doctrine that the word of God hasn’t been around for many centuries, and to believe that all we have is the uninspired, fallible word of men. If he continues to reject the existence of the word of God you must realize you will never be able to hold meaningful discussions with him. Only the true word of God can effectively destroy philosophy and tradition – but only if it is *accepted* as the true word of God. Anyone who doesn’t do that has no faith, and since it is impossible to please God without faith, you should walk away from them like Paul did on Mars Hill and concentrate on Christians who truly love the Lord.

Have you been wasting your time with Dr. Morton? No, probably not, because you’ve been gaining combat experience. Combat will help you grow in a number of ways.

Combat will show you that you can live with the hurt and embarrassment of being misunderstood, despised, rejected, ridiculed, and laughed at. Those are things medics seem to be unable to handle. In fact, many Christians are “medics” simply because they are afraid of confrontation.

Combat enables you to sharpen your understanding about some of the doctrines you discuss, and helps you to anticipate some of the typical questions and objections that come up. That’s why my book covers some of those objections.

Combat will wound you deeply at times. Instead of still feeling the righteous indignation and passion later while you rant to Jane about the blind morons you’ve been dealing with, you will feel your energy deflate, your confidence shrink, and your doubts grow. You’ll withdraw into yourself. You will hurt. You will cry. But your faith and belief in God will cause you to take Him into seclusion with you because you will always turn to the Bible. It will correct you if you were wrong, reassure you when you are right, and comfort and strengthen you in your darkest hours just like it does in your times of great blessing. And your love for God, your increasing knowledge of His perspective, and your concern for *His* feelings will cause you to minister to Him even from the depths of your anguish as you respectfully come to attention before your King and reassure Him that you have “No regrets, Sir! No regrets!” – because your love for Him runs deeper than all your sorrows. These serious wounds will actually result in some times of wonderful closeness with Him that you both will cherish. They will also help train, condition, and discipline you for the eventuality that God might – like He did to Job and Hezekiah – abandon you by turning you over to Satan in order that He might know if your heart will remain focused on Him even if He removes His hedge and makes you suffer like His Son and His prophets did.

Combat will help put things into perspective. You’ll realize, because you’ve been there, it’s not that big of a deal. It’s doable; it’s bearable. It will also make you realize those who shrink from combat are worse than you thought (**Nu 32:20-23; Ps 78:9; Je 7:15**). It will also humble you when God puts combat ribbons on your chest because you’ll feel undeserving.

Dr. Morton’s use of Mt 7 in order to defend eternal security and salvation by the new birth alone – not by works – is just the type of thing that’ll make you rant about blind morons: He says “fruits” does *not* mean “works.” He says “fruits” means “words”! And then he contradicts that by saying the “fruits Christ is looking for” are people who will “do the will of **My** [His] Father.” (Do you think Dr. Morton added the “His” in brackets because he is afraid you might think he was somehow referring to himself and his own earthly daddy even though he capitalized both “My” and “Father”?) Why is Dr. Morton so blind that he’ll embarrass himself by saying fruit means *words*, not *works*, and then say fruit means *doing*? It’s because he’s not really interested in correct “exegesis” – another word he loves to toss around. I don’t think he is deliberately abusing the English language (although it is obvious he didn’t do well in his English classes so I suspect his grades weren’t very good in his dead language classes, either) in an attempt to deceive you. But I do think his desperate belief in eternal security is causing him to look for ways to rebut your arguments rather than look for the truth. His assumption that his church’s doctrine is correct, and his Natural attempt to defend it in any way he can, are things we all need to guard ourselves against. We need the discernment of our inner sanctum to be so much a part of us that we constantly monitor and evaluate the Scriptural validity of what we say and do as well as what others say and do. And we need to be careful about tradition’s ability to make us think Scripture says something it really doesn’t.

Dr. Morton will never be able to escape the snare of tradition and philosophy unless he trains himself to strangle his Reason and develop discernment. He honestly thinks anybody the Bible says is “wicked,” a “son of Belial,” or an “unbeliever” *has* to be unsaved. And that becomes axiomatic to him *no matter what God says* – because he doesn’t think any Bible is God’s word.

But the fact is people who don’t know the Lord can be Christians. We get saved when God gives birth to our new man. We later accept by faith that that unseen and unfelt new birth happened; we don’t cause it to happen by any works of faith – including knowledge of the Bible and the so-called “sinner’s prayer.” Later as we learn the Bible we have the opportunity to be believers by doing the word. For example, Samuel was a young Christian who did not know the Lord (**1 Sa 3:7**). How was it that a born-again Christian who was already being shaped by God didn’t know Him? Because Samuel didn’t yet know the word of God (**1 Sa 3:7**), because the word of God was so rare (**1 Sa 3:1**) in those Bible-rejecting days under the slovenly Eli. But God later revealed Himself to Samuel through the Bible (**1 Sa 3:19,21**). Paul is another good example: He was a born-again Christian who didn’t know the Lord because tradition made his knowledge of the Scriptures of none effect. The Lord later – on the road to Damascus – showed Paul how tradition had blinded him and then took Paul into the wilderness and re-taught him the Bible.

This all helps show that it is also possible to know God, and then forget Him (**Ro 1:21,28; Ps 9:17**). It is possible to be a believer one day and an unbeliever the next. I know tradition generally groups all Christians in the believer category and all dogs in the unbeliever category, but that’s not what the Bible says. When you are born again you become a Christian. When you start being a hearer *and* a doer of the word you are a believer. But if you ever stop being a hearer and doer of the word you are an unbeliever. (That’s one of the reasons a Bible study of the **Synonyms** on page H1-2 is so important – a Bible study that means absolutely nothing to all Christians who think those words were selected by fallible translators rather than by Almighty God.) And all dogs are unbelievers because the unsaved are not capable of doing the word of God.

You’re doing well, comrade. I didn’t do any better at your stage. I wrote a book in an effort to *perhaps* better reach, teach, help, and encourage sincere Christians so they might mature more quickly than I did. But my book isn’t the answer; it’s just a way for me to be a witness. Anytime there is a witness they that have ears to hear will hear.

Len

ESTABLISHING DOMESTIC RULE

Richard:

No, you’re doing nothing wrong. Whenever you feel like that just get in the Bible with the Lord. The Christian struggle is not designed to be easy – not if what God says in His Book is true. Remember, you’re only just getting started. And you will find yourself surrounded by Enlightened Christianity – not an easy foe. When I first got started I couldn’t handle everything at once. That’s why I moved to the country. No friends, no family, and no society to deal with.

Robin just told me Jane has something she didn’t have – options. Jane has friends and relatives who will take her side and take her in if necessary. Robin literally had nobody to turn to and nowhere to go. I was her only friend, the only one she could talk to, the only one who agreed with her (mostly) about the Bible and the way life and Christian society are supposed to be. One of the things I had going for me was Robin knew the Bible – I made sure of that. And that knowledge of the truth made

it more difficult for her to justify leaving. What you are encountering now is just the same carnality you'd be pulling if you were ignorant, carnal, and fighting to save your life. (For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.)

All I know for sure is, it isn't easy. You must spend quality time with Him in order to make it. If I may make a suggestion: Don't worry about your preacher; there's no sense convincing him that Jane and your kids are right about you. You're at war, Richard. Pick your targets and the time you want to engage them – when you can. (There will be plenty of ambushes you didn't see coming that you'll have to deal with.) Don't go picking fights in your church just because you might be trying to justify leaving. It is lawful to leave if you want. Because you're not really separated you may not really understand how different you are and will increasingly become. Be careful about what you say and do. Don't show your hand while you are still spiritually too young to fight. When people ask you stuff, you don't have to tell them. They wouldn't understand anyway. Don't bite off more than you can chew. If you are careful and choose your battles wisely you might not have to bug out. I guess what I'm trying to say is you can very quickly get in over your head if you aren't careful. Spend time alone with the Lord and plan your strategy. What are your immediate objectives? You and your family – that's your first responsibility. You are too young – and aren't qualified yet, anyway – to help the church. Do not allow yourself to think your duty is to stay involved with your friends and church in order to help them see the light. No. You cannot do that until you can rule well your own household. Do not feel guilty about that – those are orders from the Lord because He doesn't want His new recruits going out and getting their lives destroyed before they're ready to have them destroyed. Establish priorities and stick with your plan. You're going to have to realize that even when you're in church you're in enemy territory. Be careful what you say. And if they approach you because they heard something from someone in your family, have truthful generalities ready to give them in order to reassure them you're just going through a time in your relationship with the Lord when you want to be sure you're committed to Him and are searching for answers about your dedication – or some such stuff they really can't find fault with. As long as you have anything to do with people you'll have to be very careful they don't become distractions for you, and allies for your family. You are at war. Do not forget that. Protect your six, cover your flanks, and stay focused on the objectives you've established.

You should have three real and immediate objectives. When I say immediate I don't mean they should be accomplished by next month or next year. I mean immediate as in first and foremost objectives: 1) You must learn the Bible. That means stay home and study. It doesn't mean go out and spar with your preacher and fellow pewsters. 2) You must gradually bring your family under your control. 3) You must educate your family about the Bible.

Because of the age of your children you must use #3 as a major part of #2. Be prepared to accept a certain amount of insubordination, rebellion, and worldly Reason without doing anything more than explaining the Biblical view of the situation. You will have to have a certain amount of help from your family. By that I mean their understanding of what God wants and what He doesn't – and their submission to Him. At this stage it would be difficult for you to do much without their accepting the authority of the word of God.

Remember, Christians – like your family – are in a modern Babylonian captivity *and they don't even know it*. The Sword of the Lord is your weapon of choice because of the age of your family – not the rod of correction. It's pretty late for that. You must be a *head* – outsmart them. Be ready for their rebellion. Self-control in your situation is more important than ever. Be *nine* parts professor and *one* part disciplinarian.

Len

KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, WISDOM

Andy:

Everything I learned and put in my book is just a product of being a doer of the word: When a person is saved he gains three advantages. First, he becomes capable of pleasing God. Second, he gains the ability to understand spiritual truths. Third, he gains everlasting spirit life, which gives him the courage even to lose his mortal life.

Those things enable the Christian to better learn the Bible. Learning the Bible is **knowledge**. And that is as far as most "good" Christians ever get; they learn the Bible. *Knowledge* is believed to be the equivalent of growth by most Christians. Therefore, they study the Bible and all kinds of extra-biblical "Christian" bullshit. The more knowledgeable they become, the more mature (they think) they become as a Christian. That's why Bible schools are almost universally believed to produce mature Christians who are capable of shepherding churches. In truth, however, knowledge alone is the mark of a *young* Christian. (A *baby* Christian, by way of comparison, has little command of the Bible.)

A Christian who has true love for God, however, will want to turn his Bible knowledge into action by being a doer of the word. (For example, I obediently separated myself physically from harmful influences like modern Christianity and the world.) And then God as a reward gives the obedient doer of the word **understanding**. Understanding is the ability to see the value of something. (For example, my obedient separation allowed me to grow rapidly, and that made me understand a basic truth: Physical separation is good.) Understanding is the mark of an *adolescent* Christian – neither young nor mature.

Over time if the Christian continues being a doer by incorporating more and more things from the Bible into his life, God will reward him again. This time God turns all of his accumulated understanding into **wisdom**. Wisdom is the mark of a *mature* Christian. Wisdom is the ability to see the forest once you've seen enough trees. (For example, wisdom showed me that separation doesn't necessarily have to be physical or complete; it just has to keep you from being influenced and contaminated by philosophy, tradition, peer pressure, fear, etc.)

What is wisdom? Wisdom – you will eventually come to understand if you continue as a doer of the word – doesn't require lofty intelligence. Wisdom seems to be *having your eyes opened* because it gives you the ability to *see* things that most people can't see. Wisdom gives you the ability to see the obvious – even though it wasn't so obvious before. You've seen many things in my book that really can't be called genius because they are so *basic*, so *obvious*. You just never *saw* them before because you were lacking in accumulated understanding because you were rendered carnal and blind by tradition and philosophy.

Look at the wisdom of Solomon, for example. He forced the truth to surface by threatening to cut a baby in half (**1 Ki 3:16-28**). That seems so *basic*, so *obvious*. And it is, but most people don't have wisdom. Without wisdom all they can see is the touch not, taste not, handle not individual trees in the Bible – they cannot see the big picture of the forest the Schoolmaster

reveals to those who faithfully believe and do His word. And that is how the Lord through His word makes us more qualified to rule than dogs who may have more intelligence than we.

As you grow in wisdom you will begin to see how blind most people are. And you will see how chaotic and, well, *stupid* people seem. The Scriptures will result in your being more orderly and precise in your thoughts, speech, and actions. The Scriptures will make you honest and trustworthy in everything. Concepts like duty, responsibility, righteousness, obedience, and submission will take on more significance. The things of this world like the U.S. Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Pledge of Allegiance, conservatism, morality, and “family values” – all of which are prominently on display in our churches – will fade into insignificance. Your biggest disappointment in life will be *people*: they are willful, mentally lazy, inconsistent, undisciplined, unprincipled, and they lack strength, consistency, courage, character, stability, and personality. No longer will you be like prominent preachers today who blindly proclaim that God allowed the World Trade Center to be destroyed because He is angry with the homos and the abortionists.

I’ve got to say something about “family values.” Christians *love* to focus on “family values.” But “family values” as a defined set *does not exist!* It’s just a way that Christians, Moslems, atheists, and Satanists can all get together and rejoice that they all think the country needs to get back to good old “family values.” Here is an extreme example in order to illustrate that there is really no such thing as “family values”: One husband and father, a good, upstanding conservative church-goer, was talking to me about how important and necessary “family values” are. A little later in the conversation he revealed one of the “family values” he and his wife believe in: They make sure to keep their high school daughter supplied with rubbers so she won’t wreck her life by getting pregnant! You go ask ten Christians to sit down and write a list of family values and you’ll get ten different lists – if they can even make one. That is what today’s Christianity consists of – bullshit. They are all just doing that which is right in their own eyes *and therefore they don’t need any list any more than they need the Bible!* The reason most Christians talk about “family values” and the “Holy Bible” is because those two things are used as signs, frontlets, or phylacteries to prove they are spiritual Christians.

Now that you’ve read my book you’ve seen that almost all Christians are blind. That’s why they – and you – never *saw* a lot of the stuff in this book before. Just like I never saw it until the Lord gave me wisdom. My book shows how blind Christians are, but now let me give you an example that will illustrate blindness in *almost everybody* – saved or unsaved – in order to show how blindness can affect people of all levels of intelligence. I’m referring to everyone who drives a car. One of the benefits of this example is you can witness the truth of it every day:

Obviously, driving a car is no big deal. It requires neither intelligence nor skill. And many drivers have been doing it for many years and are therefore experienced drivers. If you ask any driver – Christian or unsaved – why his **side-view mirror** is called a side-view mirror, he will answer either, “Because it’s mounted on the side of the car” (an incorrect answer), or, “Because it’s used to see out the side of the car.” If he gave you the incorrect answer ask him why the rear-view mirror is called the rear-view mirror. He’ll answer, “Because it’s mounted on the rear of...uh...no, it’s mounted toward the *front* of the car. So I guess it’s name reflects the fact that it is used to view what’s out the rear of the car.”

Now, if you were to pull up behind him at a traffic light and look in his rear-view mirror you’d see his eyes because he is correctly using his rear-view mirror to view things to his *rear*. Now look in his side-view mirror. You will *also* see his eyes because he is incorrectly and redundantly using his side-view mirror to view the very same things to his rear that he sees in his rear-view mirror! (You should not be able to see his eyes in his side-view mirror until you pull out into the lane to his left and begin pulling up toward his left *side*.) What you now know about this guy is *he is blind* (!) to traffic that comes up alongside him because his side-view mirror is not performing its intended function. In order to see traffic out to the side he must therefore compensate for his lack of a side-view mirror by turning his head.

If your mirrors are aimed properly you will be able to see the car *behind* you in your rear-view mirror. As that car moves into the left lane and begins getting closer you will see it moving off the left side of your rear-view mirror (and also out the left side of your side-view mirror if you are incorrectly and redundantly using it as another rear-view mirror). The car you are watching is now moving into the “blind spot” that most motorists (those who don’t know what a side-view mirror is for) on the road have. However, in this example you have properly aimed your side-view mirror so you can see out to the side. Therefore, as the car moves out the left of your rear-view mirror it simultaneously moves into your side-view mirror. As the car continues to pull up further alongside of your vehicle you will notice it beginning to move out of your side-view mirror. However, at that same time it will begin moving into your peripheral vision – even though your head is still pointed forward. With the two mirrors aimed properly the passing vehicle will *always* be visible in your rear-view mirror, your side-view mirror, or your peripheral vision. There is no such thing as blindness when you do it right – your eyes will be opened.

A good way to initially adjust your side-view mirror is to put the side of your head against the closed driver’s window. Adjust the side-view mirror so you can just see a slender part of the side of your own vehicle. Most of what you see in the mirror will be out to the side of your car. Then with your head up in the normal driving position you’ll look over at your side-view mirror and see a strange sight – a view out to the side! Most people at this point (to use a Bible application) would listen to their body complain that it preferred the traditional view it is used to; because so many Christians – the majority – just *can’t* be wrong, and would surrender to the will of the body by continuing to use the side-view mirror as another rear-view mirror. A Swordbearer, however, would cautiously drive his car with the mirrors set correctly in order to see if these things be so. Amazed that he no longer has a blind spot, and that he doesn’t even have to turn his head, he’ll overrule his body’s objections and force it to submit to doing things the right way. By being a doer of what is right he will gain understanding *that other drivers lack*. By continuing to learn and do more and more things correctly – instead of making the single doctrine of driving mirrors a hobby horse in order to show that he’s “better” than most other drivers – the Swordbearer becomes a mature and wise driver. In the future when you stop behind another Christian motorist at a traffic light and see his two eyes in his side-view mirror you’ll reflect upon the fact that in all probability you are looking into two OFF flags because that Christian apparently never mastered basics like driving mirrors and the doctrine of the immortality of the unregenerate soul. He only *thought* he was right...because he lazily accepted all the “answers” he got from tradition.

In my next letter I’ll answer your questions about finances and use that to illustrate the importance of *control*.

Len

DOMESTIC COMBAT

Richard:

Because the war involves so much, you must decide what you want to accomplish first. Then decide how you want to accomplish it. And don't think moving to the country will make your family want to live for the Lord; lots of lousy Christians live in the country. Rural property isn't a magic fix.

Your first problem is you. You've been a drifter as a Christian. That needs fixing. You need to change who you are – and you're past middle age so it'll take some thought, planning, and discipline. Because of the kind of Christian you've been your home has been rudderless. Your wife and kids are set in their ways. And they are that way because you allowed them to be whatever they wanted to be. The fact that you suddenly want them to change – at their age – is your second biggest problem. Those two problems are all you should work on for now.

The reason I said *nine* parts professor and *one* part disciplinarian in my earlier letter is because it's too late to lower the boom on everybody. You should be a wise, controlled counselor who puts up with a lot of poor behavior in order to deliver a few words of Scriptural wisdom. If you stay in the word and meditate on it, you'll begin to see lessons and examples in everything around you. The birds, the trees, what people do and say, the way wives and kids smartass the father on TV. Everything. You'll find that the bread of the word just keeps multiplying in order to keep you supplied with little bits of wisdom for your family all the time. Your Bible time with them is a good idea. It is absolutely necessary that they learn to see the Bible as literal if they are ever going to be able to let it replace tradition and Reason.

It would be more rewarding for you, perhaps, to engage in combat on other fields – such as your church. But you are under the authority of your preacher as long as you go to that church – so be careful. Also you'd be shirking your primary responsibility to get yourself and your family squared away. Christianity is mostly boring, daily domestic routine. We are told to be keepers at home for a reason.

I think, in between screaming matches with Jane, it'd be good to spend time with her. Go places with her – even if it's just to push the shopping cart. I'm Robin's favorite plastic vegetable bag ripper-offer. (Except she thinks I've managed to adopt the loudest and most obnoxious method of snapping the bag off the roller!) Since your priorities are now your family, make yourself more a part of their lives – not just a pain in their asses. That will require you to force yourself to be less selfish. It means you'll have to live as if you want to be with them. Domestic routine isn't my cup of tea, but it's important. Start being more honest and open with Jane. Let her know how worried or afraid you are about how hard living in accordance with God's word might be. She'll certainly be able to identify with that. Don't just be in her presence physically; let her inside your head. Confide in her, and ask for her help. Have lots of Bible discussions with her – more than you have with your kids. Be patient when she takes the side of tradition and Reason.

The domestic front is your field of battle. It will be fought and won with an all-encompassing domestic routine – not just because you have a new daily Bible time and occasional times of shouting and laying down the law.

Keep all of this in mind when establishing your priorities and objectives. You should be Mister Homebody until your last child leaves home. That's not very long. At that point you and Jane will be the only ones in the house, your domestic world will shrink considerably, and you can begin to extend your attentions outside the home.

This is not to say you won't meet people with whom you'll interact. You will. But the domestic front must be your priority because of all the word of God has to say about that important foundation.

Whatever you decide to do you should keep the above in mind. The Christian life is lived one boring day after another for the most part. It is a way of life. It is who we are. That will affect you. You'll become more home oriented. Your family will become more important because your obedience to God will become more important. Things that are outside your little Christian life will become less important. If you are afraid of something out in the world or if you are all involved in worldly affairs, you'll find those cares of the world will grow strangely dim when your little Christian world is your main priority. That's kind of what I was getting at when I spoke about your inner sanctum. If your inner sanctum is in order, you'll branch out from there: Your family and home will be an extension of your inner sanctum. Then your friends will become only those who care about the Bible. You will shape your world around the Bible. In that way you are indicating the kind of kingdom you want to live in.

Len

IMPORTANCE OF BEING IN CONTROL

Andy:

In order to properly serve God we must be in control of our lives. That remains true even if we are slaves under Pharaoh or modern soldiers subject to sudden orders. Being in control applies to our own bodies, our homes, and everything we do. The obvious principle behind it is the head and body. The head must be in control of its members at all times. But remember, we are and will always be members under the Lord's Headship. And now during this sojourn when we do not have dominion we will be under varying authorities such as governmental laws and our employers. We must faithfully keep the laws of our secular government and faithfully serve our employers. Whenever we become members of various organizations we must faithfully serve our authorities in those organizations. That's why we must be careful about voluntarily joining churches, garden clubs, open-shop unions, militias, and all organizations that do not glorify God in the name of Jesus Christ. Remember, unless we rule well our own house, unless we run a "tight ship" as we used to say in the Navy, we run the risk of not being ready to serve our Heavenly Master and our earthly masters anywhere, any time, and in any way. Being in control is absolutely essential if we are to have any value to the Lord. If we are not in control in some area, the Devil will use that area against us in order to defeat the church, which is how he defeats the Lord. Therefore, the key to being a good servant is to be in complete control of your life so you can submissively and instantly obey all orders from the Master.

If we do not control ourselves and control our areas of responsibility we are not good servants – we are liabilities. And that is very bad because *our only value to the Lord is our service*. It does not matter how much He loves us; if we prove not to be faithful servants He will get rid of us as quickly as He got rid of Lucifer. Lucifer's downfall was his inability or unwillingness to *control* his lusts. Our primary lust in life should be to do whatever the Lord wants. If we are unable to do that we are – in practice – carnal.

Let's look at the value of dogs. Unless they get saved they are carnal – and are therefore abominations at enmity against God. That's why when God moved His Old Testament saints into the Promised Land and gave them dominion He told

them to exterminate the nations that did not completely submit to them. There are two lessons we should learn from that: First, we are God's servants who will be discarded as abominations unless we faithfully submit to Him. Second, dogs are to be our slaves in the future. Many of them we will love and enjoy very much. But if they prove to be poor servants we must not only understand Bible principles but also have the wisdom to apply them so we, too, can view them as abominations – and get rid of them.

Because of Who God is, the one and only Head, it is impossible to exist as a member under His authority if that member forgets its purpose and place by becoming another head. That simply cannot be. That's how this war started. All of this will become more clear as you and the word of God become one, as you become a Swordbearer by incorporating the teachings, principles, and concepts of the Bible into who you are. You will then so love the Lord and His ways that you will understand how it is that you can view Christians you love and who are congenial, wonderful, and sincere (like preachers, pewsters, relatives, and Lucifer) as enemies if they remain carnal: Your love for the Lord and His kingdom will affect the way you view everyone and everything.

As you mature as a Christian, therefore, you will develop an affinity for Biblical order – as opposed to chaos. That will cause any area in your life over which you do not have control to produce in you a feeling of what I call “unease.” I use this feeling of unease as an early warning that something is not to my liking. For example, you said you had a feeling of “reluctance” about letting your wife convince you to buy a new home because you “should have more cash on hand at this point” and that your “record of saving is not what it should be.” In other words, you feel uneasy about losing financial control by going into debt.

That unease would not be acceptable to me because the Bible says we are to be *in control* (debt free) of our finances at all times. Therefore, because of even the unlikely event that the debt should be suddenly called, I avoid debt if I don't already have the full amount ready to cover the debt. It is perfectly fine for dogs to live in debt, but as Christians we are in bondage to the Bible and are not to be in debt.

If my lusts for material things and for prestige got the better of me (Whoa! That would make me feel uneasy and I'd instantly crack down on myself), and I allowed myself to ignore the Bible and get into debt (Whoa! That would make me feel uneasy and I'd instantly crack down on myself), I'd be tempting God. In effect, I'd be saying, “Hey, Lord, look at the debt I got myself into. Now, I don't know what you have planned for the future but whatever it is, how about not letting it interfere with my ability to pay this debt.” (Whoa! A prayer like that would make me feel uneasy and I'd crack down on myself.)

The solution is a simple one as long as my affections are on things above, not on things on the earth (**Co 3:2**): I ensure that my lusts and the lusts of those under my authority do not get me into debt. That is my responsibility as a member of God's household, and as head over my household.

Debt is not just bad because it is contrary to what the Bible says; it also violates the principles by which we are supposed to live and causes God to withhold understanding and wisdom – just like any other sin does.

This principle of remaining in control in order to avoid “unease” can be applied to everything: If I thought my “record of saving is not what it should be” and that I “should have more cash on hand at this point”, I would take action by doing what was necessary to save more.

Instead of using your inner sanctum to decide if increasing your debt was Biblical, however, you yielded to your carnal man and rationalized that “if you do go into debt and things go sour economically, well that could be good, too.” By that remark I assume you mean you'd learn a “good lesson” if the Lord chose to punish you for sinning by going into debt. That's not the way to look at it. If you knowingly and voluntarily turn your back on the Bible and something happens that causes you to go bankrupt, you'd be making God and His church look bad (even if you didn't encounter financial difficulty) by foolishly hoisting yourself on your own petard. So the only “good” that could come from a situation that caused you to be unable to pay your debt would be your learning a lesson that you already knew and had decided to ignore! But you'd only learn that lesson if you heeded the same “unease” you'd earlier ignored and if you this time forced yourself to repent and submit to the word of God. It's a lot easier, less painful, and much better for the church if you heed the still small voice of unease *before* you sin by not sinning in the first place.

The important thing is to be honest with the Lord. When you feel unease, take it to the Lord via the Scriptures. If in doubt about something don't make a move until you and the Lord and the Bible all agree.

Also, if I may submit one more thing for your consideration: Your viewpoint on life should be a strong and positive one. Your Biblical relationship with the Lord should make you humble and obedient enough to be a strong warrior who, as a doer, confronts problems and solves them. Problems include not just things that are obviously unscriptural, but also things you don't like – things that make you uneasy. Being strong and in control should be conveyed not just by your actions, but also in your speech. The weak will whine, “I wish I could stop smoking”, but you say, “I stopped smoking because I wanted to.” The weak will whine, “I wish I'd been brave enough to fight Goliath”, but you say, “I fought Goliath in spite of my fear.” The weak will whine, “I wish I'd lived a better Christian life”, but you say, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.” The weak will whine, “I wish I had saved more money”, but you say, “I just revamped my savings program because I decided it was best to do so.”

Let others express regrets for their failures. If you and I are warriors, we'll be men of action – not passive whiners who watch life get ahead of us. Yes, we'll screw some things up, *but we'll adjust and fix them*. Mistakes and sins are inevitable parts of the fight because we are ignorant sinners striving to learn, to grow, and to be perfect. Perfection isn't looking back at a sinless life; perfection is being a proper servant who is always ready, willing, and able to serve the Lord by doing anything He wants to the utmost of his ability. Perfection is being a doer of the word. A weakling and loser is the whiner who sincerely *wished* he'd done this or that when the opportunity presented itself.

Learn to be in control of everything. Be in control of your speech as well as yourself, your household, and everything within your jurisdiction in life. Be in command of your areas of responsibility because it's your duty, it's your job. Rule and reign with Christ today, tomorrow, and forever. Make mistakes along the way, but always have a *perfect* record as a doer as you grow. We are here to be perfect doers – not sinless. And then if God is happy with our lives as doers, if He sees He can count on us as obedient men of action, He'll not impute sin to us.

Be like David; when he sinned he didn't become a whiner and let it defeat him: He continued being a man of action by repenting and making it right. That's why he never made the same mistake twice. When God's prophet went to him and

said, “You sinned with Bathsheba”, David didn’t whine, “I wish I didn’t have a problem with sex”; he took action by repenting and saying, “It won’t happen again.” And it didn’t; he pressed on with serving God by being a bold doer of the word.

Len

ON HAVING READ THE BIBLE

Harry:

Now that you have finished reading the entire Bible you are ahead of *most Christians*. But now you need to *learn* the Bible so you can say to people, “Yes, I’m an expert on the Bible, what would you like to discuss?” That doesn’t mean you know everything; it just means you are an expert. An expert on the Bible is familiar with the entire Book and has studied it in detail until he understands all doctrines. Most Christians have slovenly failed to do that and are therefore incapable of living Biblical lives. Not knowing the Bible means they do not know the Word of God Who reveals Himself through His word. Because they lack both discernment and an inner sanctum, they have no alternative but to be the very best Christians they can possibly be using their carnal minds. Then at Judgment they’ll use their carnal minds to argue with the Lord when He tells them they shamefully did not study to show themselves approved unto God by rightly dividing the word of truth. Yes, you need to become an expert on the Bible because it must become *who you are*.

It is not necessary to take the courses offered in “Bible” school in order to be a Bible expert; in fact, it is generally harmful to do so. God gave us the Bible and told us to live by it and it alone. Most courses in “Bible” schools are extra-Biblical crap.

As soon as you learn something from the Bible you should incorporate it into your life. That is being a doer of the word. Be strong and watch yourself because being a doer of the word is where most Christians stumble. Remember, we are not called to *learn* the Bible. I say again, our job is not to *learn* the Bible; our job is to *do* the Bible. Yes, that requires learning the Bible, but we should only learn the Bible in order to make it part of our lives, hearts, and minds. Being a doer of the word is belief. That alone is belief. That is the test in our Christianity.

Obedient works result in an important part of growth – understanding. Growing in understanding is a must. And since understanding is a by-product of obedient works, you should look for things to do in the Bible so you can grow.

Here’s how it works: If you love the Lord you will want to be a pleasing wife/servant. Since you know doing what *you* think would please Him does *not* please Him, there is only one place to find ways to please Him – the Bible. You will *want* to find things in the Bible that you can incorporate into your life and into your character. Some of them will be minor and easy to do. Others will be big and scary. How you accomplish those challenges doesn’t matter – as long as you do them. It is easy to learn the Bible, but it is difficult to be a doer. *That* is the test of your faith. I won’t belabor that point, but be advised, brother, there are very few Christians who are doers. You’ll just have to find that out for yourself.

Which brings to mind another point. Because there are so few Swordbearers you will lead a lonely life. Knowing the Bible and doing the Bible – which rules out tradition and philosophy – will result in your being separated from most – should I say, *almost all?* – Christians. You will, in the beginning, wonder if you are doing the right thing, but the Word of God will Comfort and assure you through His word that you are alone because you have repented of your apostasy.

Therefore, in order to grow quickly it is a good idea to find and incorporate as many things in the Bible as quickly as you can (being careful not to overdrive your family). You will probably make some mistakes as I did, but the Lord will see and appreciate that you are eagerly trying to conform to His word and He will take care of you. Later when you find out you didn’t have to do a certain thing you can address it in your inner sanctum and decide what to do about it; our Christian walk with the Lord is a growth process fed by the milk and meat of His word.

Len

FOUR BIG STEPS

Richard:

After Robin and I were saved there were four steps we took that aided our development as Christians. I am not suggesting these are substitutes for daily Bible study. These steps were *results* of our Bible study; they were *doing* the word. Along with Bible study there were some major factors that enabled me to take these steps. First was belief in the word of God as the absolute authority over me. Second, my faith in God made me accept whatever the results of obeying His word might be. And third, my open and honest relationship with the Lord made me admit to Him all the fears I had about different aspects of putting His word into action in my life.

I don’t like being afraid or nervous about things. And I don’t want to be a coward when it comes to serving the Lord. A coward runs from the things in the Bible that scare him. In order to not be a coward, therefore, I had to *address my fears*. I quickly learned the best and quickest way to reduce fear in my life was to *pick out the biggest and commence firing!* My honest relationship with the Lord wouldn’t allow me to handle my Christian walk any other way. Once I began talking with Him about certain issues and problems, it was impossible to avoid resolving the issue or problem without turning my back on the Lord. If I wanted to ignore a doctrine my honesty with Him would require me to first say, “Lord, I’m going to let my fear of this thing cause me to cowardly turn my back to You and ignore both it and You.” I found I couldn’t live that way; I love Him too much to treat Him that way. So I learned to act in spite of the presence of fear; if I had waited to see if the fear would subside I’d never have become a doer of the word. The **BIG FOUR** steps were:

LEAVING CHURCH. I didn’t leave because I knew any of the stuff in my book. I left because I became dissatisfied with the bullshit that goes on in church; I simply could not compromise. I believed in an idealistic Christianity and naïvely thought the grass would be greener elsewhere. What people thought of me was unimportant; serving God in accordance with His word was all that mattered.

Leaving church (we simply quit showing up) created a bigger stir than I thought it would. My wife and I got some phone calls from fellow pewsters who told us that – just in case we heard about a certain “unanimous” vote concerning us at a hastily-called “business meeting” – it wasn’t unanimous because they and others who voted against the measure were ignored. A preacher in a neighboring city who was a friend of my preacher quickly mailed a letter to the area churches and warned them to shun me because I’d “gone over to the Devil.” In another city an hour’s drive away, an elderly retired missionary and his wife heard the letter read by their pastor in church and were shocked.

The missionary and his wife had gotten to know us a year earlier when my wife and I knocked on their door. I introduced us as new Christians, told him I’d heard he served on the mission field in a certain place, and would like to ask him

some questions if that would be all right. The four of us hit it off from the start, and they were delighted that we were so enthusiastic about the Lord that we'd even knock on their door as if we were Family. They "adopted" us and insisted that we use the same familial endearments when addressing them that their adult children did.

Therefore, after they heard the reading of the letter that was circulating about us, they jumped into their car and drove to our home. When I answered the unexpected knock on my door and expressed delight at seeing them, he cut me short with a grim-faced, "We came all this way because we just had to ask you to your face if what we heard in church is true: Have you turned your back on the Lord and started serving the Devil?" Now it was my turn to be shocked, "No, sir, absolutely not. Why would you think that? Please, come in." They stepped into our tiny living room and saw that they had interrupted a Bible study Robin and I were having. Obviously relieved, he had me tell him in great detail why I'd left church. When they left he told me we had made the right decision, and that – even though he believed me – he wanted me to know he was going to talk with my pastor to verify my story. Later he called to tell me my pastor admitted the truth of my story, and the missionary was therefore going to advise his own pastor to tell his church the letter was false, and suggest that he get the truth out to all the churches that received the letter.

The point is, even in the rare instances when leaving a church creates a stir, leaving is not the end of the world. In fact, we found we now had more time to devote to Bible study. I also realized I needed to ensure that neither Robin nor I slacked off from our Bible studies and Christian growth. That helped lead to the second big step we took.

ESTABLISHING HEGEMONY. The Bible says the man is to run his house as if he were Christ. So with Christ as my Boss, I gradually established hegemony over my home – as outlined in my last letter (which made the process sound easier and more peaceful than it was). I was merely taking what the Bible says seriously instead of giving lip service to God.

As I took steps to rule my house as a Christ-like monarch, I began to *understand* more about authority, which made some things jump out at me: As God's wife/servant I'd never backtalk Him, disrespectfully roll my eyes at Him, question His authority, tell Him to quit shouting at me, or in a hundred other ways made common by women's liberation, be disrespectful of His authority. And if I let those under my authority do those things to me, I'd be surrendering my authority to my subjects just like King Saul did. So, not wanting to piss God off by shirking my Christian duty, I ensured that Robin became a properly respectful and obedient subject. When the wars were won and my rule was established we discovered peace and contentment. At one point Robin even mused about a bumper sticker on her car that said, I'M A SUBMISSIVE HOUSEWIFE AND PROUD OF IT. She also takes **1 Pe 3:6** seriously and literally. As an outward manifestation of the truth of that verse in our home, she has developed a habit of saying to me, "Dinner's ready, lord" and "Good night, lord." She's probably the only Christian wife in western society who does that. And, as you know, she's a normal person; neither her submission to me nor my submission to God has resulted in our behaving with the cowering, abused mannerisms of servants who are not loved by their masters and who therefore lack confidence and boldness.

This was obviously a big step because it is something we live each and every day. And how we live at home has a big impact on how we view life. We have both learned much about authority, about serving, and about ruling. And then we learned what God says about health. Because it was such a scary doctrine my honest relationship with the Lord made it obvious that I'd have to *address my fears*.

SHUNNING MEDICAL SCIENCE. This was a biggie. And I came up with all kinds of great ways to convince myself that relying on medical science AND God wasn't really as bad as God told King Asa it was. But thank God I couldn't leave the Bible out of any relevant line of thought. My inner sanctum kept throwing out as irrelevant all my fears, all my rationalizations, all my excuses, all my opinions, all the opinions of other Christians, and kept dragging me back to the Bible. My inner sanctum would not allow me to base my thoughts or actions on anything but the living word of the living God. It scared me more than my mortal death to realize my reluctance to believe what God teaches about health was causing me to fight against Him! Fighting God is the one thing I always *say* with my lips I never want to do, and here I was actively resisting Him with philosophy as my weapon! I say again, thank God He kept dragging me – kicking and screaming – back to what *He* says. Robin and I discussed, studied, and prayed about the doctrine over a period of several months. We were really procrastinating and we knew it; there simply wasn't anything in the Bible to justify going to medical science AND God. Luke was not a physician by today's standards; his medical practice had nothing to do with science or philosophy and consisted of nothing more than what any Boy Scout learns about first aid. So if I had a heart attack or a brain tumor was I supposed to call a Boy Scout? "No", the word of God kept answering, "you're supposed to call elders of the church." Oh, that's just great! An elder! And with my luck he probably hadn't even been a Boy Scout! I mean, Luke the Boy Scout knew more about first aid than your average elder! And then my inner sanctum would remind me not to leave God and His word out of it. God is a better healer than Luke the Boy Scout ever was. And as a soldier of Christ my duty was to lean not unto mine own understanding, but to trust in the Lord with all mine heart if I ever wanted Him to direct my paths. It was time for me to grow up and be not wise in mine own eyes, but *fear the Lord* and depart from my carnal walk. Mine is not to question why; mine is but to do and die – daily.

Then one day at Canaan Farm (named after **Le 25:38**) I was out front by the road planting a tree. Robin came out to visit, and we talked about the obvious again as I worked. We both knew we were close to making a decision for the Lord because we both felt bad about dragging our feet any longer in hopes that some "miracle verse" that we'd somehow overlooked would pop out of the Bible. We decided we'd rather die than make it look like the Lord had only fearful servants who would do anything to save their skin – except trust Him in accordance with His word. So right there we leaned on my shovel and prayed, putting our lives into His hands. Then I got back to my digging. Since then we haven't had so much as an aspirin. And after that every other fear got smaller because we'd picked our biggest fear and overcome it. We still get afraid, but not as much. We have simply accepted our own deaths whenever our Lord arranges them; His will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

SEPARATION: Medical science wasn't the only problem we were struggling with. We were also learning about various other things like – well, you've read my book. And we were still young Christians – only four years old. We were already openly attacked by our parents and siblings as weirdoes simply because we'd become Bible believers. And now we were sailing full speed ahead way out into uncharted waters for which even born-again Christians ridiculed us. We even found common peer pressure from pagans to be oppressive because all of it together was just too much of a load for us to bear at that young age. We were losing friends left and right: Naval Academy classmates, shipmates, and squadron mates would phone and want to shoot the shit – and sure enough, I'd mention the Bible. And then we'd never hear from them again. We ended up with no family and no friends. None. We had to get away from it all; we had to go somewhere we could be alone with the Lord so we

could grow under His wing without simultaneously contending with ridicule, rejection, and mindless, carnal arguments. So we moved to Blue Ribband Farm (named after **Nu 15:37-41**) where we could be alone in the earth (**Is 5:8**).

That helped me learn about *separation*. Separation is merely preserving your doctrinal purity and the integrity of your walk with the Lord. As a young Christian I was too weak to handle social pressures along with the unusual stuff I was learning from the Bible. Something had to give, and since society wasn't our friend we took our Bibles out into the wilderness. (Actually, I believe the Lord arranged circumstances to *drive* us out into the wilderness for our own good.) Blue Ribband Farm was a refuge from both modern Christianity and the world. A quiet life in the country allowed us to concentrate on the Bible without distraction, and to completely rule our environment in order to ensure it was conducive to Christian growth. We made so much progress I began to be a big fan of extreme physical separation.

Speaking of separation, your moonlight stroll with the Lord is an excellent way for you to be alone with Him and think things through with Him. But you've got to work harder to find ways to be alone with Him than I do. In fact, living out here alone for so long has been very good for me. For example, unscriptural stuff that other people never seem to be aware of – possibly because that stuff is “business as usual” in the world – really sends up a red flag in my inner sanctum. I think the fact that I don't live in the world, that I'm out here all alone with the Lord, has helped the Bible remove many of the weeds in the soil of my soul that hinder many Christians in busier environments. And since the vast majority of my life is spent alone with Him in this simple *Biblical environment*, it has become my reality. When I go back to “civilization” many things jump out at me as wrong that others don't see because they are weeds they've gotten used to. In many cases they actually think the weeds are flowers. (Weeds have become flowers and flowers weeds in today's Christianity.) Out here I don't need to work at being alone – I'm thinking with the Lord and singing hymns to Him when I'm out in the woods cutting firewood, riding the tractor for hours cutting grass, digging holes, walking down to the mailbox, etc. – it's just a way of life.

As good as physical separation has been for me, however, what I learned during my rapid growth out here in the boonies showed me physical separation is not necessarily the answer.

Like me, the Pharisees were big fans of physical separation and therefore looked down their noses at the Lord for eating with sinners. Obviously, then, *physical* separation is *not* the answer. The answer is *separation*; the answer is not physical separation. The Lord didn't *need* physical separation because He was strong enough to keep Himself from becoming unclean doctrinally when He rubbed elbows with sinners and when Satan tempted Him in the wilderness. His inner sanctum was so strong nothing could get in and corrupt His doctrine, His discernment, His dedication, or His being a doer of the word. I, on the other hand, was too young and weak to handle anything but the peaceful childhood environment my Heavenly Father provided out here so we could mature into adult Christians armed for the war.

Therefore, I now realize why the Lord got me out of church and out of “circulation” so fast: The Good Shepherd knew that was best for this young lamb. My secure, Bible-oriented environment allowed me to get my doctrine squared away and to develop an inner sanctum that could withstand the false doctrine and tradition of modern churchianity, as well as the emotional pressures of being despised and rejected by men. Now, with my doctrine mature, my relationship with the Lord strong, and my inner sanctum impregnable (with the Lord as my strength), I am separated no matter where I go. That is what Christian maturity is. It doesn't mean I'm closed-minded; if I am wrong about something, I will submit to Scripture. It means the Lord of the Bible is my God, and His word is my life – no matter what.

Those four steps were necessary for me. They may not be for you. Therefore, perhaps I should have just told you the most helpful and important steps we took after we became followers of Jesus Christ were the myriad steps of obedience to Him, because that's all the above four steps were. The many steps we took in our walk with Him included those four steps because that's the way our Shepherd led us. He may not want you to go that way because He may want to shape you into a different kind of vessel. The real message in the above is that we should all be willing to do *anything* for the Lord. Our walk is just one step after the other – forever.

Did it require courage to take the above steps? Yes and no.

Yes, it did take courage because we were leaving modern/traditional Christianity behind. We were also leaving our own Reason behind. And we were committing ourselves to living in accordance with a Book most Christians do not believe is the word of God *as defined by God*. You see, when we got saved we had no idea what we were committing ourselves to. We had been told the Bible says to repent, be born again, and then eternal security would get us to heaven no matter how much we later turned our backs on God. Therefore, we were turning our backs on what many traditional Christians had believed for centuries, and we began trusting the Lord to guide us via His word alone.

And no, it didn't take courage because if we truly loved the Lord, had faith in Him, and believed His word, all steps in our Christian walk were merely obedient steps in accordance with our duty. That's what we signed up for – to obey God. Servants do not deserve rewards for doing their jobs. But the Lord rewards us anyway because there is no nobler deed than the performance of one's duty.

Today, Christians need two things in order to leave traditional leaven behind and follow the Lord. First, they need to truly love the Lord and have a *personal* relationship *with Him*. Second, they need to know the Bible and believe it is the word of God. Most Christians meet neither requirement.

Len

INNER SANCTUM DEFINED

Richard:

You are beginning to see firsthand that in order to win in combat you must be prepared in advance. If we don't take training seriously we'll never be able to contend with footmen. Everything in the Bible is there for a reason. If you haven't taken this stuff seriously when studying it in your easy chair at home, mulled it over while shaving and mowing the grass, discussed it with people, and imagined different scenarios, etc., you'll be caught by surprise when out on the field of life and will revert to old habits taught by the world and reinforced by the worldly Christians with whom you associate.

God expects us to be cerebral. He expects us to live according to the principles and concepts He has revealed in His word. Because the Old Testament Jews failed to do that, they circumcised their penises, went to church on Saturday, and went to hell. David, however, lived with the Lord through the word of God and developed an understanding of what the Lord really wants, as demonstrated by his eating the shewbread. Most Christians don't know how to live with the Lord and therefore don't know Him well.

In order to properly rule ourselves, our families, and the people in God's future kingdom, we need to know God's will in every possible situation and be able to differentiate between what is *really* His will and what is just what we think is the right thing. That means we need to develop what I call the *inner sanctum*.

The inner sanctum is in your mind. It is your headquarters, your office from which you rule. It is a very exclusive place because only three things should be allowed in it; God, the Bible, and you. No worldly thoughts, morals, traditions, or feelings. No peer pressure, no fears, and no lusts. All thoughts, words, decisions, decrees, and actions must come from the inner sanctum. The inner sanctum is the private place in which you and the Lord talk about the Bible and about everything in life. It is where discernment originates. Obviously, if you become an expert on the Bible it will help you discuss and analyze the events of life with the Lord in accordance with His word. Therefore one of the earliest decrees by you (and the Lord) from your inner sanctum will be that you always study the Bible in order to increase your expertise.

Your goal is to always live in the inner sanctum with the Lord, to be always with Him, to be always submissive to Him, and to be always ready to serve Him. I don't care if you are making love to your wife or yelling at her, being scolded by your boss, mowing the lawn, or being tortured to death by the Antichrist – you must *always* be in the inner sanctum. That is your goal, and that is the way God will require you to be for all of eternity.

When you screw up get back in the inner sanctum with the Lord and His word. Talk it over with Him and decide what, if anything, needs to be done. When you are reading the Bible be on the lookout for ways to serve Him and please Him. Your growing love for Him will cause you to want to find ways to alter your life in accordance with His word. Fortunately there are *plenty* of things, large and small, in His word that will begin to present themselves to you. Do not be afraid to live by the Bible because every time you do something in the Bible God feeds you and you grow.

The inner sanctum is really just a way to illustrate the proper mindset of a servant of God. It is where you can analyze things unencumbered by the world and your own fears. A properly developed inner sanctum will enable you to be a separated Christian no matter where you are. Once the three of you have arrived at a conclusion it is up to you to put it into action. In that way God is the Boss and you are the worker. If you only sit in the inner sanctum and idly muse about things without putting them into action you will be disciplined by circumstances God sends along.

That means you in your inner sanctum need to be alert to possible "random occurrences of chance" that may be from the Lord as He tries to punish and guide you. Carefully analyze the timing of the event with respect to your life. Have you been a little too hard on your wife lately? Have you been ignoring the Lord and your Bible study? It could be anything, it could be nothing. That's up to you and the Lord. But that's the way you must always live your life, ruling from the throne up there on top of your shoulders with the Lord and His word. I cannot stress that enough: All of your growth, all of your actions, all of your decisions, all of your beliefs and opinions must (and should only) come from the inner sanctum. If you live that way you will grow very rapidly.

Developing an inner sanctum takes more than just knowing the Bible. You must also spend much time in meditation. Meditation is just *thinking* about things. You can do it anywhere, but you must do it. The Bible says "study to be quiet." Part of that involves taking time to think. You are supposed to be developing into a ruler under Christ. You must train your brain to think Scripturally. Take walks, sit on the porch, sit in a dark living room when your family is asleep, pace the floor, etc. Do something to ensure that you, unlike our frenetically paced modern society, have *time to think*. What goes on in your easy chair should not be underestimated. From there, with the Bible as your looking glass, you examine and sit in judgment on your life and your household and issue orders to yourself and to those under your command. You'll learn to appreciate the time you spend in thought because, since it will happen in your inner sanctum, you'll be fellowshiping with the Lord and making yourself available to hear the still small voice. All orders originating from the inner sanctum must be obeyed. If they are not you need to take appropriate measures to see that it doesn't happen again.

We need to be prepared for everything in life. Your eyes are now opening, and there is so much to see.

Len

MORE INNER SANCTUM

Richard:

First, I never do anything that isn't approved by the inner sanctum. The inner chambers of my mind – where I really dwell – are off limits to all but the Lord and His Bible. There the three of us live in harmony because there is no question about Who's in charge, and there are no distractions such as wives, tradition, peer pressure, religious commentaries, etc. – just the three of us deciding how I should live. I say the three of us because, although it is the Lord who decides, my ability to know and understand His will is a function of my maturity.

For example, decades ago as a new convert when I had no inner sanctum and no knowledge of the Bible, an assistant pastor came over for dinner. When he saw beer in my refrigerator he rebuked me and asked, "If Jesus Christ came over for dinner, would you want Him to find out you drank beer?" I quit drinking right then because I had no choice – I didn't know the Bible and had to assume those in authority in the church did. A few years later when I learned that drinking is OK, my inner sanctum made a decree to continue not drinking so I wouldn't offend the many traditional Christians who think booze is a sin. That decision was based on my understanding and level of maturity at the time. Nothing could change that decree except a revision from the inner sanctum. After about seventeen years of not drinking something happened as a result of my Christian maturity: I became aggressive. (Well, *more* aggressive.) I was now strong enough in the Lord that I didn't need physical separation to protect me from Christians and dogs. And my hatred for tradition made me drink so I could be more like Christ by inviting rebukes from other Christians who thought it was a sin to break tradition. Therefore when I realized not drinking was playing into the hands of tradition, and that I'd reached a level of strength and maturity that would allow me to handle the barbs and arrows of other Christians, the three of us in the inner sanctum reversed the decree.

The inner sanctum must even reject the inputs of fear. For example, when I realized my appendix was about to rupture, my sudden fear was not allowed into the inner sanctum where it could possibly affect the earlier decree to not go to medical science AND God. All I did was to make sure Robin would be watched over by someone when I died (**Jn 19:26,27**). And then as I sank into torturing pain and feverish delirium I simply waited on the Lord. Wait, I say, on the Lord. That showed the Lord and me (**Ge 22:12**) that I'd *really* rather die than not glorify Him as the only real authority in my life. If I had died when my appendix ruptured, it would have been *good* because it would have been the Lord's will. If I had run to the emergency room and been "saved" by the doctors, I probably would have tried to pretend God saved me – when all I was really doing was trusting in the world's beloved balm of Gilead. I would not have glorified God; I would have circumvented His will; and I would

have revealed that I didn't really believe what the Bible says. I can't allow myself to be that kind of person because I love the Lord too much for that.

And that's what's ultimately at stake – our mortal lives. That's where the rubber meets the road. Unfortunately for most Christians as soon as something happens that they don't like, they come up with all kinds of rationalizations to abandon the position they took (lightly) when studying the Bible in their easy chairs. And *that's* how they demonstrate unbelief – by not *doing* the word. The Bible simply isn't real to them; it's not *really* in control of their lives. They make the Bible and Christianity and their lives nothing but pathetic jokes. There is nothing wrong with dying on the field of battle.

No, I don't mind answering any questions you want to ask me. However, I say that with a certain amount of reluctance. On the one hand I'm willing for you to examine my testimony and be inspired by my selfless love for the Lord. That's what my testimony – or *ensample* – should do because that's what it's there for. But on the other hand I worry about some things: First, I don't want anyone to feel *pushed* by me about anything (except Bible study). They may grow faster in *other* areas than I did, so I don't want to get in their way. I'm here to help. And second, I don't want anyone to form a dependence on me; I want them to use me as inspiration, help, information, etc., but I am not a substitute for, and don't belong in, their inner sanctum. I want them to develop their own strong and independent relationships with the Lord through His word. That way they can develop into the kind of vessels *God* wants them to be.

Just to clarify: Swearing is an extra something over and above just stating, decreeing, or affirming. Swearing is intended to give more weight to our words than our just saying something. Saying something like, "To tell you the truth, I didn't think he'd ever show up" is probably bad because it *undermines* the validity of other things we say when we don't swear or say "To tell you the truth." The Bible makes a *huge* deal over the truth of what God says, the authority of what He says – even in little things. We are being taught to have that characteristic as part of who we are. We should be ideologically offended when someone says to us, "I don't believe it!" because they are taking our word lightly. I don't take my words lightly. None of us is supposed to.

Not swearing is just the tip of the iceberg – it has to do with *who we are* – our character. All of what the Bible says must be internalized (eaten) in order for us to conform to the image of God. We must become noble princes with great strength of character in accordance with the Bible in order to inherit the kingdom. If we're not fit to rule, we won't.

As you can see, there is much thinking to do ahead of time if we are going to successfully walk the narrow path of righteousness.

Len

STAY IN CHURCH

Harry:

It *might* be better for you to attend some church. I know you have become more and more dissatisfied with church as you have grown in your knowledge of the word. But leaving church must be carefully considered. There was no doubt with me; I had to leave. The Lord wanted it that way so He could sit me down and teach me His word and give me the faith and strength to accept and act on His word alone. So continue your search for a better church and see what happens. If your current church works out...stay, if it doesn't...leave. The Lord may have things He wants you to do and/or learn in a church.

We know a guy who quit going to church because it didn't use and/or believe the KJV. He immediately started going downhill: He didn't read the Bible, much less study it; his wife quit pretending she cared about the Bible; and he kept picking fights with people about the Bible version issue in order to justify his not going to church. In other words the KJV became his reason and excuse for sliding into oblivion. I only mention that because I know you are looking for a KJV church. That is fine. But many KJVers use the Bible version issue to cover the fact that they don't know the KJV very well and to "prove" they are better Christians than all those non-KJVers. Many Christians do that kind of thing; they make one issue a big deal and constantly harp on it. But when you get to know them it turns out they don't know and aren't interested in other Bible issues. So be aware of that and don't let anyone turn you into a single issue Christian.

Another reason you may want to continue attending church – at least for a while – is so you won't be perceived by other Christians as (I have to tilt my head back and look down my nose in order to say this correctly) "one of *those*" who doesn't go to church. If you do not go to church you will lose credibility and legitimacy with those who do. If you were to quit going to church your family and friends who do go to church would think, "Yeah, just as I thought, Harry's pious act is a fake. He just wants to quit going to church." Remember, when we quit going to church we had no family and no friends so we didn't have to consider that aspect. And now I'm used to it: Whenever I'm introduced to or meet another Christian, the first thing they ask when they find out I'm a Bible believer is, "What church do you attend?" It's just the way they are. But since all but the first two years I've been saved have been out of church, I can handle their disapproval. What they usually don't realize about me is I'm quietly "knowing them by their fruits" during our conversation; and if their church produces Enlightened, Scripturally-ignorant, carnal unbelievers in the existence of the word of God, I wouldn't go anywhere near it.

So go to church, but have your loins girded against the leaven.

Len

BE A DOER – NOW!

Harry:

My prayers are with Connie that she might recover and start feeling better. Perhaps it will in some way express my heart-felt wishes if you just give her a hug for me.

No, as I indicated earlier, Richard still needs prayer; his wife and teenage kids are beginning to openly rebel against his growing desire to shape his life in accordance with God's will. He is also beginning to spar – against my advice – with his preacher about the existence of the word of God. Therefore, I wrote him some things about the war he is entering. I told him his first priority should be to rule well his own household. Until that is done he's not qualified to minister to the church. I warned him about fighting other battles before he even has his own home in order – he must take care of his family's needs.

Part of his problem is he has not been prepared for the reaction he is getting from other Christians who are captives of Babylon. So let me caution you again: Do not take Christian warfare lightly; I've been through it and know how bad it can be. Your enemies will be other Christians – not unsaved homos, adulterers, drunkards, and abortionists. Your kids are already

grown and gone from the nest, so that's not something you have to face. And both Connie and Hank are pretty squared away and disciplined anyway because you and Jill have done a nice job with them. For years Robin was a handful because no Enlightened woman is going to become Biblically submissive without a fight. Richard is encountering that now. But he's never had a disciplined household – that's why he has his hands so full now. Because you do have a disciplined household you may be able to engage in external battles sooner than Richard even though you're younger in the Lord than he.

As a young Christian my combative nature combined with my new love for the Lord caused me to get into many battles. I didn't know any better, got overwhelmed, and retreated to the country. That helped me; I was learning some pretty dramatic stuff from the Lord and needed some time to digest it, mature, and get my house and life in order.

Robin and I are now one. She knows everything I know, agrees with me, and discusses everything with me about society, the church, doctrine, etc. My home is a Bible haven, a place I can recharge my batteries during and after combat. My Christian walk has been full of sorrow, tears, pain, fear, mistakes, loneliness, satisfaction, and joy. As I always say to the Lord when pouring my heart out to Him, "No regrets, Sir!" I say that because I don't want my open honesty with Him to come across as if I regret the path He has led me along – I don't want to hurt His feelings.

My separated life enabled me to grow in the word without being influenced by tradition and Enlightened Christians. I only had to deal with the Lord, the Bible, Robin, and sheep, dairy goats, chickens, ducks, geese, honeybees, and an ass. I could handle the workload of a land of milk and honey. The main thing I did was study the Bible. That was and is always our first priority. That is how we develop our personal relationship with our Husband and learn how we can please Him. Because you do not live a separated life but are rather subject to the busy pace of urban church members, I hope my book and counsel will help you deal with all that more successfully than did I.

When should you leave church? I can't answer that question. If the time ever comes for you to quit church and walk with the Lord, it will grow out of your relationship with Him if He wants it to. If and when that time comes you'll know it because you won't be able to just silently bite your tongue anymore. Any possible benefit to be gained by staying in church will be overshadowed by your disgust. That is normal and good. Only you will know when that time comes. Again, because of the issue of authority I advise against challenging your preacher while you are still under his guidance.

It is fairly hard for us to disassociate ourselves from church, state, and politics because we've always been part of something all of our lives. We all tend to be joiners. There is nothing wrong with that but we all have to learn to allow the Bible to pull us out of associations when they are contrary to the Scriptural truths we learn as we mature. Being alone – not belonging to some group – does have its advantages because it helps reduce peer pressure when you have to be different in order to be Biblical. For example, at Canaan Farm a missionary and his wife we had known and supported for years came to stay with us. He wanted us to visit the local church in which he was the guest preacher during their short stay. The church was delighted to meet two people who obviously loved the Lord and who were comfortable moving in Christian circles. I was invited to a Saturday morning men's prayer breakfast. During the breakfast conversation the preachers, pewsters, and missionaries were curious about their visitor and began asking questions. Oh, since the town I got saved in was close to a larger town, they asked, did I happen to know a certain preacher they liked? Inwardly I smiled at the unexpected answer they were about to get: "Yes, I know him. In fact, he sent a letter to all the churches in the area warning them that I'd gone over to the Devil." Dead silence. They were very uncomfortable. They had a guy in their midst they couldn't understand: He knew the Bible, said all the right things, had a passion for the Lord, was at ease fellowshiping with them, and yet was different because he had the strength and confidence to casually drop a bomb like that knowing they would automatically recoil from him with fear and suspicion.

The point is if you follow the Lord in accordance with His word He will prepare you to handle the paths along which He leads you. It won't be fun and it won't be heroic – it's just doing your duty in a war most Christians don't understand. Walking with the Lord will not make you any more popular than were the prophets who also warred against the apostate church. Be prepared; if you quit church someday what will you do? Are you a self-starter? Can you stay in the word daily – and keep Jill in it, too? That's the biggest consideration. Other things, like how you'll reach people in order to help them, are not to concern you. You just stick with the Lord and He'll take care of all those details when He's ready.

Because of your military background and the decisiveness you've so far demonstrated in your Christian walk, I don't really worry about your being a doer of the word – with one glaring exception, if I may be permitted to be critical in a way I hope is iron sharpening iron: Whenever you become aware, beyond any doubt in your military mind, of something the Lord wants you to do, it should become an imperative of the highest priority. Why? Because we're here to be *doers* who are led by the Lord. That includes *timing*. When He reveals to you that something needs to be done, He expects you to do it right away – not whenever you get around to it in your own sweet time. Do not pattern your Christian walk, Harry, after the way you've handled baptism. If baptism is any indicator, you are *not* a doer.

Going to Israel confirmed something for me: It's the *doing* that matters, not the setting or the mood. There is nothing grand or glamorous about Israel; it's the deeds that were done there that are glorious. Therefore it matters not if the creeks are cold; if the church you attend is apostate and doesn't care if or when you get baptized; if you'd like to wait until your entire family is ready to be baptized in a big ceremony; or if you have a golf match scheduled: If God grants you the honor, privilege, and responsibility of knowing His will, *do it!* Do it *now!* Procrastination does not glorify Him; it makes Him look like an impotent Potentate with lousy, willful, lazy servants. It makes Him look like He can't rule well His own household. May I suggest that you get on your knees, confess your sin, and go get baptized as soon as you can – no matter how unglamorous the setting, the timing, or the attendance may be? May I further suggest that you always remember the fact that *two years* after you knew you were supposed to get baptized you *still* hadn't quite found the particular combination of weather, setting, attendance, etc., that you wanted and therefore still haven't gotten around to it! And use that embarrassing fact as an example to you and to others of how we are *not* to serve Christ. It is a perfect example of selfish, willful carnality and disrespect for the commanding authority of God Almighty.

If you are to be a servant of God engaged in His war, you're going to have to die to self and put His will above everything else – even your mortal life. If you are going to do things for Him you are going to have to trust His timing as part of His plan. Do it *now*. Can anything have more imperative than the will of God? Don't you wish all Christians were dependable warriors who carried out God's orders as soon as they got them? Then *be* that kind of warrior – someone God can depend on to do His will as soon as He makes it known to you. Because you want to be among the elite few who serve God for eternity, start now. If you do, your service to Him will be much more rewarding. But if you are not a dependable doer, you'll gravitate towards the kind of "Christianity" you complain about in your church.

I asked you to give Connie a hug for me because I want to support, love, and comfort her. I want to be good for her. I wrote the above to you because I want to support and love – but not comfort – you. I want to be good for you. And moving you out of the comfort zone seems like the right thing for the cause of Christ. If this is not helpful, please forgive me and disregard this; I make plenty of mistakes and hope this doesn't offend you in a way that would hinder your Christian growth.

Len

REPLY

Len:

You know me well, and have not lost your touch at wielding a 2x4. Of course, anyone who truly loves the Lord will never be unable to summon the “force” whenever it is required.

That gnawing little voice inside (it could be called *guilt*, but more so *sin* – as you correctly term it) gets louder as each day passes. I think I've perfected the bad habit of procrastination. However, procrastination is not appropriate for “believer-actions” such as baptism. I now realize that the time for the accomplishment of believer-actions is ASAP after the requirement has been identified. You are absolutely right in that my inaction has been an ongoing example of how not to be a newborn and committed Christian warrior.

I had intended this communication to be an *Action Complete* notice, but current circumstances have momentarily delayed the imminent event. You are my only Christian friend who has ever taken the initiative to sharpen my countenance – about anything. Offense is never taken for such actions.

Thanks for sharing with me Richard's and your challenges working to establish a Biblical, disciplined household. Those insights are helpful. For example, my military mind also recognizes some seemingly benign, low-key *disagreements* as forms of *rebellion*. But do not overestimate how disciplined my own household may be. There is work to be done, and I am realizing that it may take time and patience.

And the advice to have a disciplined household before engaging in church battles is well taken because I have already noticed more flaws in the Bible-preaching church we attend than I did (in my ignorance) in over fifty years in the RCC. I agree (if I read you correctly) that the pastor's authority is to be respected, at least as long as I am a member of his congregation. But with some of the unscriptural things I've heard over the last year and a half, I would be remiss in not telling him why I am leaving his fold when the time comes.

Thanks for moving me out of the comfort zone.

Harry

SALUTE FOR BAPTISM

Harry:

I must commend you; you managed to go from behind the power curve to supersonic in very short order. I've recently been in water that cold and actually wondered if I was going to have heart problems. Your story made for great reading, and Robin and I salute all three of you. (But for Connie I send a hug as well.) You now have a great story of (belatedly) coming through for the Lord to tack onto your not-so-great story of slothfulness when you are giving your testimony and/or exhorting others. In fact, you now have an episode in your Christian walk that can be very helpful to others. They'll see your initial lazy carnality, your humility in acknowledging your sin, your repentance, your absolute determination and resourcefulness in getting the job done, and how good you felt once you'd been obedient to our King. Yes, it's a great story – but don't let it happen again.

Actually, when I read how cold the water was I hoped Connie wouldn't be involved – even though you had rented wetsuits. You've got strong women, Harry. Comrades. They make Hank look like a pussy! Naw, I'm just being macho. I know how much you would have liked your son to be baptized, but actually, he is also demonstrating strength; the kind of strength that will help him resist peer pressure and religious tradition should he ever dedicate himself to serving the Lord. Should he make that commitment he'll probably go through his Christian service at full throttle.

You're right, two years ago this month we met: Another salute, comrade. You provide me with a large percentage of the thankful, satisfied joy in my life that I can't help but offer up to God in humble appreciation.

You've made a couple of comments about my ability to wield a 2x4 during the Bible discussions we had two years ago (you've done so in a good-natured and appreciative way), and I'd like to make a few observations:

- I don't remember any of those instances because they were not remarkable. By that I mean they are usual – they're the way I am when the topic is the Bible. I'm reminded of a couple of verses I like: **Am 3:8**: *The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?* **Je 4:19**: *My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.*
- While I'm sure I irritated some people over the years, my honesty and directness allowed most to see that it really wasn't personal.
- If people are offended that's OK. The Bible makes it clear – when looking at people like the Lord, John the Baptist, and all the prophets – that *personality* is not an issue. Standing up for God's truth is.
- The Bible makes it clear that – in spite of the fact that I manage to piss off a lot of Christians – I do have a lot of love for the brethren (**1 Jn 5:2** and others). Why? Because we all need the truth and can't survive the war without it.
- People who are young *need* correction and discipline – that's just the way life is. You are young in the Lord. Therefore, if I'm the only one who has used a 2x4 on you, I'm the only one who cares about you *according to God Almighty*.
- I'm not always that “involved” when talking with people. In fact, I can be a lousy listener. But when the Bible is the topic I am always that way and am always a good listener.
- The reason I am able to be that way – impassioned, direct, and correcting – is because I can't allow myself to turn my back on the Lord and His truth. It would be cowardly and hateful to do so.
- I ask God to help me be that way in every facet of my Christian walk: Honest and direct in my conversations and confessions to Him; in writing my book; and in public and in private in every way.
- I believe the truth is good, and I want to be good for people.

- I want, no, I long to hear the One I love say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”
- Much, much, much Bible study and time spent with the Lord has given me the confidence that comes when you know what you’re talking about. Once I realized I knew the truth, *I knew my Sword was more powerful than all other swords*. I knew there were no arguments that could overturn the truth because of what truth is. And if I ever found out I was wrong about something – *good! I want* to know the truth. That meant my pride would be less of a factor and therefore I don’t fear being proven wrong – I welcome it – because I welcome truth.

I believe 99.9999% of our preachers and pewsters lack that kind of confidence and conviction and courage and love. And I believe that shows immaturity at best, and apostasy at worst. Either way, it shows they don’t have a proper knowledge, belief, and love for the holy words of truth God has given us. And a man’s relationship with the Bible is an exact indication of his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s just the way God ordained it to be. And that’s why, as wonderful as His name is, He has chosen to magnify His word above His name. That’s why it’s not impressive when someone who is a “Christian” talks about “Jesus” and prays in His name. What’s impressive is when they are doers of His word. That’s the difference between a Lucifer and a Gabriel.

You, Jill, and Connie have now officially and ceremonially become doers of God’s word. May I sincerely welcome you all into the service of the King with His words: **Ps 34:3**: *O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

Len

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIFE

Harry:

Christianity today is full of “Marthas” who are cumbered about with much serving (**Lk 10:38-42**). Martha was full of “care” and therefore was concerned about many things. She is a perfect picture of today’s active Christian who is involved in so much. There are many church groups, activities, prayer breakfasts, ministries, charity works, etc., etc. And everybody runs around talking about how God “called” them to do something. I never object when they say that, but I don’t believe it. I think at least 90% of today’s “callings” are of the flesh. Because I was interested and active as a young Christian I had preachers and visiting missionaries work on me from the pulpit. They’d preach their typical soap opera sermons full of emotion in order to get pewsters worked up and then have an altar call for those who “felt God calling them” into “full time Christian service” of one kind or another. I certainly felt the emotion – just like when I watch a movie – but I was careful to wait for God. Don’t get ahead of Him. Wait, I say, on the Lord.

Your Christian service will involve a lot of daily routine. Bible study, casual conversations with Jill about Bible stuff, thinking about something that occurred to you while brushing your teeth, sitting in a dark, quiet living room and thinking after Jill’s in bed, etc. In order to properly serve God you must actually protect yourself from well-intentioned Marthas by creating an environment or routine or life that gets you alone with the Lord so He’ll be the only real influence in your life. I’m referring to the “inner sanctum” I’ve discussed with you before. My inner sanctum eventually developed to the point where I am always separated no matter what my surroundings.

Now I no longer need to *retreat* into the inner sanctum; I’m there all the time – it’s who I am. I’m a full-time servant of Christ. I’m in the inner sanctum everywhere. For example, even in my hotel room when traveling my body obediently carries me around as appropriate: Sometimes it paces the room as I think about things with the Lord; sometimes it kneels at the bed during moments of heartfelt communication, sometimes it stands at attention, or salutes, or reaches up – all of those are normal actions of a man interfacing with his God. The inner sanctum must be developed; it must become who you are, all the time, in every situation.

You must not rule; ruling must come from the inner sanctum. Because if *you* rule it is carnal. But when ruling from the inner sanctum, you are ruling as God’s servant under His authority and in accordance with His word.

Much time must be spent developing the inner sanctum. And much effort must go into turning the policies that originate there into action in your life. And *that* is where the struggle takes place. Your carnal man doesn’t want to live by the Bible. God won’t *take* command of you or of your carnal body (contrary to the doctrines of gibberish churches). It is up to you to voluntarily submit to Him in the inner sanctum, and then it is up to you to force your body into complete submission to your rule. If you cannot rule well your own body you will not be given a ruling position in eternity. Why? Because a Christian who doesn’t rule well his own body is reflecting poorly on his Head (**1 Co 11:3-5**). If we don’t do a good job, we make Christ look like He hasn’t done a good job ruling us, His own household – and He’ll therefore lose the war and be deemed *unfit to rule*.

So, that’s what is involved in maturing as a Christian. Now, as you ponder leaving church you’ll also be looking ahead trying to figure out how to serve God if you’re not in a pew. Without church you may feel rudderless. How will you know what to do and how to serve God?

First, most days will be routine. You will go through life doing normal things. And each day you will ensure that you spend time with God and His word. You will develop an inner sanctum and will get increasing control over your household.

But then God will sometimes send circumstances into your life. He may be testing you, He may be teaching you, He may be punishing you, or He may be leading you. I think of these circumstances as “gates.” When a gate pops up in your life – a circumstance – you must decide whether to go through it or not. Let’s list some gates that may pop up: Adultery; voting for President; joining the National Rifle Association; having a TV preaching ministry; skipping your daily Bible study; joining an anti-abortion march; quitting or joining a church; moving to the country; suspending something in order to spend time with Jill; ordering a beer when eating with Christians; resigning from the homeowners’ association; etc. All of those gates must either be passed through or not passed through. And that decision must be made in the inner sanctum. The inner sanctum must always have all three components present. It can’t just be God and you; the Bible must also be present. If the Bible is absent, your “God” will be the same “God” as that of all carnal Christians whose real God is Self. By using the inner sanctum to decide through which gates we should go and which gates we should reject, His word really does become a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. That is how God leads us through life – one gate or circumstance at a time, and that’s why being an expert on the Bible is so essential: If we don’t know God’s Directions we’ll have to take the gates or paths that seem right in our own eyes, which – because that is the definition of carnality – puts us at enmity against God and on the highway to hell. So know the Bible, use discernment – not Reason – to *do* the Bible, and enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. God does not give us the big picture of where He wants us to go in our lives; we are expected to study to be quiet and to wait, I say, on the Lord daily. Christianity is lived by faith one day and one circumstance at a time. Our decisions about which gates to pass through must be made in the inner

sanctum without any outside influences. And which gates we go through, in turn, determine the direction of our lives. Every gate we go through must glorify God in the name of Jesus Christ by being in accordance with His word.

So don't feel that you have to be a Martha like most other Christians; patiently and attentively sit at His feet daily in your inner sanctum like Mary and wait, I say, for Him to put gates before you. Then make a Scriptural decision honestly with Him, and obediently and expeditiously carry out His will. I'm tempted to say that's all there is to it, but because the vast majority of Christians can't handle it, perhaps I should remind you that what we're talking about is war in which you, too, will be a casualty unless you die daily. You will experience fear, but that's good. That's when we're tested. Think about these two facts: In the absence of fear there can be no courage and no glory; and present *fear* is never as bad as later *regret*. So give your fear to God and go face Goliath even if it kills you. Remember, David would be just as big a hero if God had elected to have Goliath kill him. David glorified God by deciding to pass through the gate into battle in spite of his fear. What happens to us in combat is up to God; our duty is to glorify Him.

I rule from the inner sanctum. In the inner sanctum I am an obedient and eager servant of God. Those who are under my authority, such as my body, my wife, my children, and the subjects in my future kingdom, I rule as an absolute dictator. It is my job to care for them while ensuring that they grow in Christ into the kind of Christians who will continue the good fight after I'm dead. My subjection to God also results in my obediently submitting to any earthly authority having dominion over me, whether it is parents, employers, or civil or military authorities – whether they are Scriptural, or right, or good, or not.

All of this will be sorted out and understood in the inner sanctum and will result in an orderly, consistent, and confident walk through life with Christ. And it will help you understand that being “keepers at home” (**Ti 2:5**) who, if we want to learn any thing, are to ask our Lord at home (**1 Co 14:35; Ac 17:11**), doesn't just apply to our physical wives; it applies to all of Christ's wives every day of our lives. The inner sanctum is an important aspect of our relationship with our Lord.

Len

GROWING

Harry:

Your thinking about Bible versions is absolutely flawless. And you are already beginning to know that to be true because your questions this time are very close to being rhetorical. Your only reluctance is due to a lack of more firsthand experience discussing this stuff with Christians. That makes you give them the benefit of the doubt; they *seem* like normal, intelligent, sincere Christians, so they *must* have some valid argument or point of view that would explain their (to you) apparently contradictory and illogical statements and beliefs about the word of God. And that's why I've said to you before that I don't really understand *unbelief*. There's something about not believing that apparently blinds people. They aren't really stupid – they just act like it because the carnal mind cannot grasp spiritual realities. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith comes from hearing the word of God – *if* they have ears that hear. Faith can only come from God. So if they just don't get it, accept the fact that they are deaf and blind and therefore aren't qualified to be **Ro 12:1** according to places like **Mal 1:8; Le 22:19-22**.

Those faithless Christians who are unbelievers in the existence of the word of God have no dependable, Scriptural authority to even say, like they always do, that the *original* autographs were inspired and inerrant; because it isn't written anywhere that *only the originals* were inspired. The Bible obviously says all Scripture *is* inspired by God and we therefore know that *includes* the originals. But apostate Christians *cannot* know that because they don't accept the inerrant authority of the very Bible that says it. They are inconsistent. They are saying something that means nothing. Their doctrine is designed to make them the authority in their lives – not the words God gave us to live by. Therefore they are *not* serving, pleasing, or glorifying God. Therefore, when these unbelievers in the existence of the word of God hold up their NIV and say, “I believe the Bible is the inspired word of God”, they are not basing that belief on the word of God. They are basing it on tradition and on a corrupt version that – since it is not the word of God – doesn't have the *authority* to say what God's word is. An apostate's belief about the Bible is not of faith that came from hearing the word of God, contradicts God's definitions of His word, does not please God, and therefore is *carnal!* Strange but true. We are to worship God in spirit (walking by faith in His word and according to His word) and in truth (as defined by His word).

I have always liked **Jn 12:48** much more than **He 4:12** because the former contains a threat if we don't go by the words in His Book. As far as showing Christians that the exact and specific words in the Bible are necessary, it can only be done if they have ears to hear. You and I aren't any smarter or dumber than the other Christians around us, Harry, and *we* get it. And we got it without any brilliantly worded argument having to pin us down and force us to see the truth. Therefore smarts aren't the answer and great arguments aren't the answer. I have never had one of my brilliant arguments convince any Christian that the word of God does exist. Never! My arguments have only been valuable to Christians who already – by faith – accepted the existence of the word of God. They welcomed my arguments as relief from the Enlightened Reason that was torturing their faith; my arguments merely comforted them by showing that *the Scriptures teach that the word of God is here today*. In other words, I preach the Bible version issue out of a sense of duty to anyone who'll listen, but I realize it will probably only be helpful when I'm preaching to the choir.

I think chapter D5, *A Literal Interpretation*, is an important part of the King James issue. The chapter shows that Jesus Christ Himself took the Scriptures at literal face value. He even took the tense of a specific word and *built doctrine upon it!* That adds significance to **2 Ti 3:15,16**. The inspired word of God is available to us today in the present. And it is so perfect we can use it to build doctrine, to teach, to correct, to reprove and rebuke our fellow Christians who don't go by the AV1611. They, on the other hand, don't really know what tense, or even what word God picked because the translators or the manuscripts might not be correct. Therefore, by default the only true authority in their lives is Self. Self is good to Enlightened Christians as long as *they* think it's good. But self is the spirit of antichrist to Christians who understand order and authority and the enmity against God of the carnal mind.

You get it, Harry. All I can tell you is, as time and experiences go by you'll more and more thank God for opening your eyes and ears. Keep asking Him for more: Don't be afraid of what He might reveal to you. You and I have been around long enough to get glimpses of the fact that this life is vanity; it's not really much more than a joke. Only what's done for the glory of God matters. So ask God to bless your declining years by continuing to open your eyes. And then apply what baptism taught you. It's so important to allow the Bible to be our reality in all things in our lives – to *rule* our lives.

If you resign from your church be careful. As head of your household you are responsible for you and Jill. You seem to be interested in finding a good King James church. There is nothing wrong with that. But remember, you will be putting yourself under the authority of an Enlightened preacher who believes patriotism, democracy, and rebellion are ordained by God. You won't be able to keep from talking about the things you've learned, and will still be among Christians who will use Reason and tradition to tar and feather you for believing the true doctrines in the Bible. You are going to end up at odds with the entire church no matter what church it is. The word of God is not a magical, automatic cure for unbelief, Reason, and tradition. If it were, there really wouldn't be a war. So a "King James only" church doesn't necessarily mean anything. That's why I had to make my home my church and my refuge.

If you decide to faithfully grow at home you may still want to continue some of the Christian fellowship with others you left behind in church. There is nothing wrong with that but you'll have to have all your guards up because they will continue to believe in and live by Reason.

You might want to experiment with a KJV church and see what happens. I mean, you've been going to a non-KJV church and even I haven't bugged you about it. It might be good for you two to see that KJVers don't know the Bible very well and want to avoid doctrinal discussions, which is why they sit around all day every day talking about the KJV. But that doesn't help them grow; there's a lot of stuff in the KJV that must be learned, believed, and implemented.

You might take some Bible course or you might decide studying on your own is more productive. (I've never taken any Bible courses and wouldn't waste my time going to any Bible school.)

But whatever you do, do it for God. Learn, grow, and serve. If you stay in the Bible, stay close to God in prayer, and if you are honest with Him, with yourself, and with Jill, the Lord will guide you and help you. He *will* do that. Twenty years ago I hoped that would happen to me. It did. He is real, and He has lots of time to devote to you, Harry, because nobody else is counting on Him for anything except to allow the Cowboys to win the Super Bowl, spread democracy around the globe, and provide money for another car. Nobody else *really* wants to serve Him where it really counts; they just want to put on the pious act.

So, why are you thinking about quitting your church? Because it's beginning to get on your nerves – you're outgrowing your church and are beginning to feel stifled and frustrated. You enjoyed the things of childhood while you were a child, but you don't want to sit in a playpen all your Christian life; you want to put the things of childhood behind you and keep growing. But what will you do if you leave? Learn, grow, and serve God. The key isn't what you do or where you do it. The key is allowing Him to be your Head, and forcing yourself to be His obedient body carrying out His will. That's all you have to do. And you have to do it every day from now until...always. It'll never stop. A servant is what you just *become*. It just becomes *who and what you are*. Nothing else matters.

Len

REPLY

Len:

The Lord indeed knows the thoughts and intents of my heart and when I can use guidance, counseling, nurturing, knowledge, and encouragement. And He does it through His word and through you. My inner sanctum is not as developed as yours, but as this babe begins to walk more steadily it does get better. I am glad you were detailed in your description because I knew there was something deeper in a relationship with God and His Son but I could not put it into words.

I'm encouraged also that you have "never had one of my brilliant arguments convince any Christian that the word of God does exist." I, too, have seen that glazed-eyed look many times when talking about such things and wonder to myself, "why am I wasting my time on this person?" But I also immediately remind myself that I have put myself in His Majesty's Service and what I am saying at any point in time on these subjects are not my words, but His – no matter how effective or ineffective they may seem to me. The result may come years later. I can at least hope to be a link in the chain of events that will bring this person to a knowledge of the truth.

Now that I know about the Age of Reason and how it has affected the church, I am very aware of how often Christians choose Reason over revelation. For example, when discussions arise about doctrine or about situations in life, even if the subject concerns matters of right and wrong, *no one* wants to go to the Standard of right and wrong and weigh himself against it. There is little or no willingness to evaluate the situation based on what the Bible says but rather on what the *circumstances* are. Opinions flourish and judgments are rendered, not based on what God says but on what they *think*. And when confronted with this and given an opportunity to seek the Bible as the judge, the opportunity is not only avoided, but openly refused. At that point I realize I'm dealing with a dishonest person. They talk about wanting to be truthful, but in reality what is wanted is to live according to their own perception of reality, truth, and right – not God's.

I have mentioned that my second time through the Bible is making more sense. I have also started rereading your book and it also is sinking in more clearly as I track the Scripture references. I picked up a paperback a while back entitled *Great Christian Thinkers* (Paul, Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Schleiermacher, and Barth). I bought the book to objectively compare another source with your descriptions of some of the above named people, and verified, not unexpectedly, that you are on the mark.

Harry

PRINCIPLES

Richard:

Robin was just asking me about some of the stuff in my book, and we had a discussion about the concepts behind things in the Bible. I used your remarks – about how David really understood authority so that it became a *part of his character* – as an example. A while later Robin told me that every now and then she gets snatches of understanding about my character. She doesn't always understand how or why I sometimes make such a big deal over something she says or does. But she's beginning to understand the importance of concepts or principles and their governing influence on our character and actions. She realizes it's often not her words or actions themselves that get my attention; it's the fact that *if certain Scriptural principles were a part of her character she wouldn't do or say those things* because they just wouldn't be *her* – they wouldn't be part of *who she is*. And that is what I'm seeing – the issues behind the actions. I'm seeing the big stuff, the important stuff.

We all need to spend enough time in the Bible, meditating on it, and discussing it with the Lord and with other Christians, to enable us to first grasp and then incorporate the Biblical principles *into who we are*. That, of course, means

always being in control of our old man. It means governing ourselves all the time from the discerning new man. That is not Natural. It requires discipline and practice. It requires dying to self daily.

Most Christians are taught to live like the Pharisees: Create a laundry list of rules and then keep them. That doesn't work; we need to *understand* how the rules fit together and the principles from whence they come. David did that and it enabled him to eat the shewbread. Today's Christians, lacking that kind of conceptual understanding of the Bible, would never be able to make decrees to married Christians similar to those made by Paul about sex and separation. Paul understood the big picture behind the rules. That understanding allowed him to be a Christian ruler – making rules in accordance with the will of God, even when those rules do not appear on any laundry list in the Bible.

Our job as Christians being trained to rule under God forever is to develop that kind of understanding. We need the kind of understanding that becomes a part of who we are so we are able to make rules in our present and future kingdoms about anything and everything because we understand where and how our decrees fit into the way God views things.

The failure of Christians to meditate in order to incorporate Biblical principles and concepts into who they are is a serious shortcoming. It reveals them to be too lazy or too busy with the world to spend the required time sitting at the feet of the Master. That's why discernment is not a big deal to the church of the Age of Reason. We want to learn a laundry list of things we can quickly keep in order to justify ourselves before ourselves so we can then go about our lives doing what we want. Nobody really cares about the things of the Lord; if they did they'd take them seriously and do all of the above. Or, as you worded it: "David not only understood authority – and from a very early age I might add – he *really* understood it; it was part of his character, and it made me make that a desire of my own heart: that I would know it as he did, this thing called authority." Well said, comrade. That desire of your heart is a necessary part of growing, of maturing. It worries me that I don't see it in more Christians. Without that desire Christians will never become fit to serve or to rule.

Len

RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER

Richard:

I was just sitting here reading my Bible and came across **Ps 31:24**. Years ago in the margin after the word *and* I wrote in *then*. I was like you, wondering how I'd be able to walk according to all that His Book says. I was reminding myself that growth comes *after* we do the word. In the previous verse I had also underlined *rewardeth the proud doer* for the same reason. Growth is a reward for works. *Doing* is a prerequisite for growth.

I have a lot of stuff written or underlined in my Bible. A lot of it is from my younger days – stuff I wouldn't dwell on as much today because I've grown. But it's good to see signs in the Bible of different stages of my growth. When I read this psalm I thought about how you're going through some of this stuff now. We all do. Just thought I'd let you know I'm thinking of you and am with you all the way.

In bed this morning I was thinking about your saying I was pretty intense about the swearing/character issue. That's because it's so important. Is the issue honor, or integrity, or some other words that describe our character? I don't think those words – while descriptive and helpful – are really what I'm talking about. It's *righteousness*. God's righteousness as taught to us by His Book must become *who we are*. Yes, others cheat on income tax and openly do many things the world considers OK because "that's the way the game is played." But not us; we're above all that – up on a level they cannot really understand. That's because the only thing that really matters to us is the approval of God. Our head sits up there on our shoulders and watches everything. We see how conservatives live. We know what our flesh thinks is OK, and what it wants to do. But up there we reign as dictators-in-training under God. By ruling well over ourselves we learn what is hard, what is not, and what happens to us when we do things. The perspectives we gain from those experiences are then applied to how we rule others and what we say to them. That's what Ecclesiastes is all about. Because we believe God put it in His Book for our edification, we apply the fact that Solomon didn't restrain himself enough during his life and he regretted it in his older, wiser years. His life was very *noisy*. Yes, we're princes learning to rule, but we need to keep ourselves from the dainties – or privileges – of kings until we've won the war. This is a time for a more rigid, Spartan walk. (And that's something we'll want to keep in mind during the heady experiences of ruling during the 1000-year reign of Christ.) I keep my body under subjection lest I myself should be a castaway.

Len

DISCIPLINE

Andy:

Robin and I have never been blessed with children so I don't know how qualified I am to answer your question or to give you advice on rearing your children. I'll do the best I can by trying to use my life to illustrate some of what the Bible says on the subject. As you will see, I believe in discipline – all forms of it.

I'm told the doctor spanked me when I was born because he thought it was good for me. Then my parents took over and spanked me for the next 14 or 15 years. I didn't like it – that's why they did it. I was a child and had little self-discipline, so they imposed it on me. Eventually two things happened: First, I began to learn to discipline myself (obey the rules) in order to reduce the number of times I got my hide tanned. Second, I began to develop a healthy fear/respect for all authority, not just my parents.

Early lessons involved baby sitters. When they tried to control us four kids we had this attitude of, "I know my parents can discipline me, but who are you?" (**Ac 19:15**). The next thing we knew my father was pulling us – fast asleep – out of our beds, marching us down to his bedroom, leaning us over his bed, and spanking us with his leather slipper. That happened repeatedly until we learned it really *would* continue until he began getting good reports from baby sitters.

I spent the first three grades in Catholic school where it was OK for them to hit us. I behaved and got good grades. However, we moved and I found myself in public school from the fourth grade on. They couldn't hit us! Terrific! I began to be a bad boy in school and also began to hang out with some fifth or sixth grade thugs after school – until I took my first report card home. All low grades except for recess. And my conduct and effort grades were all *fours* (the lowest mark, with *one* being the best). My dad gave me the worst spanking I ever got. (I now realize it was the best.) He told me he had no problem with my bringing home low grades on my report card – as long as I also got all *ones* in conduct and effort. But even if I got good grades I'd still get spanked if I didn't get *ones* in deportment and effort. He told me – I was standing there crying from the beating I'd just had – if I didn't like the way he ran his household I could leave any time I wanted. He then pointed to the front door and said, "But if you ever walk out that door, you're not coming back." I was ten years old and was scared to death, but he taught

me whose will would be done under his roof! He had me apologize to my teacher, Mrs. Weaver. He told her not to wait for the next report card but to send a note home or call him if I didn't shape up right away. By the next report card I was her best student in all areas, and I never brought home another bad report card. Yes, Dr. Spock, spanking is good.

My parents also taught me about character. One time we kids were playfully turning the kitchen light off when my folks were in there talking and fixing supper. It was funny a couple of times but my dad said that was enough – no more. I did it again. He called us all in and asked who did it. I 'fessed up. He had me get him the big wooden salad spoon and hold my hand out, palm up. He then told me he wasn't going to hit me because he was proud of the fact that, even though I knew I'd be punished, I still admitted my guilt. I never forgot that lesson.

The fact that he didn't *always* let me off the hook when I 'fessed up showed me that mercy isn't guaranteed – it's completely arbitrary. Therefore, my job was to please my authorities because if I didn't I'd displease my father – and I sure didn't want to get on his bad side!

When I went to the Naval Academy it was my first time away from home. It was institutional living with rules and regulations and “honor concepts” and discipline, discipline, discipline. I felt sorry for myself and cried twice: Once my first night and once when returning to Annapolis from Christmas leave my first year when I'd gotten a taste of “freedom” and the easy civilian life again. But I had already learned as a child that while tears are permissible, they don't change anything. And I knew the military was trying to get rid of people who lacked the discipline to endure to the end of Plebe year; anyone who couldn't hack the program at the Academy certainly wouldn't be able to withstand the rigors of combat (**Je 12:5**).

Those kinds of things taught me the value of discipline and the value of getting rid of people who don't toe the line (**1 Co 5:11**). One reason we are so lax about rebuking and discipline in the church is we don't really think there is a war going on. We need to stop fellowshipping with lousy Christians and concentrate on helping the ones whose actions demonstrate they really care. Willfulness must not be tolerated at home or in the church. Authority must be respected and obeyed.

Self-discipline and obedience are learned by suffering (**He 5:8**), therefore do not spare the rod. Just like many undisciplined boot recruits hate their drill sergeants at first, many undisciplined children at first hate their parents when they discipline them. (I never hated my parents because the rod was never something new and despised to me – it had always been a part of my life since birth.) But just as those same people love their drill sergeants when they graduate, disciplined children eventually appreciate the parents who spanked them (**Pv 27:6,17; 28:23; 29:17**). And interestingly, the children who are not disciplined do not later respect their parents – and often hate them. I feel so strongly about discipline I'll paraphrase all the Proverbs that tell you to beat your children with a rod: If you do not literally spank your children they will not turn out right. If you believe the rod of correction is bad for children and that talking to them and other mild, non-physical forms of correction are better, you are a Bible rejecter. But, you say, you've known children whose parents didn't believe in the rod of correction and those kids became nice, respectable, successful adults. And I answer, No: they are in some way undisciplined spoiled brats. They may be adulterers, or they may cheat on their taxes or steal from their employers. They may not be able to handle stress, they may take sedatives or sleeping pills, or they may drink too much. In *some way* their undisciplined self-indulgence spoils them.

In general I do not like children today. They have no manners, no respect for their elders, and no discipline. They are sullen and unresponsive. Often when I look into their eyes I'm surprised I don't see two OFF flags. And when I speak with their parents I usually see what the problem is. However, because even undisciplined, uneducated teens and adults aren't stupid, they often look around and compare themselves with others of their generation and realize their parents did a lousy job with them. Sadly, in spite of that realization they often don't have the self-discipline to turn their lives around – and their kids end up just like them. Once when I was in uniform in a public setting I was approached by a man and wife and their small boy. They said their child was interested in pursuing a career like mine and would I please give him some advice. I looked at the little boy and said, “Son, if you *obey your parents and keep your grades up* you can do anything in life you want.” I was shocked, disgusted, and saddened when the parents laughed, rolled their eyes, and walked away saying, “Obey his parents? Shit! That'll be the day! Har! Har! Har!”

I believe parents today lack love and a sense of responsibility. And if they protest that they do love their children and do accept their responsibility as parents, then I must conclude they are too selfish and/or too undisciplined to overcome the Natural inclination we all have to be just as lazy as we think we can get away with. Therefore, instead of spanking their children and having to deal with the emotional rebellion that physical correction is likely to produce (especially in these Enlightened times when morons think pain is bad), parents convince themselves it is better for their children if non-physical methods of correction are used. And instead of taking an active part in their children's education by occasionally checking their child's homework, reading their reports, and beating the laziness and the willfulness out of them, they later whine, “I don't understand how she could turn out this way – we took her to the best schools!” And instead of discussing the Sunday sermon when eating supper, asking the children about Sunday school and discussing it with them, having Bible instruction sessions at home, and kneeling down in the living room and praying with their children, parents later whine, “I don't know why she is such a slutty bitch – we always made sure she went to church!” In general it is an unfortunate fact that churches and educational institutions today will not use corporal punishment on your children. Therefore they eliminate the most important part of training up a child. Because of that it is up to you and your wife to closely monitor what your children are doing, with whom and where they are doing it, how they are progressing, how their attitude is, and spank them when they do not please you.

I am not suggesting you cannot yell at your kids and use other forms of non-physical punishment. But do not fail to make spanking the form of punishment your children expect when they do wrong. And do not let anyone tell you it is wrong to discipline your children when you are mad at them. But do not let your emotions govern your actions: never surrender the sovereignty of your head to your body. You may allow yourself to have emotions, but you should always rule over them.

My parents never had to worry about their peers accusing them of “child abuse.” For example, if my parents had guests and we were supposed to be in bed, if our “spying” on the guests and our rough-housing became a distraction my father simply excused himself, came upstairs and spanked us and put us back in bed so we could cry ourselves to sleep, and rejoined his guests. However, my parents were considerate enough to not “disturb the peace.” So, on summer days when I was going to get a spanking my father would tell me to go close the windows in his bedroom, get his slipper, and wait for him next to the bed.

Require your kids to respect all authority – even in little ways such as addressing adults as “Mr. Jones” or “Brother Jones” rather than “Eddie” or “dude.” Do not allow them to say “yeah” to any adult; they should say, “Yes, ma'am” and “Yes, sir.” Do not ever think back-talking and smart-assing are cute or acceptable. Do not allow them to sulk. Do not allow anything

they do to distract anyone during church services, because if you have children who are not under your control you are not ruling well your own household. Use your children as servants in your home. At various ages I was required to empty the wastebaskets and ashtrays, scrub the bathroom, scrub the kitchen floor, dust the furniture, make the beds, keep my room tidy, observe a strictly-enforced “quiet hour” on summer afternoons so my mother could relax and take a breather, weed the garden and the gravel driveway, move the wood pile, build fires in the fireplace, vacuum the house, bleed the air out of the radiators, iron clothes, fold and put away the laundry, wash and dry the dishes, make the dessert, mow the lawn, hand clip around the trees and edge the sidewalk, rake the leaves, get jobs mowing neighbor’s lawns on Saturday mornings, get a job as a paper boy to pay for my bicycle, paint furniture, transplant shrubs, set the table for meals, be “kitchen help” when my parents entertained, shovel snow off the driveway and sidewalk, water the plants, clean and paint the bottom of the boat, install two flagstone patios – and do it all with a cheerful demeanor. I was also required to assist that fourth grade teacher my parents (and I) grew so fond of at the end and beginning of school years. At the end of school years it involved collecting all texts from all classrooms and neatly stacking them in a secure storage room, and also clearing the bulletin boards. And before the next school year started the books had to be redistributed to the classrooms, and the letters for the words and the pictures and decorations for the new bulletin boards had to be cut from construction paper and put up. (On one particularly hot day I was rewarded when Mr. and Mrs. Weaver took me to a public swimming pool!)

My parents became acquainted with the authorities to whom they entrusted me – baby sitters, teachers, guidance counselors, and newspaper district supervisors in charge of paper boys – because they wanted to ensure that all authority was respected and obeyed and all tasks were properly completed. If nothing else they wanted my authorities to know my parents were their interested, supportive allies.

Anyway, I think you get the idea – discipline is a prerequisite to success in life and in Christianity. People who lack self-discipline are losers. The best thing you can do for your children isn’t give them “self esteem” or a good education; the best thing you can give them is self-discipline. If you do, you will probably like and respect each other when they are adults.

Len

FEEL-GOOD CHRISTIANITY

Richard:

I generally do not ask Christians what church they go to because I focus only on the Scriptures and really don’t care what church they attend. However, it *was* shocking for me to learn that you’ve spent so many years in gibberish churches. Especially when you *know* their doctrines are false. Let me try to answer some of your questions in a way that might help you understand some things and grow:

“Have you ever apologized to Robin for being harsh because you later felt that you acted inappropriately?”

No, because I don’t go by feelings. I do allow myself to have feelings, but they are not allowed to interfere. When we had the grass fire, for example, I went to her, told her I was accepting it as a rebuke of me from the Lord, that she was no longer in the doghouse, that I was wrong to put her there, and I apologized. But my feelings never entered into it because I rule from my head not my belly. The only emotion you might say entered into it was fear of the wrath of God if I tried to ignore His guidance.

“How did you achieve these things with Robin, specifically as applies to the Eph 5 passage?”

First, I made sure she knew the Scriptures. Then I simply required her to obey me in everything. I required her to treat me as a superior, not as an equal. She tried everything she could to get me to permit her to be “liberated” and independent. But I showed that tactics like that didn’t impress me. I remained firm because of my fear that my household wouldn’t glorify God in accordance with His word. Eventually, gradually, she gave up and submitted to me.

“And I do want to deal with any blindness that causes me to overlook her emotional health. But as you have implied (sort of), perhaps it isn’t her emotional health I should first be concerned with? It seems that Jane’s spiritual needs should be the prime focus for me. But if she is resentful or wounded, how easy will it be to meet those needs?”

I let Robin know that the road to “emotional health” was submission. Her submission was the issue. And she knew that was Scriptural. Over time she came to realize I could not be manipulated or swayed. Submission was simply required. It was a prerequisite to a happy, Christian marriage. She is now submissive and has learned discipline and self-control. And it helped that she saw that her husband was no hypocrite; he was himself completely submissive to the Lord.

“I have taught them what the word of God says about tongues and that therefore, what I see in the church is not genuine...I’ve studied the issue of tongues in the Bible and keep coming up with the same conclusion: that what goes on in the church today is a lot of well-intended, emotional ‘hoo haa.’ The problem with it, I’ve come to realize, is that it not only is dishonest and doesn’t accurately reflect what God is doing...”

Here you point out that gibberishers are deceitful liars who go about pretending the Holy Spirit is controlling their “miraculous” utterances. And because it *is* fake, they know they are dishonest liars every time they decide to fake it again or to lie about what God is doing to them. They knew they were faking it the first time they gibberished, and they know they are still faking it today. So, how can someone who is willing to lie about God Almighty be the kind of vessel He wants to use?

“They cause us ‘unenlightened’ to doubt our own faith because we don’t ‘have the gift’...Some I believe really do love the Lord, but for whatever reason, don’t agree with my assessment of the Scriptures.”

Here you reveal that you have a huge problem, Richard: *You don’t believe the word of God!* You’ve studied it over and over through your many years in gibberish churches, have taught your family what the Bible says about gibberish, believe gibberishers to be dishonest liars about involuntary miraculous utterances, and yet you’ve decided to surround your family and yourself with unholy liars whose numbers and deceitful doctrines cause you to *doubt your own faith!* You even speak the language of Mars Hill by saying these liars don’t “agree” with your “assessment” of the Scriptures. In other words, you’ve decided to “agree to disagree” with unholy liars who have been causing you and your family to doubt the very faith for which you are supposed to be contending! *Is that* good leadership? Or are you defrauding yourself and your own family? No wonder you don’t *act* on the Scriptures – you don’t believe them. You muse about them, find them interesting, find them amazing, but you don’t believe them. You’ve chosen to sit your whole Christian life among people you felt comfortable with – otherwise you wouldn’t have spent so many years among them. Your belly likes them and (you say) your mind doesn’t. Therefore your god is your belly. You have avoided denominations that are more rigid because you prefer to be around lazy, effeminate, wishy-washy liars who won’t require anything of you – they don’t even require you to believe their doctrine! That’s perfect if you just want

to feel good and render lip service. The Bible, however, requires us to get involved and fight. It says our enemies are they of our own household. But for some reason over all these years the Lord has never been able to teach your fingers to fight and your hands to make war.

“Regretfully, I’ve not had the balls to confront...”

No shit!?

“How do you feel about inoculations?”

I don’t go by my feelings. I don’t go by my “assessments.” I go by what I *believe* God wants of me. I only want to please Him and make Him look like a halfway decent *ruler*. I don’t think you are ready to contend with horses in the swelling of Jordan because you’ve proven unable to handle footmen. I’ve made a big deal out of your use of the word “feel” (even though I know I’ve taken it somewhat out of context) in order to make a point: God doesn’t care about your feelings – He wants submissive obedience to what He says in His Book. Any Christian who doesn’t live that way is your enemy for the gospel’s sake.

I think you need to spend some time in your inner sanctum with the Lord and His Book and review the kind of Christian you have been, why you’ve been that way, and figure out what the Lord wants of you from now on.

If what I’ve said to you is true it should be an embarrassment. That confusion of face should cause you to go to the Lord to see if there is a possibility that He is applying the rod of correction to your backside in order to steer you in a different direction. If the shoe does fit, you should rejoice that He is still treating you as a beloved family member by not sparing the rod. Then you need to show Him that you are willing to glorify Him and show Him strong by picking up His cross and forcing yourself to spend your life serving Him instead of deceiving yourself that the Holy Spirit is active in your life as you sit on your ass listening to a bunch of unholy, Bible-rejecting liars.

You have gotten yourself into a deep and serious ditch over the years. You got there because you like the ear-tickling soft life of lip service. You are exactly where you want to be – that’s why you’re there. You now have to make yourself *want* something you really don’t want. You are going to have to accept the fact that your Husband is *not* pleased with you. Then you are going to have to make yourself *want* what He wants in order to walk in harmony with Him. And then you are going to have to carefully take steps designed to get you out of the ditch you like so much, create an environment in your head and in your home and in your life that will be conducive to a Biblical lifestyle, and then live a Biblical life as a doer of the word. Start finding things in the Bible to incorporate into your life. Start serving Him. Develop a submissive relationship with Him. You have to be an obedient and submissive servant/wife before you can be His friend.

If you are not a self-starter maybe you and your family need to voluntarily go through some boot camp. Perhaps you should join some militantly-strict church that thinks it is a sin to go to movies, say shit, smoke, drink, dance, listen to music, drink coffee, wear sleeveless blouses, wear bright colors, etc. And *submit* to their authority and rules as a training program. After all, it is OK to avoid all the things on the above laundry list. (Just don’t think they are sins or rebuke people who do them.) Your current church is just way too apostate and easy going. I don’t know what you might come up with, brother, but I think you need something. You may have to bite your “tongue” while listening to some of the preaching in a militant church, but at least the doctrines and church members won’t cause you to doubt your faith. The preaching and the fellowship *cannot possibly be as damaging as that which you’ve enjoyed for so many years*. I’m merely offering a thought-provoking suggestion because I think you need to do something – and quickly.

Len

REPLY

Len:

You knocked me for a considerable loop, perhaps deservedly so. There’s much to talk about. The “unbeliever” and “my god is my belly” are issues I’ve wrestled with since your last; I have not ignored them. You were not wrong in saying a lot of things you did and I am not offended at you even though my hurt kept me from answering you right away. I’m actually grateful for your brutal honesty. I truly hope I have not lost a good brother; I owe you much. Just wanted you to know that I took to heart what you wrote and that I have not fallen away because the road suddenly got rougher than planned.

Richard

BEING CORRECTED BY GOD

Harry:

Just as we know His eye is on the sparrow, we know the Lord watches over those who are His servants.

When you recently wrote and told me what you’d done and what you’d committed yourself to, I wrote and told you why your first action was good and why your subsequent commitment was bad. I advised you to be Christ-like, however, by being true to your word and living up to the bad commitment you’d made. Now it turns out you are Providentially prevented from fulfilling your bad commitment because the system cannot accommodate that kind of thing. When you wrote and told me that, I sat back in wonder and thought, “The Lord is watching over Harry!”

Through the eyes of faith we can figure out what happened: While being a doer of the word you made a slight error by saying you’d make that commitment. But the Lord has His hand on you because He likes the fact that you really care about faithfully serving Him via His word. He knew you would make the mistake even before you did it. But because it was just a minor pothole along the narrow way that leadeth unto righteousness, He decided to take care of you in two ways. First, He positioned someone in your life to give you some perspective on what you’d done so you’d learn to avoid similar minor errors in the future. It was a learning experience put together for you by the Lord. Realizing that you’d erred, your thoughts turned to your word and testimony as you resolved to accept responsibility for your error by dutifully glorifying God by fulfilling your commitment. But the Lord was way ahead of both you and me, because He knew you wouldn’t be able to fulfill your commitment. That means the Lord engineered the whole thing from start to finish as a learning experience for you.

You have learned to be careful about making commitments to secular organizations. You have learned the Lord will protect you from yourself as long as He sees your heart is truly set on serving and glorifying Him. You have learned the Lord controls events and circumstances in life. And you have learned He is actively shepherding you.

You should thank Him for His love and provision. You should feel humbled, grateful, exhilarated, and inspired by the fact that you are already beginning to see the hand of God orchestrating events in your life. And you need to continue to grow by applying what you’ve learned about His being actively involved in your life. That means you need to develop an *awareness* or *watchfulness*. This is part of discernment, but it is actually another level of discernment.

Being *watchful* means always analyzing circumstances in your life in order to see if the Lord is dealing with you. In the example above your watchful discernment should have caused you to – by faith – accept the blessings from the Lord and thank Him for them. But we also need to watch for events in our lives that may have been orchestrated by Him to get us back on the right course and/or to punish us for something. It may be handy and helpful for me to repeat something I sent to Richard some time ago. He was involved in domestic wars and was asking how he could know when he had gone too far when dealing with his wife and kids. I replied by saying he needs to be on the lookout for times when the Lord sends “confusion of face” (**Ezr 9:6,7** and **Da 9:7,8**). Confusion of face is when the Lord makes you look bad to yourself or to others. By faith we accept the fact that God orchestrates everything in our lives for a reason (**Ro 8:28**). Confusion of face and bad circumstances should get our attention just as much as the good stuff that happens. We need to figure out *why* the Lord allowed the bad stuff to happen to us. It could be just a test of our faith and willingness to submit to whatever He decides to do with us. But it could also be an attempt on His part to discipline us and usher us in another direction. In order to figure it out we need to use the inner sanctum, have some honest soul-searching in the presence of the Lord, and then glorify Him as Boss by accepting His guidance and repenting of whatever we think might be wrong in our lives at the moment. The following examples were things in my life that made me pause and turn questioningly to the Lord for answers. As you read them you should realize most Christians would not have given a second thought to these events. I did because I believe the Lord is doing more than sitting on His hands. And I’m always looking for ways to glorify Him – even when it involves humbling me. The first two events caused me to back off on some strictness with Robin. The third was more general. All of them were results of my active faith in the guiding hand of God.

For purposes of illustration, let’s say I was wrong in thinking God caused these events in order to correct and guide me. If I was wrong in thinking that, His reaction would be the same as it was with you: He would see that I was making an error, but because He could read my heart and know my true motivation was to submit to His guiding authority in my daily life, He would protect me from my error. That was not the case with me in the following examples, however, because as far as I could tell, He approved of my responses to all three of these incidents because He did nothing to change them as He did with you and your commitment. Here’s what I told Richard:

We all wonder, when handing out discipline, if we are just doing it in the flesh. The Bible is an obvious guide in general, but how can we know when the Lord thinks what we’ve done is either inappropriate or has gone on long enough? I mean, *any* discipline we deal out can be justified in the Bible because we’re the bosses of our homes. Therefore, when our Boss lets us know it’s time to ease off, we must obey Him just as we expect our families to obey us.

How does He let us know? Well, aside from the obvious afflictions He mentions in the Bible like sickness, there are less obvious ways like “confusion of face.” Let’s look at some examples from my life:

A big kick in the ass from the Lord was a grass fire. I’ve done lots of burning over the years and know what I’m doing. Some years ago in late winter/early spring when the grass was greening but the leaves were not yet sprouting on the trees, I went out to burn some old rotten wood I’d bulldozed into a pile with my tractor. It had rained and the ground was wet but I hoped the pile, being up off the ground a bit, would be dry enough to burn. It wasn’t. I tried to get it going several times but it always hissed and died. The last time it died I accepted defeat and went into the house.

Meanwhile, Robin, who had been in the doghouse with me, was doing something outside. When she went around back she saw a huge portion of the back pasture was on fire and it was spreading into the woods on both sides out beyond the pasture fence. She knew I’d been trying to get a fire going and assumed I was up the hill in the woods trying to contain it while she labored on the lower slopes. But I was inside, sitting there reading the newspaper! I finally smelled smoke and went out back to this unbelievable scene. By the time I got a shovel, hopped the fence into the woods, and began scraping a fire break through the leaves on the ground, two forest service guys with a mini bulldozer equipped for this sort of thing were already working. (An airborne fire watch had seen the smoke as soon as it started and radioed it in.) Fire out, I fessed up to them that I was responsible, and was fined \$150.

Well, because the Lord usually takes care of me I knew the fire didn’t have to start. But the Lord allowed it to start and it made me look bad to the forest service and to my wife. That’s confusion of face. So I had a talk with the Lord in an attempt to discern if He was trying to get my attention about something. I prayerfully accepted it as a sign that He wanted me to take Robin out of the doghouse. So I immediately went to her, told her I thought the fire might have been the Lord interceding on her behalf, apologized for treating her wrongly, and immediately repented of my behavior.

Now for Parental discipline on a smaller scale: Robin tried to use the summer shower on the back patio and came to me saying she couldn’t get it going. I asked her if she turned the correct valve, the one on the far right. Yes, she had. Well, I’d been giving her the semi-silent treatment for something for a couple of days, so I just told her it should work and went back to what I was doing. When I then heard her turn on the shower in the bathroom, I went out to the patio to see what the problem was. At first I couldn’t get the water going either. Perplexed – because I’m the “water expert” who designed all of this stuff, I went back and forth between the “submarine wall” in the laundry room and the patio. Finally I noticed one of the valves on the patio that is supposed to remain untouched and in the “on” position, was in the “off” position. Problem solved, I went into the bathroom and told Robin she had turned the wrong valve off the last time she’d showered. She pointed out, correctly, that she hadn’t showered out back in several days but that I’d used it the day before. I realized I had confusion of face. First, the Lord had blinded me into turning off the wrong valve, and then He blinded me to the problem when I was troubleshooting. And He used all of that to make me look like a stupid jerk to Robin. When I thought about it (I always try to evaluate things for possible involvement on the part of the Lord) I had to admit the shower episode did make me look bad. I accepted it as a sign from the Lord that it was time to end the cold shoulder treatment of Robin, and did so.

You say, but the whole thing could be explained with Reason. True, but I am too afraid of the Lord to risk messing with Reason and unscriptural things like “chance.” You see, if I don’t acknowledge signs from the Lord by *allowing* Him to get my attention with small things, He’ll have to get my attention with big things. I don’t want to be so stubborn and out of touch with Him that He has to use drastic measures to get my attention.

One more example. At Canaan Farm one year the garbage truck driver backed into my overhead gate and broke my Canaan Farm sign hanging on it. He reported it to his company – said his foot slipped off the brake. The boss called me to apologize and to assure me that I’d be paid for the damage. Well, I knew the Lord knew about the sign and could have prevented the accident, but He chose not to. I also knew I’d been backslidden. I therefore told the garbage boss that no apology and no payment were necessary. I told him to reassure the driver that it was totally my fault, that I was a backslidden Bible believer, that the Lord had used the driver to teach me a lesson, and that I wanted the boss to actually convey my apology to the driver

for putting him in a potentially bad situation with my spiritual hypocrisy. The boss was stunned. He told me he'd gotten all kinds of reactions to calls like this, but he'd never heard anything as humble and honest as this. He said some complimentary things, thanked me, and hung up. I bolted the sign back together with obvious flat metal plates, and put it back up as a reminder to me of the Lord's discipline. I've still got it and have grown quite fond of it.

The reason I look at "circumstances" in my life in an attempt to discern if God may be trying to get my attention about something is verses like **Nu 12:9-15**; **2 Sa 16:5-13**; **Jb 2:10**. And the reason I say discernment is needed in order to see "if" God is trying to tell me something is verses like **Jb 4:7,8** and **Lk 13:1-5**.

The Lord is active in your life, Harry. And you won't be taught this stuff by modern Christianity because living by Reason is now believed to be the way God wants us to live. Faith is the victory: In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths (**Pv 3:6**).

Len

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Richard:

Because you've been going to church for 20 years you are a very young Christian. And because you've been going to "Spirit-filled" churches you are oriented toward a "feel good" Christianity that makes you indecisive and timid when it comes to action.

Behind the scenes I was even more frustrated than the frustration that showed in my earlier letter. There is simply no way I could possibly hang around with a bunch of apostates who taught that God was taking physical control of them and making them talk. They are liars and *they know it* because they are *faking* what they do. I do not like people like that because – no matter how "nice" they are – they are of the lowest character. I simply will not allow myself to hang out with people who repeatedly and knowingly lie about God Almighty. And I would never allow my family to have anything to do with them, much less attend tongue-talking tutorials. I cannot describe the bile that rises in me as I think about it, Richard. It is that offensive to who I am and to That Which I cherish more than my mortal life.

You have some growing to do.

Because charismatics are people of low character who also want to be "Christians", they gravitate towards the same kind of wishy-washy, say-nothing, feel-everything churches you do. Birds of a feather.

Let me give you an example of how my Christian character and doctrine determine whom I permit in my presence: Robin and I met a nice couple a few years ago who were Seventh-Day Adventists. We were introduced to them because they were very similar to us in several respects. We enjoyed them. And, obviously, doctrinal differences quickly arose. No problem, I simply opened my Bible and read the Scripture to them. When he turned to the "inspired" writings of the woman who started his denomination, I corrected her with the word of God. He objected that the KJV was just a translation with errors and corruptions – unlike his infallible "word of woman." I told him that was interesting, would he show me at least one error in the King James? He said he didn't know one off the top of his head but could easily prepare a little presentation for me on the subject that would include errors. I told him I would greatly appreciate it because until he successfully concluded his presentation I would consider him a blasphemer of the word of God. I also pointed out that I considered the Bible to be *the* authority in all matters and therefore further conversations with him would have to wait until after we settled the KJV issue. After that they called a couple of times wanting to get together, but when I asked if his presentation was ready and was told it wasn't, I told them we'd wait until it was. Finally I told him I thought he was just playing games and really had no idea about anything concerning the KJV and that I wasn't interested in seeing them again. I had decided he was a lightweight and a liar who said blasphemous things about the word of God with no understanding, no faith, and no fear – just like the crowd you hang out with. About a year later they called and began chitchatting about how she was about to have a baby, what they'd been up to, and just generally attempting to have a friendly conversation. I interrupted by asking, "What is this, are you trying to get back together with us?!" "Well, we just thought you might be interested to know we're going to have a baby." "I'm more concerned about the bad things you said about the word of God and about the fact that you aren't true to your word. Either you're ready to show me some errors in the Bible or you aren't." They weren't, and we never heard from them again. Once again, Bible doctrine – no, once again, believing Bible doctrine caused us to be separated from apostates who were only interested in religion.

The point is I don't have the time or inclination to pal around with Christians whose doctrine is wrong and who are not interested in discussing those doctrines. There is a war going on and I'm fighting for survival. This stuff is of absolute supreme importance. I have heard and responded to the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Just because some people are nice, have things in common with us, and want to be our friends is not enough. I am at war and will not allow myself to be distracted by the things of the world.

I just can't understand how you can hang around with whited sepulchers who are harming you and your family. It seems obvious that the immediate imperative would be to come out from among them. That's what Robin and I did after a little under two years as Christians – we simply quit going to church. No announcement, no fanfare, no fuss. We simply quit attending. And I'll tell you something else about me and my relationship with the Lord even at that early stage: I was a doer of the word even then: I was going to live for the Lord by simply obeying His word. I didn't know much Bible at that point, but what I did know I was going to do – whether it made me feel silly or not. So, because two innocent young converts had been very badly treated by the Christians of that town, when Robin and I left, just as we got to the outskirts of town I pulled over to the side of the road, stopped, opened the door, pivoted in my seat, and banged my shoes together (**Mk 6:11**). When the Lord looked down from His throne and saw me pulling off the road, He called Michael and Gabriel over and said, "Get a load of that: Looks like we may have a budding doer."

So why did you hang around gibberish for so long? Is it because your family is so zealous about the things of the Lord and about gibberish churches that they couldn't bear to attend another church? Is it because they don't really care about the Lord or His Bible and are so attached to the superficial country-club social life in your church that you couldn't drag them out if you wanted to? Or is it because you are a Mars Hill type?

Am I saying you have low character? Of course I am. You don't rob banks and cheat on your wife, but you tried to cheat your employer and the computer company when you tempted me to participate in fraud in order to save a few lousy bucks. What? Did you think God was actively working in your life changing you from the character of your carnal old man into

the righteousness of the new man over the last 20 years while you sat there in your pew reveling in the emotional, unscriptural crap those deceitful liars were feeding you? That's not the way the Lord works. If you don't work, He won't reward you with growth.

You may not have been thinking when you tempted me to participate in fraud with you. I refused, but the sin was already committed in your heart. It's about character, Richard. It's about *who you are*. Let's say, for example, that you were just clumsily looking for a way you could express friendship and appreciation for me. I was in the market for a computer, and the thought occurred to you that you could deceitfully and knowingly lie (like all the people in your church do every week) by ordering a discounted computer for "yourself" and then selling it to me in order to get around the fact that I don't qualify for your employee discount. I was very embarrassed for you. Your new man should have instantly killed that sinful idea. It didn't. You had a great chance to "die daily" to self and you missed it. You were carnal. You also should have apologized to me for tempting me and for being a negative influence on me. You didn't. All of that goes to character – you have not yet developed the high character of righteousness demanded by the Lord.

You need to be sure you are Scripturally right before you *do* anything. And since you have a lot of growing to do you need to actively and deliberately look for things in the Bible you can incorporate into your life. That's why, in my frustration, I suggested that you and your family go to boot camp by finding the most narrow-minded, militaristic, rule-keeping church you could find. Why do that? Because being a doer of the word is the only way you can grow. You need to learn how to *discipline yourself* into being a doer. You may make a few mistakes along the way but you can correct them later when you realize them. You need to be a man on a mission if you ever hope to make up for the wasted 20 years and if you ever hope to overcome the antichristian teachings of the "Spirit-filled" churches you've been attending.

My character is such that I could not disrespect you by lying or being evasive when you asked me about all of this. Therefore, I pray this will be received with the same heavy heart with which it is sent and that you will put the Bible into action in your life so you can grow in Christian character.

I would not enjoy getting a letter like this – even if only half of it were true. But at Judgment I also wouldn't want to be asked why I didn't respond truthfully to your interrogative. I believe you have the maturity, humility, and love for the Lord to appreciate the truthful and direct, eyeball-to-eyeball answer required of a Christian warrior when answering another Christian warrior.

There is a Cause. And this letter is sent in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom we serve. I really do love the brethren. I love you, Richard.

Len

REPLY

Len:

Thanks, brother. I love you too.

Richard

DUTY – NOT RESULTS

Andy:

Once, as a new Christian, three men I'd been witnessing to asked me to be at their place at such a time so I could debate their Catholic priest (whose name, in my mind, was Goliath). I tried not to show it but I was terrified. How could a young layman like me hope to compete with an experienced, formally trained priest? But, I'd already spent too much of my life being concerned with *me*, and I was determined to be concerned about the Lord from then on – even if it meant being humiliated, tongue-tied, and ass-whipped by a Catholic priest.

What happened you ask? I glorified God. But, Len, did you get your ass kicked by the priest or did you slay Goliath? That doesn't matter; all that matters is I went and did it – I was a doer. Yeah, Len, but were you commandingly eloquent or were you a dry-mouthed, nervous rookie? That doesn't matter; God just wants us to be willing to glorify Him. It's better for you not to know what happened because it emphasizes the fact that we are to serve the Lord and leave the results to Him. We are not here to *win*; we are here to *serve*. If we faithfully do that, we shall win – even if it kills us.

You've suggested you may not be very eloquent. You have grown rapidly and well – that is your eloquence.

When God selected Moses to confront Pharaoh, Moses screwed up. He said in effect, "Lord, I don't think you've thought this out properly and therefore haven't made a good selection by choosing me. My brother, Aaron, is much more eloquent than I, so why don't you pick him?" Moses should have glorified God by treating Him as if He were the all-knowing God who had His reasons for picking Moses. God does not screw things up. If we just accept and carry out His will the war will go exactly the way He wants it to.

Len

OH YE OF LITTLE FAITH

Harry:

When you said, "*The age Ahaziah began to reign in 2 Ch 22:2 appears to conflict with 2 Ki 8:26. It puts a chink in my errorless KJV argument*", what you meant to say is it puts a chink in your faith. And when you said, "*If it is a legitimate error and you know of other similar type errors, please let me know; I'll just revise my language to 'there are no errors of any consequence' in God's Book*", what you meant to say is you'll just downgrade God Almighty to chump status because He didn't/couldn't do with His word what He said He'd do.

When King Saul turned democratic God rejected him as king. And God had David anointed king. You could say David *officially* began to reign that day. But Saul wouldn't go away and eventually began trying to kill David. And when Saul later killed himself, you could say David *actually* began to reign that day. And that means if you were asked when David began to reign you'd need more info in the question because you could pick *two* dates. A person ignorant of all the facts and later hearing your two answers would assume you were contradicting yourself.

Since David established the City of David, Jerusalem, you could say he reigned *in Jerusalem* for x years. But if you got rid of *in Jerusalem* you could say David reigned for y years *actually* (y includes x). And you could also say David reigned for z years *officially* (z includes y and x). All of that would confuse ignorant people of little faith who, in spite of their ignorance,

worshipped the tree of knowledge by allowing their limited knowledge to make them assume the statements about David were contradictory.

Now we turn to 2 Ch 22:2 and 2 Ki 8:26. We have *two* different statements about *when he began to reign!* We quickly assume there is an error because we're all Naturally infected by the leaven of the tree of knowledge. But we must answer a question about ourselves: Do we know all there is to know about the facts of the matter? No? Then the matter is solved – we are simply not qualified to declare the statements contradictory. To do so would mean we are walking by sight (a sight filled with admitted ignorance!) rather than by faith in the Lord Who Knows all.

Ahaziah reigned for a year in *Jerusalem*. But he was related to the king of *Israel*. Jerusalem was in Judah – not Israel! *That* really complicates matters: We have two different times concerning the start of his reign (and we don't know anything about *official* or *actual*.) We have the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel involved, and that means official relations, unofficial relations, family relations, etc. And that makes us realize we are ignorant of so much more than we first thought. I say again, we are way too stupid and pathetic to ever dare to assume *in our abundant ignorance and limited knowledge* that Almighty God screwed up. There are a thousand possible explanations for this apparent contradiction. Did Ahaziah reign in Israel for a time? Was he *decreed* to be the king but circumstances prevented his *actual* reign for a number of years? Was he considered to be reigning by the folks in one kingdom while the folks in the other kingdom rejected him as legitimate king? What – you don't know? And in spite of your ignorance of even 1% of the facts you were ready to downgrade God to chump status if Lord Len merely told you to? It sounds to me like you worship the word of Len more than the word of God.

As you grow you'll realize I'm just another chump like you. I'm just older in the Lord than you are, and therefore I have milk in my breasts that you can feed on until you are weaned. That's all my job is. And part of that parental responsibility is to correct you when you thoughtlessly and lightly make blasphemous statements. You just weren't thinking about the words you chose to use. If you had thought about them you'd have realized their terrible implications and their blasphemy and you wouldn't have said them. You must get yourself under control so you glorify God with all you do and say. And you must realize that other, younger Christians will look to you for guidance and will drink your milk – and they'll hang on your every word. So be carefully controlled by carefully ruling from your inner sanctum over everything you do.

Your carnality caused you to *want an answer*. You wanted to be able to state Reasonable, undeniable facts to others who asked about the passage. You wanted to be in a position of *knowledge*. But we are not here to live by worldly knowledge, Harry; we are here to live by faith. We're not here to be men of smarts; we're here to be men of faith. Do I know the exact answer? No, but I see some possibilities. And through faith I give the One I trust with my life the benefit of the doubt.

The important thing to keep in mind is the overwhelming ignorance that blinds us. The Bible is written for men of faith; and it was written to be a stumblingstone and a rock of offense to they of little faith. You just tripped over it. Pick yourself up, have a chat with the Lord about it, and carry on.

Len

BELIEF IS APPLYING THE BIBLE

Richard:

Let me clarify my position on gibberish by replying to your comments:

“In terms of character, I guess I would be better off living by the truths in the Bible, and realizing that not knowing God’s will is unacceptable, whether due to ignorance or deliberate choice.”

As we used to say at the Naval Academy: *Are you guessing, mister?!* How is it that you don't *know* it is better to know God's truth than to be ignorant of it?

“You said charismatics were liars because they knew what they were doing was wrong and did it anyway, that ‘knowing the truth, they deliberately lie about it.’ I suppose there are those among them that do this. But I wonder if there are also those who are just ignorant and/or unbelieving of what God says”...“Have charismatics bought into the party line of tradition because they haven’t bothered to research the issues, or have they done so and then decided that ‘their’ way is better *despite* what the Bible says? Does it ultimately matter?”

I think the fact that you've been friends with gibberishers for so many years has hindered your ability to see clearly. Those two quotes may indicate that you haven't yet learned how to view Bible truths on the one hand, and “everyday life” or “reality” on the other. Many Christians are that way; they think everyday life is “real” and therefore what the Bible says gets locked up in their Sunday school compartment only to be brought out when talking about “Bible stuff.” I'm the opposite of that: What happens in everyday life has no meaning, import, validity, or truth to me unless I view it through the corrective lenses of the word of God.

The reason I think you may not be using God's corrective lenses is your above two quotes seem to make a distinction between what charismatics *think* doctrinally and what they actually *do* in their lives. When discussing whether or not they are deliberate liars, for example, I used their physical *actions* – gibberish – as proof. But you have ignored their *fruit* by changing the subject from what they *do* to what they *think*. (Notice I don't even use the word *believe* when discussing them.) Why did you change the subject? Why would you want to get off onto the slippery and uncertain slope of trying to figure out what they may or may not have correctly or incorrectly learned from the Bible? Are you a mind reader? Why wouldn't you just *know them by their fruits* like God tells us to do?

What are their fruits? That's easy – they actually, physically go, “La, la, la, goo, goo, goo, da, da, da, doo, doo, doo...” However, perhaps because you've been sitting there silently watching them babble for so many years, it may be that you have been blinded.

So, for instructional purposes, let's simply invent another “second blessing” or “fruit of the Spirit.” Let's say charismatics think the Holy Ghost makes them all do cartwheels. There is no difference between cartwheels and gibberish because they are both voluntary bodily actions that can be performed by any unsaved schoolgirl. Now, I'm the gibberish preacher and you're the pewster. I've taught you that God will take over your body and will use your body to do cartwheels. But, just to “help Him get started”, you need to go outside on the sidewalk with little schoolgirls and practice doing cartwheels. At first, you're a little rusty and your gymnastics don't look so good. When you come back into church I ask, “Did God take over your body and do the cartwheels, or did you do them as voluntary, deliberate acts?” You have three possible answers: 1) “It was amazing! God did it! I didn't do anything – I just found myself magically doing cartwheels! It's a miracle!” 2) “I did the cartwheels. Every bodily motion was premeditated and directed by my mind. It was just a practice session to help God later

take over my body. It was definitely me doing the cartwheels.” 3) “I don’t know if I did the cartwheels or if they were involuntary cartwheels resulting from the Holy Ghost performing a miracle through me – I can’t tell the difference.”

Now we analyze the three answers, only let’s apply them to gibberish:

The first answer is easy to analyze if we know the Bible. It cannot possibly be God doing it because according to God’s word gibberish is neither tongues nor unknown tongues. Therefore the speaker is wrong – neither the gibberish nor the cartwheels was a miracle. But it’s not until we get to the second answer that we realize the first answer is a deliberate lie.

The second answer is something we can all identify with because we’ve all thrown baseballs, done cartwheels, or made nonsensical sounds come out of our mouths. We knew we were doing them – not God. I say again, we knew we were the ones doing them, and we knew God was not making us do them. After all, we know the difference between something we voluntarily do and something we involuntarily watch ourselves do because some power has taken over our bodies.

But, you ask, how does that prove the first answer is a *deliberate* lie and that all charismatics are *deliberately* lying? Simple. First, because of what the Bible says we *know* gibberish isn’t done by God. And second, even if a charismatic honestly (but mistakenly) thinks gibberish *is* Scriptural, and even if he honestly (but mistakenly) thinks all the other people around him *are* being controlled by God, he *knows* he is faking it because he can tell the difference between when he throws a baseball, does a cartwheel, or speaks gibberish, and when some power takes over his body and does it for him. And even though “Spirit-filled” Christians know they are acting on their own volition, they lie like dogs (**2 Pe 2:22**) by claiming some power takes control of their bodies away from them.

After that second reason it is impossible to ask, “But what if God *did* cause him to speak gibberish?”, because of the first reason – God doesn’t do gibberish. But that requires both of two things, *knowing* the Bible and *believing* the Bible. And those two things are why the gibberish doctrine flourishes – many people don’t know the Bible very well, many people don’t believe the Bible, and many people neither know nor believe the Bible.

So, when you say, “I suppose there are those among them that lie”, you should know by the Scriptures and by their fruits they are lying. And when you say, “But I wonder if there are also those who are just ignorant and/or unbelieving of what God says. Have charismatics bought into the party line of tradition because they haven’t bothered to research the issues or have they done so and then decided that ‘their’ way is better *despite* what the Bible says? Does it ultimately matter?”, you should realize your words are irrelevant; it doesn’t matter what charismatics think doctrinally – they still know they are throwing the baseballs, doing the cartwheels, and doing the gibberish – some power isn’t doing it through them. Therefore they are liars. They are deceitful. And they are deliberately so even though they are talking about Almighty God!

If I were up on stage silently moving my mouth and gesturing as if I were singing while the song really came from speakers behind the curtain, would you think it possible that I truly thought I was doing the singing just because I mistakenly thought other people putting on the same act weren’t faking it like I was? No, of course not, because I’d know I was faking it. You must learn to combine the Bible with what gibberishers are doing in order to understand they are deliberately faking an action the Bible says God doesn’t even do, and then they are deliberately lying to you and to your wife and children about it. Your friends are deceitful, deliberate liars – no matter how “nice” your blindness makes you think they are. The fact that they might think gibberish is Scriptural has nothing to do with the fact that they still know they are faking their gibberish.

Do you still wonder if it ultimately matters? If you do you must question your knowledge of the Bible, your belief of the Bible, and your character.

Len

THE KING’S CROWN

Harry:

Yes, it’s interesting how the RCC – as bad as it is – is still straighter in its doctrine in some areas than some Bible-oriented churches – women preachers are an example. I think that’s because the Pope is more of a monarch. When Western civilization, including the churches, went democratic, the RCC made some modifications but basically stayed the same. For many years she even opposed the democracy she now embraces, and all of this kept her more old fashioned.

When I was a young Christian I thought she was the Great Whore. (Now I think she is a type of the Whore – a type of Christianity today.) Christianity seemed a bit simpler when I was an ignorant young Christian: Catholicism was bad and Protestantism was good. But when I began learning that some of the things supported by Protestantism, like democracy and rebellion, were bad, and some of the positions of Rome were correct, I had to dump everything I’d been told and base my outlook solely on the Bible. I think I tend to be a loyalist. By that I mean I like to pick a side, the right side, and believe in that side – the good guys wear white hats; the bad guys wear black robes. That tendency to want to identify with one side or the other made me have very minor twinges of doubts as I learned more: Was the RCC really the true church from the beginning that just went astray? Had I been too hasty when I quit Catholicism? Because of the issue of authority, should my loyalty to Christ make me faithful to the “authority” of Rome even in her apostasy while at the same time trying to be pure doctrinally on my own? You’ve got to remember, by this time I had no family, no friends, no church, no advice, no help, no guidance. Scratch all that; I had the Lord and His Instruction Book. I had God Almighty helping me and answering one prayer after another. (I gotta tell you, brother, just talking about what a Friend we have in Jesus and thinking about how much He has watched over me, overwhelms me with an emotion I cannot express. I have absolutely no regrets about the path He has chosen for me.) Anyway, the Lord helped me see that He’s the only one wearing the white hat. Or, more appropriately, He’s the only one wearing the Crown. So I quit worrying about earthly sides and denominations; I’m on His side. I was right to come out from among them and be separate. And I don’t wear a white hat; I wear whatever He wants me to wear. All I want is whatever the King wants.

Len

FIGHTING WEEDS AND BRIARS

Richard:

We are here to fight the good fight. That includes fighting yourself as well as other people. During times of domestic combat like these aren’t you glad you’re not simultaneously fighting other battles on non-domestic fronts? I’m going to zero in on various things you said and comment on them:

“The truth...was totally lost in her emotion.”

That’s been my experience with Robin. Perhaps because men are to be the heads and women are to be the bodies, the Lord made it so our struggles with each other for supremacy would be a perfect picture of the carnal old man vs. the spiritual new man. Emotion does make them blind and/or unaffected by Scripture. You on the other hand, while still wisely questioning your motives and methods, correctly came up with:

“I saw the whole incident as basic to how we relate to God and His correction.”

That is the issue. Are you the master? Is Jane the servant? Are you her head and your Head the Lord? Has He not told her to obey you as Him? Is she in rebellion vs. Him when she carries on so? Yes to all.

“She saw it as a matter of whether or not I was right in doing what I did...She saw me as over-reactive and ‘macho’...she was so angry the Scriptures just didn’t matter to her.”

Obviously, she still thinks – along with apostate modern Christianity – that the issue is **right and wrong** rather than **authority**. Perhaps a good way to handle times like these is to declare a truce and sit down with her in order to hear her explain her accusations. Hand her the Bible and have her show you what you’ve missed in Scripture that makes you wrong. Also ask her to show you where the Lord says she’s been “right” as opposed to your “wrong”, “Biblically reactive” as opposed to your “over-reactive”, and “Biblically feminine” as opposed to your “macho.” And please share the Scripture she produces with me because I’ve never been able to quite remember what chapter and verse defines just how many decibels the Lord and I are restricted to when dealing with our servants, and which methods of correction the Lord and I are supposed to allow our servants to disapprove of, veto, and disrespectfully shove back into our faces. I want to know these things because, as a wife of the Lord, I want to be sure He doesn’t overstep His bounds with me! Once I know the Scripture I’m going to start judging His every action and let me tell you what, He had better not cross the line with me because I’ll not just be “in His face”, I’ll be all over Him as I show Him that He needs to discipline me only in ways that I approve! And I think He’ll be pleased with me for rebuking and correcting Him because I suspect He really wasn’t pleased when Sarah meekly obeyed Abraham’s selfish orders! I just bet both the Old Testament story of Sarah’s meek submission and the New Testament’s singling her out as an example for New Testament Christians is the flawed work of some Stone Age Bible translator! I think God wanted Sarah to get in Abe’s face and make a federal case out of his treating her wrongly. I think God would have been delighted with her ugly, angry, condemning, and rebellious looks at her husband and head while she told him off – because He looks forward to having many of His Christian wives do the same thing to Him at Judgment about some of His extreme, violent, narrow-minded and selfish methods of dealing with us over the centuries. His methods have provoked, offended, hurt, disgusted, and driven many people away from a God Whose methods are so brutal! No wonder Satan and many carnal Christians agree about what is evil and what is good – God has been way too tyrannical!

Obviously Jane – like all women – will not be able to support her position with Scripture, but she certainly will be able to do so at great length with the Enlightened and liberated carnal mind (the one that is enmity against God). So have a piece of paper with half labeled “Jane’s Scriptural objections to Richard” and the other half labeled “Jane’s unscriptural objections to Richard.” And make sure to record the chapter and verse along with all of her Scriptural objections. And for the other objections, the carnal ones, the subjective ones, be sure to write down the exact limitation on decibels, exactly at what point you’ve gone too far, etc. I mean, get it all! Remember, this will probably be pure wisdom from Jane, carefully thought out and carefully worded. Why? *Because she is daring to judge her authority, and I hope and pray she’s not going where angels fear to tread without having first carefully, prayerfully, and completely thought it out!* Only a fool or a rebellious witch would act that way.

As far as your being “right” is concerned: The Old Testament Christian kings should have tried to be Scriptural and right in everything they did. Sadly, they often failed. But it didn’t matter to their subjects if the king was right or wrong – they still had to submit for Jesus’ sake. What then will keep you from becoming a cruel and selfish dictator in your home? First, your love for God and your obedience to Him. Second, your love for your family and your sense of duty and responsibility to Scripturally husband them.

“Whether I’m ‘Mr. Nice Guy’ or ‘Asshole Corrections Officer’ doesn’t seem to matter with my son.”

Obviously the way your family is today is probably your fault and you are reaping what you’ve sown. But that’s water over the dam. You are now living for the Lord and realize you’d have been a different father if you’d been a good Christian in a good church. But your church never taught you or your family anything about Christianity. God tells me to know them by their fruits, Richard, and as I’ve looked at you and your family over the years, it is very easy to see that you’ve never been anywhere near a decent church because any church that would produce your family is an enemy of the Bible. I’m not rebuking you, comrade; I’m speaking quietly to a brother in time of war about spiritual reality. It’s sad, but there may not be much you can do for your children in the short time they have remaining under your roof.

“My daughter’s not impressed with ‘Religious asshole Dad’ either.”

Don’t take it personally, Richard; look at it the way God sees your daughter: “She’s not impressed with any Christian who openly and honestly tries to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in accordance with His Instructions.” It’s not you, Richard, she objects to – it’s the Lord’s “tyranny” that offends her. She likes you fine, and always has – when the Bible is not involved.

“They all seem to have the same lack of regard for the word of God as real and authoritative.”

Well, having had you and your church as their spiritual guides all of these years *did you expect anything different?* You aren’t fighting a normal battle, comrade; you’re trying to play catch up. The soil of their hearts is hard, shallow, barren, rocky, dry, and full of weeds and thorns. Nobody trying to start a garden in those conditions is under any illusions – he has a lot of work to do.

“I feel as though I’m slowly losing them all...instilling in them a regard for the word seems as far away as the moon...My efforts to be obedient to the Bible seem to have backfired into onslaughts of rebellion, apathy, and over-drivenness.”

If you were to lose them all you wouldn’t be the first Christian warrior that has happened to. Because you never had a church or parent who taught you how to count the cost, you may want to spend some time with the Lord honestly discussing it with Him now. If there is anything you suspect might be more than you can bear, let Him know. Be honest with Him and with yourself. Is there anything that would make you quit? Or are you a true warrior like Job?

Your efforts to be obedient have not backfired; you are merely finding out what kind of people – from God’s perspective – live with you. And you will find them to be no different from all other carnal Christians. I’m not talking about

the outward man; I'm talking about the difference between an angel and a devil. That's why I am so vigilant with Robin: I realize, because of Matt Seven and the Pharisees, that even though she may outwardly submit and conform to my authority by keeping the rules, unless she develops her own inner relationship with the Lord, He will one day look at her, see a devil, and say, "Depart from me...I never knew you." My most difficult and frustrating challenge is to water, prune, fertilize, and coax Robin into having a *real* relationship with the Lord. I hope and pray that on the inside she has a good and proper relationship with the Lord, but if it turns out that she doesn't, fine, *as long as I've properly done my duty before God as a Christian husband.*

"I feel as though my only choices are to lose them or compromise the truth."

Read Mt 10:33-39.

"I just can't see what He wants here or how to love Him in all this. And I fear that my old man is much more alive than I realized."

He wants you to obey Him. And that's how you love him, soldier. No matter how bad it gets or what happens, you stand at attention, salute, and volunteer for more duty. You do that today, you do that tomorrow, and you do that forever and ever – it's just who and what we are. We are His servants who will serve Him any time, any eternity, and anywhere no matter how bad it gets.

You haven't really been working on your old man for very long; therefore it's Natural that he would still be strong. And he'll be with you until the 8th day. It's just something we have to deal with on a daily basis. That's why we must analyze our actions with our families and discern if our old man has been a little too much involved. If he has been, it is our Christian duty to deal with ourselves; but our servants do not have the prerogative to rebuke and correct us. For them to do so would be an act of rebellion.

"I asked for something from the word and He gave me [here a verse was listed]...Could be just the usual results of such 'scriptural roulette' or not...I don't know."

Sometimes when I open the Bible at random I wonder if the Lord might hit me upside the head with a verse. But I never sit down and say, "Lord, what do you say about this situation? I'm going to open my Bible and I want you to give me an answer." If that is what you did, stop it and don't tempt the Lord like that again. You just faithfully study His word, put it into action in your life, and let the Holy Spirit take care of making verses pop up in your head if He wants to (**Jn 14:26**), but don't try to use the Bible as a ouigee board (thank God I can't even spell it).

"I want His strength and His Spirit to work here, not my own."

I know what you mean; you don't want your carnal man continuing to ruin your household. But let me look at it from a different perspective: *You* are the Lord's body. *You* are His strength on earth, and He expects you to serve Him with all of your strength. The Lord *needs* you, and your family needs you to be strong. Don't let the pains of war cause you to shirk your duty.

As you sit at the dinner table conversing with your family, you should be also at work in the inner sanctum up there on your shoulders. Analyze things and people from God's perspective. Recognize your own shortcomings, realize how things could have been – should have been – if you'd been Scriptural, and then put the past aside and get on with your duty. David committed adultery and murder, so God killed his baby. *Before* the baby died David did everything he could to change God's mind, but once the baby died, David put his sorrow and regret aside and got on with life. You are in the present – do what you can about it. Don't dwell in the past; that won't help the present. The present needs you. The church needs you. And it all starts at home.

Also, be strengthened by how carnal your family is; they are living proof of what the Bible says. That's not a cheerful thought, but we must accept carnality as the bad fruit of unscriptural living – just like God said. We are here to fight. You are fighting. That's life on planet earth. In fighting there are casualties. That's warfare. So look at God, His church, and your family with love, gird up your loins, and fight for them.

Len

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Andy:

When you ask what I think the mark of the Beast will be you must understand nobody can give you a specific answer because nobody knows. But I can try to help you avoid the mark no matter what it turns out to be. I believe there is a lot more to the mark of the Beast than Christians realize. And I believe democracy is intimately involved.

Yes, democracy is just as evil as the Bible reveals it to be. (People who disagree with that have no inner sanctum.) Do not participate in democracy. Do not vote. Be a law-abiding citizen. (It is legal to not like democracy and to not vote.) It is important to stress that point: Do not break the laws of your country, and do not resist your government. Guns, for example, are helpful tools out on a country farm and are great aids for defending your family against intruders. But if the government passed a law that required me to hand in my guns, my inner sanctum would make a decree and I'd promptly turn in my guns. My only objective is to serve and glorify God. I couldn't care less about the Second Amendment's guaranteeing me the "right" to keep and bear arms – or about any other philosophy-based worldly concepts.

If the Antichrist comes to power and rules over the United States of the World, do not break his laws or resist him in any way. God wanted Pharaoh, Saul, and Nebuchadnezzar – all types of the Antichrist – to rule over His people. And He wanted His people to submit to their rule. Look at Daniel as an example. He submissively and properly obeyed and served his government (the Antichrist). The eunuch was so obedient, so helpful, and so trusted by his ungodly bosses that they promoted him to high office (**Da 6:1-3**). In fact, Daniel was such a model employee of the government – no anti-abortion activities, no "Christian right" political activism, no pro-democracy/anti-tyranny planning, no campaign to have the Bible made the law of the land – that his enemies knew their only chance to get Daniel to resist governmental directives was to make a law that required him to go against the God of the Bible (**Da 6:5**). Daniel chose to humbly submit to the death penalty rather than comply with their entrapping governmental directive. But those men were crude and obvious, and their only objective was to kill Daniel. Satan, however, cannot win by just killing us all; he must deceive us with subtlety. Let me try to help you see how discernment can be crucial to knowing when God wants us to submissively obey ungodly government and when He wants us to humbly submit to the death penalty rather than take the mark of the Beast.

Item: When Oliver Cromwell (a modern, democracy-embracing type of the Antichrist) beheaded Charles I (a democracy-rejecting type of Tribulation saints) (**Re 20:4**), Cromwell required that no man might buy or sell, save he that took the Engagement Oath. As you may recall (page H10-14) those who took the oath said, in effect, that they agreed with the Enlightened principles of democracy – including rebellion against the government. Christians today wouldn't hesitate to sign a similar document because they believe democracy is Christian.

Item: Years ago I ran the high hurdles for the track team at the U.S. Naval Academy. One time we took a long bus ride up to Yale University, which was hosting the Heptagonal Track and Field Championships. When we got there we found that the opening ceremonies would include the reading of an anti-Vietnam War statement. The statement was worded in such a way that the act of participating in the track meet (a harmless enough activity) symbolized complete agreement with the opening statement. We turned right around and went back to Annapolis.

I don't know what the physical mark of the Beast will be. Whatever it turns out to be I pray that God will give me the discernment to recognize it and the strength to go to my death rather than take it – no matter what laws the Antichrist passes. But take a look at these definitions of **mark**: *A distinctive trait such as an identifying action. An objective or end result that is striven for, a goal (Ph 3:14). To make manifest.* By putting the definitions together we can say Satan's *objective* is to have Christ's church *mark* itself by *manifesting* Satan's own *distinctive trait*.

If we were asked to come up with a one-word definition for the mark Paul was striving for in Ph 3:14 we might say something like *obedience* or *service*. If we were to come up with a one-word definition of Satan we might say *adversary* or *rebel* in part because the Bible defines Satan's religion – witchcraft – as *rebellion*. Now notice that the two sets of definitions are exactly the opposite of – or “anti” – each other.

What we're doing here is a little inner sanctum meditating. We are mindful of the fact that we don't know what the mark of the Beast will be, but we're trying to understand the principles or concepts that will be involved. If we understand the Biblical concepts, then identifying the actual mark, identifying characteristics, end result, or goal of the Antichrist should be more apparent when the time comes.

Keep in mind that physically circumcising the penis turned out *not* to be a big deal, and it was therefore done away with in the New Testament. But the principle behind it – submissive obedience – was, is, and always will be important.

It is probable that the mark of the Beast will be something simple and easy. But we'll still avoid it at all costs *if we recognize it as unacceptable*. However, can we not say that many Christians today *in principle already* manifest the mark, or distinguishing characteristic, of the Devil? Look at the fundamentals behind Satan's religion: He believes in *equality* – which would cause God to no longer be God. Satan also believes in *rebellion against authority* according to the will of the people. Do not most Christians already believe in those Satanic principles? Have not Biblical concepts – like Daniel, Joseph, Sarah, and Jesus Christ's submissive obedience to unscriptural orders and authorities – been rejected by the church today in favor of independence, resistance, and rebellion against any authority thought to be evil? Does not participation in democracy encourage Christians to badmouth, resist, and replace “evil” rulers like President Clinton, Hitler, and Charles I? As far as major principles, issues, and doctrines in the Bible are concerned, haven't the gates of hell already greatly prevailed over the church? Should we not all repent and urgently get about our Father's business? Is there not a cause?

Is it not possible that when the Antichrist comes to power, Christians will – like the Maccabees – rise up to resist him? That would be resisting the will of God. It would be *witchcraft*. It would be the distinguishing characteristic – *the mark* – of Satan. *It would be exactly what Satan wants us to do!*

So, since Christians today – like their Old Testament brethren – are doing a lousy job developing their inner sanctums, and therefore lack the ability to discern the principles and concepts behind the teachings of the Bible, what makes them think they'll be able to discern the subtlety of Satan in the end times when, except those days were shortened, even the very elect will be deceived? What if the purpose of philosophy and its offspring – Reason, Enlightenment, democracy, rebellion – is to cause us to take the mark of the Beast – Enlightenment – so Satan can exhibit us as *his* ideological/doctrinal wives, thereby prevailing over Christ's church? I'm not thinking about the usual definition of *mark* here. Look at it this way: We are supposed to take God's name upon ourselves as His wives. But we now understand that just being a born-again Christian and being physically circumcised are not the final or determinative requirements to be His bride. What the Lord really requires is submissive obedience to His authority, without which we have taken His name in vain. He expects our distinguishing characteristic – our mark – to be submissive obedience to authority. (That's one reason His *word* – which teaches submission to authority – is exalted above His *name* – which teaches nothing.) Satan's distinguishing characteristic – or mark – is just the opposite, it is antichrist, it is rebellion against authority. Since we choose which of these two husbands we prefer by our works, is it not possible that *the very act of resisting the Antichrist* – because resistance and rebellion are the characteristic mark of Satan – is itself voluntarily taking the mark of the Beast, voluntarily agreeing and walking with Satan, and thereby making ourselves witches? Could it be that Satan has been preparing us for thousands of years to *resist the Antichrist* – like he resisted God – because if we do he wins? Could Satan be that deceptive and that subtle? Could it be that we really are in deep trouble because we've ignored the real issue in the Bible – authority? Is that why all who take the distinguishing characteristic of Satan – the mark of the carnal Beast – are *damned*, because Enlightened resistance really is a *damnable heresy*? And could it be that many Christians have for centuries as individuals already taken the mark of the Beast “in their right hand” via their voluntary works of rebellion against authority, or “in their foreheads” via their voluntary acceptance of the very Enlightened religion of philosophy we were warned about?

I don't know. None of us does. But I do know that based on what I now know as a Christian about democracy and rebellion I would not take Cromwell's Engagement Oath. Knowing what I now do about resisting authority I'm glad I didn't run in that track meet. And I shall not participate in any activities against the Antichrist. If the Antichrist turns out to be an individual who tries to get me to take some kind of physical mark or to in some other way pledge or indicate my agreement with Enlightenment principles – which are anti Christ – I'll politely and quietly say, “Sir, I mean no disrespect, but my Lord does not allow me to do that.”

However, if laws are ever passed that *require* me to vote, I'll obediently comply. But, you object, didn't I say I wouldn't participate in democracy? Yes, and I won't. But if the laws ever *require* us to vote, *voting ceases to be a democratic act* and becomes a submissive act of obedience to authority. For that reason the Devil will never make voting mandatory – he has nothing to gain by doing so. (Voting is required in a couple of countries today.) I only bring this up to illustrate again that the action itself – voting or running the high hurdles – is often harmless. But we must, as princes learning how to rule, examine

the principles and meanings attached to actions in order to understand them and make proper decisions. In that way when we run the race we can sail over the hurdles in life rather than stumble over them.

For the same reason, the Devil needs our resistance to the Beast to be voluntary; he needs our rebellion to be something we *want*, something we think is *good*, something we *believe in*. He needs us to *believe in him*. And since we know *belief* and *works* are synonyms, we apply all of this to conclude that when we rebel against any authority – maybe especially the Antichrist – *we are believing in Satan through our works*. A good tree does not produce evil fruit.

As you know, some Christians do not believe the Antichrist will be an actual person. I don't know the answer; I just pray that my lamp will be full enough with Oil that God's light will guide me through any and all darkness. But does it even make sense that the Antichrist might not be a definite person? Well, we know that we ourselves – our old man – are beasts (**Ec 3:18,19**). We know that Christians who speak evil of the truth in accordance with not just what they “know” but what they *know naturally* are likened unto *beasts* that perish for their *gainsaying* (which is *resistance!*) according to **Jude 10,11** and its companion verses we studied in D25, *Damnable Heresy*. Therefore, you can make a good case that God is looking for servants who demonstrate that they – unlike Satan – are capable of being submissive. If God sees that our *distinguishing characteristic* is humble submission even unto death, He recognizes that as the way His Son showed us to live. But if God sees that we exalt self over authority via equality, resistance, and rebellion, He recognizes that as Satan's characteristic mark of carnality, as the beast in all of us. In other words, God cares about concepts, principles, and ideologies; He cares about *who* or *what* we are: If our ideology is His, He views us as *people*. If our ideology is Satan's, He views us as *beasts*. Satan's ideology – if accepted – marks us as beasts whether we live during the end times or not. In other words it may be that “the Antichrist” is the collective democratic (multi-headed) beastly body or bride of Satan – whether you call it the Whore or the Beast. And the Whore, who thinks she is pleasing God, comes to power by riding the democratic beast (**Re 17:3**), only to find that it turns out to be her downfall (**Re 17:16**). We don't know. But we do know walking in the flesh is “that spirit of antichrist”, which has been here for at least two thousand years (**1 Jn 4:3**).

We also note that the mark of the beast goes all the way back to Lucifer's rebellion and Adam and Eve: Lucifer was supposed to be a *servant* of God, but he became independent, carnal. That made him not meet to serve God and caused him to be cursed by God with “mortality” if you will. Because Lucifer is destined for the lake of fire, the “second death”, he – like mortals – has but a limited amount of time to live (**Re 12:12**). As a “mortal” he is a beast (Ec 3:19).

When God rejected beasts as wives for Adam (and Himself), He did so because first, beasts are independent heads, carnal, at enmity against Him. And second, beasts are going to die and therefore cannot be part of the everlasting Kingdom of God. That's why God doesn't consider unsaved/carnal people to be *people* – they are *beasts* neither meet nor qualified to be His helpers.

As Christians with two bodies we can walk in the flesh or in the spirit. If we are carnal we have the distinguishing mark of the beast. Therefore, what we have learned about doctrines and about the consistency of the Bible makes us realize the mark of the beast, the whoredom of Peor, the damnable heresy, Achan's accursed thing, equality, independence, rebellion, witchcraft, covetousness, and idolatry are all part of – or manifestations of – the spirit of antichrist.

God created beasts to teach us something – they are not meet to be His wives/helpers. If our distinguishing characteristic is *carnality* rather than discernment *we have the mark of the beast!*

My point in all of this has been to illustrate how important principles, concepts, and ideologies are. Most Christians throughout history have failed because their Biblical involvement has been *superficial*. And as you know, if a man has a superficial understanding of the Bible, he has a superficial relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, when Old Testament saints read things in the Bible that said to avoid unclean foods, their carnal immaturity caused them to invent “sins” by thinking this way: “Hmm, we need to make sure the physical food we eat stays clean. So we need to wash everything; our hands, our dishes – even the outside of the dishes and the tables. In fact, to not do those things is also a sin.”

They invented long lists of “sins”, and each “sin” was an attempt to please God according to their own understanding. The problem with adding to the word of God like that is those “sins” become a part of tradition and are eventually accepted automatically. Then generations later if you tried to do a Bible study on *washing tables* you'd find zero Scripture to support it. That frustration would then, when you considered the topic of *unclean food*, cause you to lose interest in a serious study on it because you'd assume the issue really is right and wrong and therefore some things are just “bad”, and you would think not eating unclean food was probably just another item on a long laundry list of sins that weren't really meant to teach us anything.

But if you *did* research clean and unclean meat you'd learn the stuff covered on page D17-1,2. Then you'd connect it with God's saying His people couldn't marry dogs because they were unclean. Then you'd find a “contradiction” in the Bible when you saw that God allowed you to marry dogs as long as you took proper steps to ensure you didn't become apostatized (made unclean) by pagan ideas. Then faith would make you accept the fact that God's word *doesn't* contradict itself, and you'd realize eating unclean meat and leavened bread really only typified the real problem of corrupting the new man with false doctrine (**Mt 16:12**). Then you'd branch out and study and understand the real significance of circumcision. Then you'd figure out the sabbath. Then you'd understand expediency as your understanding of the word of God began to expand. And all that would make you stop condemning the guiltless and help you realize the issue is not right and wrong.

The same leavening process has happened to us in the New Testament era: For example, Augustine's superficial understanding of the Bible caused him to incorrectly link sex with carnality. That became a traditional belief in Roman Catholicism, which was carried over into Protestantism by Martin Luther who added a few “sins” to the growing laundry list that was blinding men in their Bible studies just as had happened to Old Testament saints. Soon we had all kinds of new traditional “sins” that, although they weren't in the Bible, were sincerely intended to prevent us from becoming carnal, unclean, lifted up with pride, etc: Smoking, nudity, drinking, movies, dancing, sex, wearing bright clothes, using English words for bodily functions, etc. Those traditional sins have blinded us and prevented the above-described learning curve. Add to the damage done by tradition the fact that philosophy has exalted scientific knowledge over faith, which caused us to stop believing in a literal interpretation of the Bible – and even to doubt the modern existence of the word of God. So the Bible has become a mere frontlet or phylactery (**Mt 23:5**) worn on our foreheads or carried in our hands as a sign or mark that we believe its principles are the same ones the Beast wants us to cherish as sacred! (In other words, many Christians actually think the Bible stands for Freedom, Democracy, Equality, and The American Way.) Yes, tradition and philosophy have caused us to get our doctrines and beliefs from flesh and blood because the Bible is no longer the authority in all matters of faith and life. Therefore,

our understanding of the Bible is superficial and has caused Christianity to become a confusing, self-righteous, condemning, contradictory, hypocritical, and inconsistent mess full of carnal, self-righteous Pharisees.

If Christians had – like David – properly made themselves Swordbearers, that is; one flesh with the Word of God via the word of God; that is, a committed bride who serves her Husband with loving submission (rather than as a superficial, selfish, haughty whore whose love of self liberates her from submission and makes her independent), they would have developed the mind of Christ via discernment and would have understood the important meanings, principles, and concepts behind the do's and don'ts in the Bible. I think **Co 2** is a good chapter to use to illustrate what I'm saying:

Paul is concerned (**v.1**) that Christians might not *understand* the *mystery* (**v.2**). The mystery is being one flesh with Christ (**Ep 5:30-32**), which gives us the ability to reason together with Him (discernment in the inner sanctum) in order to know the mind of Christ so we can obediently manifest God in our flesh (**2 Co 4:10,11**) through our Christian walk.

V.3: In that way we become rich with the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge by understanding the meanings, principles, and concepts behind things.

V.8: But *beware* because *philosophy* and *tradition* will destroy your marriage to Christ. The marriage made you the body and Christ the Head. Philosophy and tradition, however, mean *you* do the thinking, which makes you a competing head in rebellion against the Headship of Christ. Christians today have no idea how important this verse is.

V.10 says being one with Christ (complete) brings us into the realm of God's authority (**v.9**), which makes obeying all – including evil – principalities and powers important because Christ is the Head from Whom those rulers get their authority.

V.11 says we can become non-physically circumcised (learn submissive obedience through discernment) in Christ by *putting off* the carnal old man (dying to self daily).

In verses **13-15** we get a brief summation of what Christ did: He rescued us and removed the Old Testament laws and the laws that bound us to Satan, and He used the law and fulfilled the law in order to defeat the principalities and powers. It was they who had caused the laws to be made because of their transgressions, and who then corrupted the law with philosophy and tradition.

V.16 says the outward physical things (in the Old Testament laws) are not important.

V.17 says, however, that those physical things do have important meanings, principles, and concepts behind them, which brings v.3 to mind again. The way to understand all of that is to grasp how we are no longer a proper body in submission to Christ when we focus on keeping all the physical, superficial aspects of the law – because being slaves to the carnal law itself prevents us from ignoring that law at times (expediency) in order to adhere to the *concepts* those laws were supposed to teach.

V.18 says men who have neither seen nor understood these teachings and concepts will try to beguile you into *worshipping angels* (exalting Christians such as the Pharisees and Augustine in order to introduce the traditions of men and philosophy mentioned in v.8), which will cause you to lose your reward of the inheritance. These men have carnal minds...

V.19: ...because their belief in philosophy and tradition make it so Christ is not their Head.

V.20 wonders why we who are legally dead to – and thereby rescued from – this physical world through Christ, would want to choose to dwell in the world by treating physical, superficial rules as legitimately binding.

V.21 refers to New Testament taboos (such as smoking, drinking, dancing) that Christ rescued us from.

V.22 says "sins" like the ones in the previous verse didn't come from God; they came from the tradition-bound, philosophy-believing carnal minds of Bible preachers in this New Testament era who are no different from the hell-bound Bible preachers in the Old Testament era.

V.23 says these invented taboos do *seem* to make sense because they promote self-control by denying the appetites of the flesh. Let me give you an example. Many preachers think certain types of music are sinful. The "bad" *music* (we are not addressing the *words* of the songs) can be identified by its beat: Here's what they say: "If the beat makes you tend to tap your foot, or sway with the rhythm, the music is bad because it is subconsciously making you want to thrust your pelvis – a sure sign that the Devil is trying to get you to enjoy sex and carnality! Burn the records! Stop dancing, tapping your foot, and swaying with the rhythm – they are all New Testament sins against God!" There is an Augustinian worldly logic to those arguments that appeals to the carnal mind. But those arguments don't survive long in the Scripture-demanding, Bible-understanding inner sanctum.

If we are going to successfully avoid the characteristic traits of the Beast we are going to have to dump philosophy and tradition and use the inspired word of God to become mature, capable servants of Christ.

Len

PACING YOURSELF

Richard:

This is all more difficult for you than it was for me for the simple reason that I grew much more slowly than you are. It took me many years to learn the stuff I put in my book. Over many of those years I didn't rule my house like I do now. I had to develop both as a servant of Christ and as a ruler at home. Robin also had to grow both as a servant of Christ and as my servant. It took years for us to learn and grow and implement the changes that are now part of our lives, part of who we are. We are clay vessels the Bible has shaped over time. For example, Robin and I – together – gradually learned about Xmas over time. We thoroughly understood the topic by the time we got rid of it because we discussed everything as we learned it.

Therefore, one of your tasks that I didn't have is *pacing*. Each thing I learned took time because I didn't have it all neatly laid out in a book for me so I could rapidly go from one topic to another in the Bible. And I learned it all one thing at a time. You've gotten it pretty much all at once. So you're going to have to prioritize things and then pace their implementation. That means you might continue to allow some things that you now know to be wrong because there is a time and a season for everything. It is expediency that allows you to make those kinds of decisions that are all for the glory of God and the furtherance of His church. By the time He makes you a king you will be a very decisive individual because you will have had lots of practice. That's what we're doing, we're learning, growing, and practicing.

Is my book harmful then because it may be too much too soon for immature Christians? No, just like it isn't harmful for children to sit with their parents in church and hear adult topics preached. Young children know about mowing the lawn, driving cars, and flying jet fighters long before they are old enough to attempt them. That adult knowledge is not harmful to them. Christians who study my book must likewise pace themselves by not doing things until they have grown enough to handle them.

It's OK to say, "I'm too young to mow the lawn." And it's OK to say, "I'm too young to handle that Bible doctrine." Growth is a good process because it allows us to prepare for the things of tomorrow by taking care of the things of today. Our Christian walk is done one step at a time.

I've been thinking about my letters to you and to Harry over the years. I have even edited some of what I've said in them to "soften" them a little bit for inclusion in the new last chapter of my book. Why then, I wondered, did I not soften them when I first sent them? I know I agonized over them before I sent them, and that helps me realize what may be the reason: I don't think I'm strong enough to be "softer" when confronting people. It's much easier for me to be softer when editing something for my book than it is when I'm confronting real people. Like most people, I don't like confrontation. Most people shrink from the things they don't like. I'm that way. But when it comes to the Bible I cannot allow my fear of and dislike for confrontation to make me turn away. And, because I am weak, I need to *force* myself to speak up. That necessary internal struggle results in my being more forceful and more belligerent than I'd be if confrontation were easy for me. I'm just not strong enough to look people in the eye, smile, and gently rebuke them.

But I'm just guessing. ("Are you *guessing*, mister!?") I say I'm guessing because I believe the Lord was strong – and He *still* came across as offensive when rebuking His disciples and the Pharisees. Therefore, maybe *identifying with righteousness* factors into this, too. It may be the more we love righteousness the more we react negatively and aggressively to unrighteousness. Phinehas certainly reacted aggressively and violently – and the Lord was pleased with him. The Lord was certainly strong enough to deal with Lucifer any way He pleased – and He chose violent warfare.

Maybe I'm just trying to say I care about you and wish the war were somehow easier for me to fight. But war is hell, and I hope you'll not only overlook and forgive my aggressiveness, but that you'll discern if what I say is true and helpful or not. I'm doing the best I can for the Lord and His church, and it's not easy for me. And, unless I somehow grow rapidly and radically, I'm not likely to soon change. So, if appropriate, please use forgiveness as a means of shouldering the part of my burden I'm not able to carry, and let's press on together toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Len

MATURE ATTITUDE

Len:

At first, I thought you were suffering from the "messenger syndrome" – that unfortunate reality that messengers often get shot. The Old Testament prophets lived with it because if their prophecy was wrong they were stoned. Or piss off the recipients and they got stoned. And when acting in said capacity, they could just about count on either getting it wrong or pissing off the recipients – usually the latter. Either way, they knew they weren't going to get a pat on the back for their services. But in your case I dismissed that idea quickly because I've never known you to be that self-centered. No, your letters are more fatherly than that.

Sometimes, when I hammered on my kids, I would wonder if I had drawn just a bit too much blood and would afterwards speak to them more softly to see how they were faring. It wasn't that I was apologizing for going too far; they had been hammered for a reason. But being children, I wondered about their ability to handle the chastising, and simply wanted them to know I loved them and was concerned as to how they were doing. Sometimes it was because of weakness and self-doubt that I did this; sometimes it was genuine, selfless love.

Yes, you've been hard, pointed, belligerent, deliberately confrontational, and offensive. But you've not hurt me. You've only pointed out my lack of commitment, unbelief, and unloving heart toward the Lord. Admittedly, my "old man" reaction was, "Why is he being such an asshole about this?" But I knew in my inner man that because *what* you said was accurate, *how* you said it was ultimately irrelevant. And ironically, this has given me much practice in ignoring my emotions when it comes to the truth. And I realize that because of letters such as your last, you don't consider me a "throw away." Which is just how the Bible presents God: In all the hammering away He did on His disobedient people, He *always* made it clear that His motive was love and mercy for them. You've succeeded in doing that.

My greatest frustration in this is that I haven't always been able to *discern* as you have, and that I couldn't take the same harsh position you did (when appropriate) toward those who obviously didn't know the Bible or care about it and had therefore misinterpreted it. Your comment, "It may be the more we love righteousness the more we react negatively and aggressively to unrighteousness", was thematic. It hurts to know I don't love the Lord as I should, as He deserves, because if I did I would find it much easier to *do* the things He says. By confronting me with this fact, *you do me the greatest service possible* because you make it impossible for me to pretend otherwise. You say that you're weak in dealing with confrontation: brother, if that's weakness, I'd like to see your idea of a strong man! Your challenges have caused me to *continually* seek the Lord and ask, "Is he really right about this?", and then to search the Scriptures over and over, only to be convicted by the reality of how far from the truth I often was.

"Overlook and forgive my aggressiveness," you ask: No problem; it is I who should be continually seeking your forgiveness. But if it "isn't easy" for *you*, I realize I must be sure to gird my loins for the war because you've combated your fears much better than I have mine. And if all you ask of me to relieve your burden is to "overlook and forgive", be assured, brother, I intend to grow so I can do more for the church than that. Honestly, when you ask me to "press on together" I sometimes wonder if I'm worthy of the calling. But, as you've often pointed out, since *God* has called us to do just that, what I think doesn't matter – so count me in. And thanks for your honesty and concern.

Richard

ACCEPTING GREATNESS

Richard:

Often in life people are reluctant to accept their duties and responsibilities – particularly when they are in a new position. Sometimes it takes them time to settle into their new job and begin acting with confidence. Most people in life do not accept their leadership roles. They never shoulder their duties and responsibilities. Take parents as an example: Most people have kids but they never become good parents.

When people *do* shoulder their duties and responsibilities they look at themselves and feel great because there really is no nobler deed than the performance of one's duties. Greatness is in the performance of our duties. That is greatness. I'm not talking about arrogance; I'm talking about knowing what has to be done and doing it – even if everybody else thinks it's OK to go through life mired in the type of conformity that often comes from peer pressure and not wanting to be different.

At Canaan Farm I realized I was different from other Christians because things *bothered* me that didn't bother other Christians. I was learning things that nobody else cared to think about or discuss. They were focused on going along and getting along; I was focused on what God's Book said. Because I couldn't handle the continual mindless arguments by Christians about the doctrines I was learning, I moved out into the wilderness to Blue Ribband Farm. And there I accepted greatness. Let me explain.

As God's children we are in a training program. The Lord expects us to spend our time in this life learning the Bible and serving Him by serving His church. We are sons and daughters of God. We are heirs of His kingdom. Someday – if we are judged by Him as good and faithful servants – we shall rule and reign under Him. In other words we are destined for greatness. No, that's not correct; we are not *destined* for greatness because we shall always be, well, us. Therefore, we must understand that, by a sovereign act of God when He decided to give us spirit life, we became great. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that God put us in a position of greatness, an *office* of greatness. Being a prince in line to rule and reign under God is certainly a great position. But, like young new parents, captains, teachers, police officers, and all other people with responsibilities, we must somehow *accept* the fact that it is up to us to *perform our duties* – no matter what gets in our way.

As the years of Bible study and shepherding went by at Blue Ribband Farm, there was something going on inside of me: I was accepting the greatness of my role or office as a young prince under God. At first my acceptance resulted in my dedication to Bible study. Then it resulted in my putting my household in order. Having fulfilled those responsibilities, those *duties* as a prince under God, I then turned to His church and learned that Christianity is apostate. I had a choice between two courses of action: I could take the path of least resistance and keep my mouth shut, or I could accept the greatness of my noble birth and speak up. That's not just *why* I wrote *The Age of Reason*, it is how I was able to write it – I *accepted my role as a great man*. By that I mean I accepted the nobility of my new birth and I therefore shouldered the duties and responsibilities that come with being a saint. I am a saint. I *accepted* that years ago.

You have been reluctant to accept greatness. But you must accept the fact that you are a saint and you must start acting like one. About your recent encounter you said, "I was going to toss the religious tract when it became apparent that I could not simply walk away without saying something." And you went back and spoke with those men even though you "assumed it would be a waste of time." That was a moment of greatness, Richard. You demonstrated humility, submissiveness to the Lord, love for His church, and a willingness to sacrifice self for The Cause of Christ. You were acting like a saint, like a prince on his way to rulership.

That has got to continue. You must accept the fact that greatness isn't *feeling* great, it isn't *looking* great, and it isn't *sounding* great. Greatness is *doing your job*: Be a captain, be a husband, be a dedicated student of the Bible, be a teacher, be a rebuker, and be a comforter when each is appropriate. If you keep God and His word in all of your thoughts by having an always-active inner sanctum – which is really a continuous state of prayer – you will be a doer of the word. But if you do not always walk with the Lord you will stumble and fail. If you keep Him always with you, it will *bother* you when you do not act like a saint should. You started to walk away from those men – but it *bothered* you so you went back. Listen to that still small voice and heed it. Need to master some Bible doctrine? Do it! Do it now! That's what a saint would do! You are a saint, so be one! Accept the nobility of your birth and its accompanying duties and responsibilities. Accept your greatness.

Len