

CHAPTER D28

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

Ex 15:26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

Ja 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

When my wife and I were young Christians an elderly missionary and his wife who were staunch King James Bible advocates took us to a nearby church. The church supported him and he wanted us to hear him preach. And, of course, with two new faces showing up, everybody wanted to meet us, find out if we were saved, if we were looking for a good church, etc. We enjoyed speaking with an elderly couple who were members of the church. They knew a lot of Bible and were delighted to find a couple who shared their interest in the Scriptures and who were so full of questions. When the service was over they invited the four of us to their home for some chow.

The elderly church members soon shoved the dishes aside so we could break God's Bread. The issue we were discussing was Christians going to medical science for their health versus going to the Lord. My wife and I'd never heard anything about it before and were still too naïve to know the "proper" response to scary topics was to get real quiet and act as if they'd just said something embarrassingly offensive, thank them for the chow, and leave. We still thought Christians were supposed to pull out their Bibles and humbly engage in Swordplay in order to help each other more perfectly know God's will. Anyway, the host couple would read verses like the two at the top of the page, to which the missionary would respond by protesting that the verses did not mean what they said, produce a Greek and Hebrew dictionary for laymen, and read potential meanings for some of the words. Frustrated and embarrassed when it became evident he was going to have to overthrow a number of verses in the Bible, he retreated with red face into a little shell right there at the dinner table and spent the remainder of the discussion silently and futilely flipping back and forth in his layman's aid seeking comfort and reassurance. He was apparently unable to refute the word of God (as was I when I later studied the doctrine on my own) because he never spoke up again. In addition to learning something about the health issue it was interesting for me to observe his fear, his cowardly behavior, his immaturity, and his lack of an open interest in the things of the Lord – characteristics I thought were the opposite of those that Christians were supposed to have and demonstrate. I will give the missionary credit for one thing: he never resorted to the ungodly use of carnal ridicule and stupid clichés so often used by Christians as last-ditch defenses when losing a serious discussion about doctrine.

The next day the missionary was fielding questions from me about various doctrines when we came to one I had done some studying on and which I knew he and his denomination disagreed with. I'd point out a verse in the Bible and he'd respond by picking one of the definitions in his Hebrew/Greek lexicon that changed the meaning of the verse. So I'd turn to another verse that supported my position. He'd respond by opening a huge commentary by an author approved by his denomination and read a section in which the author by fiat decreed the verse to be incorrect. This pattern went on until it occurred to me to ask him a question about the source of his belief and about the validity of his method of argument: "Brother, why is it that every time I turn to something God says in His Book, you attack it by turning to something man says in some other book?" (That is *not* something you say to a supposed King Jameser.) He ignored my question, gathered his wife, packed their suitcases and left my house. I never saw him again and he never answered my question. He was apparently offended because he thought I had insulted him. I thought he had attacked the authority, validity, and existence of the word of God and was, by his example, unthinkingly attempting to corrupt a young Christian. His indignation was personal; mine was righteous. I say this only for your edification.

The two verses at the beginning of the chapter sum up God's health care plan for His people and show His plan has always been the same in both Testaments. You will see that, just as with the rest of God's words, I take these words literally and seriously. I believe Christians will not get sick unless God wants us to. And when we do get sick – even unto death – we should not run to the doctor for healing while giving lip service to God; we should let God heal or kill us while we ignore the doctor. But before we begin this topic I want to put it into perspective.

MENTAL HEALTH

You will likely find this to be the most fearful chapter in this book. It is not the most difficult to understand and it is not the most important issue in this book. But because it is a body blow rather than the head jabs common to the rest of the book, this subject will help reveal to you where your throne is, that is, *where you live*. We are married to the Lord for better or for worse and, from an Enlightened viewpoint, you are about to learn something about our Husband that makes our marriage take a turn for the worse. You are going to learn that Scriptures that define our calling, like **1 Pe 2:19-21; 4:12-19**; and **1 Jn 3:16**, do not just apply to governmental and religious persecution; they also apply to verses like **Jb 1:8; 2:3**.

We have seen throughout this book that God gets violently enraged at some issues that are just not that important in today's Enlightened Christianity. Aiken at Ai is a good example, as are Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. None of those men outwardly harmed any other Christians. And yet when Aiken quietly buried some stolen spoils of war in his tent, God responded by killing a number of innocent Christian soldiers in battle and then executing Aiken and his family. God also dramatically killed Korah and the two hundred and fifty men who were with him, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children, and then sent a disease that killed fourteen thousand seven hundred more of the Christians who agreed with Korah's position. (Today that disease would have resulted in 14,700 Christians running to the doctor in an effort to avoid God's will and punishment.) Remember also that King Saul was not a multiple murderer, never committed adultery, never got his neighbor drunk, never decided God's design for the wilderness tabernacle was too rinky-dink and needed to be thrown out in favor of a "better" one, and never numbered the people like King David did. And yet God dumped Saul and kept David.

These and other examples help illustrate that "walking by faith not by sight" requires us to live in accordance with the Bible. Doctrine must dominate our minds and rule our bodies. God obviously cares about doctrines on an idealistic, intellectual plane, something we got a glimpse of in chapter D6, *Authority*. He looks at things in ways that are different from the way

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Christianity has taught us to view them. By definition, therefore, today's Christianity has made us carnal and at enmity against God. We have the spirit of antichrist and we got it in church. And that's why I say other topics in this book are more important than this one because they help you look at things on an intellectual plane. They help you see through tradition in order to see more of the big picture in the way God sees it.

We must live on a cerebral level (**He 11:1,3; Co 3:2; Ph 3:19; 2 Co 4:18; 1 Jn 4:5; 1 Co 1:18,19,21; 3:18-21; 4:6; Ps 119:97-100,104,105,112**). For example, you now understand how incest, slavery, marriage, putting away a wife, sex, authority, expediency, and dominion fit into God's orderly way of doing things. And you understand how philosophy has gotten into the church, made us carnal, filled us with Reason, and poisoned our doctrines. That understanding will help you grow faster and more consistently because you will better understand how God does things. And it will help you be a better ruler in certain situations (**1 Co 6:12; 7:6,12**). The issues I listed at the beginning of this paragraph are largely conceptual and don't really impact your daily life in any significant way like this chapter might. They are of the utmost importance, though, because we *cannot* walk with the Lord except we be in agreement with him.

Unless our actions originate on a cerebral level, unless we live and walk with discernment, we cannot please God (**Ro 8:7,8**) and cannot know the things of God (**1 Co 2:12-16**). Without discernment we shall die in the lake of fire (**Ro 8:6; Mt 16:24-26**). That's why other issues in this book are more important than the issue in this chapter.

But this chapter is important as an indicator of your level of maturity. If you dwell in the cerebral zone of discernment, you'll be able to handle this topic without uncontrollable fear *because this topic does not threaten your spirit life*. However, if you have not packed up and moved into the temple of the Holy Ghost and still live in the old man, the flesh, this topic is a threat to the very life God has told you to disregard as unimportant. If you have a problem ruling well your old-man household from the conceptual realm of the discerning new man, this chapter will reveal that problem. You will then on a daily basis be able to humbly discuss this topic and the applicable Scripture with the Lord and ask Him to help you work on your level of faith, belief, courage, commitment, strength, and discipline.

I have several times used Xmas as a whipping boy in this book because it is an excellent example of how little we apply the Scriptures to all matters of faith and practice in our daily lives. Xmas is easy to use because it is so minor an issue. In general, though, I have deliberately refrained from mentioning some of the many other things in our modern lives that are unscriptural because, with the foundation I hope and pray this book will give you, you can learn about all that stuff from God as you study His word. You need to learn to walk with Him and depend on Him for guidance and instruction (**1 Co 14:35**). And you need to eventually be weaned from my breasts or those of any other man who may be suckling you. *Learning from Him* and then incorporating those lessons into your life are both *requirements of growth*. I say again, *you need both of those*. Knowing all the "right" answers is not important. But knowing how to sit at the feet of the Master, having ears that hear Him, and the strength and initiative to be a doer of His word are what He wants of you. I can't give you all the right answers because I don't know all the right answers. I am but one member of the body, so I can't know it all. I need you to grow and learn the things from Him that He wants you to know so you can then help me. Even if I could give you all the right answers *you shouldn't want me to*. You should want to get your answers from God (**1 Co 14:35; Ac 17:11**); He is your Master and Judge. If you got all your answers from me you'd be a follower of men and would, like the legalistic law-keeping Pharisees, just be following a laundry list of rules instead of having a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am covering this fearful topic because it is the biggest weapon Satan has in his arsenal (**Jb 2:4**), and I believe the best way to fight in this spiritual warfare is to **pick out the biggest and commence firing!** If you go through your Christian service only doing the little things that don't intimidate you, you'll never know if you have the courage born of love for Christ you are supposed to have. In the absence of fear there can be no courage. Use that to your advantage; the issues you should focus your sights on should be those that scare you. Remember, if you always do just the little things, you'll never do the big things. I also believe, because of **Jb 2:4, 1 Co 15:31**, and **Mt 16:24,25**, using God's health care plan can go a long way toward helping us undo the carnal effects the Age of Reason has had on our Christianity.

SUBMISSION VS. REBELLION

One day as a teenager I disrespectfully wise-assed my mother. My growth had made me physically stronger than she, and that gave me the confidence to resist her will. When I saw her slap coming I easily ducked it; she got nothing but air and looked clumsy as her continuing swing pulled her off balance. As I smugly straightened up, full of pride and satisfaction, my mother recovered her balance along with the realization that I'd crossed the line from the typical youthful inability to control a glib mouth (**Ja 3:8-10**) to actual rebellion against authority. She pointed her finger and looked up into my face and said, "Young man, you've done wrong and you deserve to be disciplined: You stand up and take your punishment like a man!" My pride and satisfaction melted into shame and regret as my love for my mother made me realize the truth of what she said, as well as the fact that I was starting down a road I didn't want to be on. Too young to realize a spontaneous apology was appropriate, I silently stood at attention while my mother slapped me.

That episode was lost in the busy clutter of life until years later when my heavenly Father brought it to my attention. I realized that starting with that slap, and because my physical capabilities gave me an option, any punishment I received from my mother from that day forward was *approved by me*. I approved or agreed not because I liked it and not because my mother was always right, but because it was her job to train me up, and my job to submit to her will. My parents and I walked together as I matured because we agreed they had the prerogative to inflict pain on me, and I had the duty to humbly submit to their will. That's just the way God set things up.

And as sons and daughters of God our relationship with Him works the same way: It is voluntary. The Lord has shouldered the responsibility of a parent; it is His job to train us up in the way we should go, and He is never remiss in His duty because He is a Faithful and Good Shepherd. It is our job to submit to His will. Notice the word *Therefore* in **Dt 8:5,6** teaches us that one of the reasons we are to obey God is *fear of His punishment*. See also **He 12:5-11**, which talks about the importance of acknowledging *and accepting* punishment from God. Accepting His punishment is part of our "subjection" to His authority (v.9). His punishment is for our "profit" (v.10), but only if after submitting ourselves to His punishment we are then "exercised", motivated, changed, and guided by that chastening (v.11). See also **Ps 119:75** and **Jn 18:11**.

We are God's **witnesses** when we obediently submit to His will. If we please Him, **Le 26:3-13** will happen. But if we are not obedient, **Le 26:14-39** will happen. These show that God uses sickness as punishment. Therefore, when bad things happen to us we need to discern if they are tests, guides, or punishments. If they are punishments we must do **Le 26:40,41**.

If we do not voluntarily “accept the punishment of our iniquity” (Le 26:41b), we’ll be rebelliously ducking our Father’s corrective slap. In other words, we have a choice as to whether we accept God’s punishment or fight against it. Now turn to the sentence in bold print on page H10-11 and apply King James’ statement to this topic. Our Christian calling and duty is to humbly submit to His correction and guidance in order that the flesh might be defeated and the war won. Just as it was Christ’s duty to die, it is our duty to die. We have wrongly ignored the physical dying part of that duty by always discussing the part about dying daily to self. For example, when was the last time your preacher or Bible study group even brought up this topic, let alone taught a lesson on it? Hmm? Fear of physical death is a great unmotivator, making this one of the least-viewed chapters at TheSwordbearer.org. But don’t worry; even the Lord’s disciples were at first afraid to address this topic.

Earlier I said it was not important for us to know all the right answers and that our real responsibility is to learn things *from God* and then incorporate them into our lives. That requires the maturity necessary to know the Lord, accept His guidance and correction, and put His will into action in our lives. The Bible commands us to be **perfect**, and I believe those three things – knowing God, accepting His will, and doing His will – are essentially what perfection is. Perfection includes the ability to repent. Repentance requires knowing we have been contrary to God’s will and then humbly conforming to His will. David was perfect (**1 Ki 15:3**). The fact that he committed quite a few sins just makes him like the rest of us. Being perfect doesn’t mean never sinning. Being perfect from God’s perspective means incorporating and identifying with every verse David wrote in **Ps 119**. Perfection is more a matter of character, a matter of the heart, a matter of *who we are*. God is looking for people who love and serve Him in a personal way like David. He is not looking for people like the Pharisees who ignore Him by focusing their attention on keeping the law. David’s old man tried to run from God by sinning, but David’s new man always fought back, regained control, and returned to the Lord. The carnal sides of the Pharisees tried to ignore God by hiding behind His laws, and their new men never loved the Lord enough to miss Him and come out from hiding.

KINGS ASA AND HEZEKIAH

We are now going to examine another great Christian in the Bible, King Asa. Like David, he loved the Lord (**1 Ki 15:11; 2 Ch 14:2**). And, like David, Asa was perfect in the eyes of God (**1 Ki 15:14; 2 Ch 15:17**), and therefore God was with him (**2 Ch 15:9**). Asa lived at a time when Judah had had its back turned to God for a long time. His love for the Lord gave him the courage to go against society by instituting Scriptural changes. And the Lord spoke to Asa through prophets during this time when He was punishing His people with various wars (**2 Ch 15:1,6**).

At one point Asa found his army greatly outnumbered by the Ethiopian army (**2 Ch 14:8-10**), but he prayed unto the Lord his God and asked Him to defeat the multitude (**2 Ch 14:11**). The Lord blessed him with more than just that one victory (**2 Ch 14:12-15**). This all happened during a period when God was happy with Asa and was therefore arranging history so Judah was secure (**2 Ch 14:6**). God told Asa He would continue to bless him as long as he continued to pass the tests in life that He sent along (**2 Ch 15:2**). And then Asa screwed up.

It happened when the Lord arranged another threat to Asa’s national security (**2 Ch 16:1**). Why did God do that? Because **the Lord needs witnesses**. What is a witness? A witness is someone who shows *by faith* that he believes, trusts, and depends on the Lord to take care of his physical life and welfare. **Is 43:10-12** is a core group of verses within a two or three chapter area that speaks of Christians being His witnesses to show He really is different from the pagan gods. He is the only true God who really does heal His people, really does protect them from their enemies, really does give them food in the wilderness, and really does take away their sins. All the other gods are graven images that cannot do anything for their followers. That is a big and very important difference. But that difference from pagan gods can only be proven if God can find witnesses who will glorify Him (**2 Ki 5:14,15**). If God is to win the war He must demonstrate through *witnesses* His ability to *preserve the physical health and welfare* of His people. That will enable Him to effectively counter Satan’s biggest weapon (Jb 2:4). For two good examples of Christians who understood we are to be *witnesses for God by relying on God only* to protect, care for, and save us, thoughtfully read **Ezr 8:21-23,31** and **Ne 6:9-13**. God’s taking care of our physical lives and welfare is visible proof He can also take care of our spiritual sins and everlasting life, as shown in **Lk 5:20-26**.

Well, actually God’s protecting our physical welfare is only half of the story. That’s the “for better” part of our marriage because it is nice when the Lord heals our sicknesses and provides for us materially. However, the other part of our marriage, the “for worse” part, is revealed in **Jb 2:10** and in other places: We must be willing to submit to the Lord *even unto the loss of all our property and our lives*. **That willingness** neutralizes Satan’s greatest weapon and shows our God truly is our King with absolute authority, power, and control over us. We show – or witness – Him to be everything we claim with our lips Him to be. All of this is a product of faith. For that reason the Lord waits until He finds a man strong in faith before He decides to demonstrate His power. Unfortunately He has not found many Christians strong in faith. When He has He has sometimes used that man as a reason or justification for pardoning the rest of His people (**Je 5:1,2; Ezek 22:30**). The Lord Jesus Christ is an example – He stood in the gap for us. And Moses interceded for the Hebrews by having the faith to risk his life by boldly standing up to Pharaoh.

You and I are supposed to grow into that kind of Christian, knowing (with a certain amount of fear) that someday the Lord might decide to use us for the good of His church by summoning Satan and saying Jb 1:8 and 2:3 and sending him on an errand such as **1 Ch 21:1**, which is made clear by comparing it with **2 Sa 24:1**. When God said He would punish David by killing David’s son (**2 Sa 12:14,15**) (a method of punishment that seems cruel and unfair to the carnal mind), David wept and fasted, hoping the Lord would forgive him and spare the child. But once the child died, instead of going through the usual period of mourning, David surprised people by suddenly going back to daily life as if nothing had happened. And when they questioned him about it I think David’s glib answer, “Hey, he’s dead; there’s nothing I can do about it”, was a normal attempt by a guilty man to hide the real issue. And I’m going to assign David more maturity and understanding in that situation than he might deserve in order to make a point: David knew the child’s death was his fault and was God’s punishment. Once the child was dead, therefore, any continued mourning by David would have been nothing but the disrespectful recrimination of a child who stubbornly disapproves of the punishment he received from his parents. David wisely chose not to risk more of God’s displeasure.

King Asa, according to **2 Ch 16:9**, was chosen *specifically* because his heart was perfect and God wanted to use him to show He could take care of His people. In other words, if you are a good Christian you become a vessel eligible for special treatment at the hands of God. Our problem is, as Job shows, we cannot always know if the evil that plagues us is punishment for sins or if God is just shewing Himself strong on behalf of His people. Either way, *our calling* is to suffer for the good of the

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church by standing in the gaps left in the front lines by those warriors who have fallen before us. If we do not suffer it is because God thinks we have not matured enough in the faith to handle it (**Je 12:5; 1 Co 10:13**). We are at war. And we are in training that we might be qualified to go to the front lines and die for our cause (**1 Sa 17:24,26,29**). Today Satan is using fear of physical death to defy the armies of the living God.

In **2 Ch 16** evil King Baasha built Ramah as an effective blockade against Judah. So King Asa did two things. First, he formed a military alliance with pagan Syria against King Baasha. Second, he prayed to God and asked Him to help them defeat King Baasha. (Nobody denies that Asa prayed to God about this military threat because even lousy Christians – whose hearts aren't even close to being perfect toward God like Asa's was – pray, especially when they are afraid.) Baasha was soundly defeated, Judah used the building materials of Ramah to build Geba and Mizpah, and King Asa was filled with prayers of thanksgiving and rejoicing that God had blessed them.

God, however, had not blessed Judah, had not defeated Baasha, was not impressed with the lip-service prayers, was not happy with Asa, and decided to punish him with a curse. He sent Hanani to King Asa to point out that Asa had no excuse for relying on the Syrians instead of on God to defeat Baasha because he'd already learned with the huge Ethiopian army that God alone could be relied upon to protect His people. Hanani said the critical factor in the two incidents was the fact that with the Ethiopians Asa had put all of his eggs in God's basket, but with Baasha he had straddled the fence and tried to serve two masters by hedging his bet with a military alliance. The Bible makes it clear that serving two masters is really only serving Satan. Hanani went on to explain why God had specifically chosen Asa to test, why He was so disappointed by Asa's decision to foolishly ignore God by running to Syria for help, and that God was going to punish Asa by sending more wars. Asa was expected to acknowledge and confess his sin of failing to go to the Lord in time of need, repent of that sin, and faithfully depend only on God in the future wars. Whether Asa won the battles or lost them was not to be his concern; Asa's only objective was to be a witness to the authority and glory of God by humbly, submissively, and faithfully receiving evil at the hand of God – not just good (Jb 2:10).

Asa was at first shocked; he couldn't believe his ears. He was not only a good Christian leader who loved the Lord and had done much to reverse the apostasy that had crept into Judah, but he knew himself to be one of the better Christians in the country; his heart was perfect toward God! And he had certainly *not* ignored God and relied on Syria! He'd gone to Syria for help only because it was the practical thing to do, but he knew and openly acknowledged that this military operation would surely fail without God! That's why he'd spent all that time with the Lord in prayer and had called upon his fellow Christians to also pray for God's help! And besides, God *had obviously answered their prayers* because *He blessed them by giving them the victory!* Hanani replied by saying the victory itself could not be used as proof of Asa's godliness (**1 Ti 6:5**). Asa was flabbergasted! This was a time for rejoicing, and deluded crackpots like Hanani who thought they were so spiritual and in touch with God were spoiling it! The more Asa thought about it, the angrier he got. In fact, he became enraged at this would-be prophet and threw him into prison. And when other Christians stepped forward and said Hanani's message did make sense Scripturally, Asa oppressed them as well.

In the thirty-ninth year of Asa's reign, God sent him another test. God afflicted him with an exceeding great disease in his feet. Faced with this situation, King Asa did two things! Yes, that's right: He did two things so he could be on both sides of the fence again! First, he went to the physicians for help. Second, he prayed to God and asked Him to heal him and/or to bless the physicians and guide their decisions so he could recover. (Nobody seriously denies that Asa prayed to God about this health threat because even lousy Christians – whose hearts aren't even close to being perfect toward God like Asa's – pray, especially when they are afraid.) The Bible does not say if God sent another prophet to tell Asa he should have done only one thing if he really loved the Lord and trusted Him. Neither does it say if Asa recovered or if the disease is what he died of. But none of that matters; we know all we need to in order to profit from this lesson and apply it to our lives. We should thank God for putting so many screw-ups by His people in His Book so we could learn more perfectly how we are to please and serve our One Master. Prayers for help like Asa's constitute lip service and are hypocritical and foolish.

2 Ch 16 complements other lessons in the Bible and shows how consistent God is:

- At first, Gideon had so many men in his army that a victory could be attributed to numbers. In order for God to get the glory the army was reduced in size. In that way, when Christians later learned what happened, their faith and reliance upon God would be strengthened. No Christian's faith is strengthened when he hears a Christian army of ten thousand claim God gave them a victory over an army of five thousand. In fact, God is not glorified in that situation.

- God needed a man of faith to face Goliath so He could show His people (again!) that no situation is too much for the Lord to handle. The only one willing to step into the gap was David; he would not let his fear of the greatest weapon in Satan's arsenal stop him from glorifying God.

- In **Nu 14** only Joshua and Caleb were willing to trust God to keep them from dying at the hands of the giants and to give them the Promised Land. What really irritated God was the fact that the people who were frozen with fear were the same people who'd already seen what He'd done in Egypt and to Pharaoh's army. That's when God decided to disinherit and cast away His people, kill them with a pestilence, and start all over by making Moses a patriarch. Moses said that would look to the world like God wasn't a capable ruler because even His own people didn't trust and depend on Him. So God agreed not to send a pestilence and to allow the lousy Christians to live, but He still disinherited them (the lousy Christians) by denying them the Promised Land. What was their sin? They were afraid to die mortal deaths at the hands of giants. No, that wasn't their sin; their sin was in letting their understandable fear stop them from being witnesses of God's glory. **He 3:16-19** and **Jude 5** say these born-again Christians were denied access to God's kingdom on earth because they were guilty of *unbelief*. That's what the Christians in King Saul's army of the living God were guilty of when they faced Goliath. That's what Asa was guilty of when faced with Baasha's army and when faced with an exceeding giant disease. Notice every one of those fears was natural, normal, and understandable. The Bible makes it clear that fear of death will stop 99% of Christians in their tracks. Sadly, that helps us have a better understanding of places like **Mt 6:24,25; 7:13,14**; and 16:25. The Lord doesn't want people to hedge their bets when confronted with the possibility of physical death – whether it is from war or from disease. He is God, the only God, and He alone is our comfort and protection, our reality and our life. We must be witnesses of that truth.

2 Ch 16 also helps us understand how God views **alliances** between His people and others – He doesn't like them. If we want to accomplish something, we are to go to God alone – not God AND something or someone else. For example, a number of years ago a preacher tried to get me to become a member of an organization founded and run by Christians called the *Coalition for Religious Freedom*. The Christian leaders in the organization were big names from a number of different

denominations. I wrote a letter to the preacher and thanked him for his good intentions but told him why I believed no Christian should join the *Coalition*. I never heard from him again.

Because you've gotten this far in this book you are now much more knowledgeable than most preachers so I'll just give you the highlights of why Christians shouldn't join outfits like the *Coalition for Religious Freedom*:

- Never voluntarily become a member or incorporate yourself with any body or organization that doesn't comply with the requirements of **1 Co 10:31** and **Co 3:17**. This has to do with what *members* are (**1 Co 6:15,16**). The key word is *voluntarily*. If your government or your employer *requires* you to join an organization, God wants you to glorify Him by submitting to the authorities over you. Because you are given no choice by God or by your employer in the matter, you glorify God by joining the organization. But any organization you are a member of that you are *not* required to join, means – if you are a good Christian – you sat down with the Bible in order to determine if that organization glorified God in the name of Jesus Christ. In that way your voluntary participation in that organization furthers the cause of Christ. If you did not do that you ignored God and used secular humanism – Reason – to decide what to do, which means your eternity is not off to a good start.
- The *Coalition for Religious Freedom* says this: “We, heirs and beneficiaries of the wisdom of the Founding Fathers of the United States, do affirm...our commitment to the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. We have come to rely on the fundamental principles of freedom of this great nation.” That's all we need to know right there, but it goes on to show that it isn't a Christian – or even a religious – organization: “We call upon all people, those religiously motivated and those others...to join...”
- No Christian should believe in or fight for religious freedom. The Bill of Rights is not our arm of strength. Let dogs fight for dominion, freedom to worship Baal, and any other “rights” they want; you and I couldn't care less.

Do you know why the big names supported the above? Because they be blind leaders of the blind who are causing God to curse America. Don't be like them; walk circumspectly.

Now let's examine another great Christian – **King Hezekiah**. When Assyria arrayed itself against Judah, Hezekiah responded by doing one thing and one thing only: He asked God for help. Notice that Hezekiah's great prayer shows he understood the importance of our being witnesses to the world by depending solely on God's power (**2 Ki 19:14-20**).

And when God afflicted Hezekiah with a fatal disease, Hezekiah responded by doing one thing and one thing only: He asked God for help (**2 Ki 20:1-6**). The fact that God healed him encourages and strengthens us, but that isn't what should be important to us; what we should zero in on is the fact that he depended only on God...even unto death. The only thing that matters is how we fight the good fight. If we subdue the carnal mind and grow in Christ our only concern will be everlasting obedient service to Him – not at what point our mortal bodies drop along the way.

When we compare Asa and Hezekiah we may wonder how God could decree Asa to have had a perfect heart toward Him all his days – having failed two big tests later in life. But God knew Asa, whose early years were during a time when Judah was apostate, didn't have enough of a Biblical foundation to fully understand some doctrines that require more maturity. So the Lord put those circumstances into Asa's life for our edification as well as his. And Asa was given the second test, the grievous disease, to let him and us know depending on God applies to more than just national military matters; it also applies to individual matters like health.

We may also conjecture that Hezekiah spent more time hanging around strong Christians (like Isaiah and Hosea) than did Asa (who probably had little choice in that era of apostasy). Therefore Asa, comparing himself with other Christians (**2 Co 10:12**), got lazy when he aged. He depended on God to protect him against the Ethiopians, but later got careless and proud of his Christian accomplishments. Pride strengthens the Natural old man but it weakens the new man. So fear – a factor that will always be present – caused him to make some later decisions using Reason rather than reasoning together with the Lord (discerning). Sometimes we're afraid to reason together with the Lord because we have a sneaking suspicion He'll take us in a direction we won't want. So gird up your loins and become the kind of Christian who will glorify God no matter what because He may decide to do to you what He did to Hezekiah and to Christ (**2 Ch 32:31; Mt 27:46**) in order to truly probe the depths of your faith. Glorifying Him *must* matter to you more than anything else.

When looking at Asa we saw two examples one right after the other so we wouldn't miss the point: It's wrong to rely on God AND something else. Even though the first example involved national military matters and the second involved individual health, the two incidents were identical because the principles involved were the same. That is a great lesson from God about *applying* the principles we learn from the Bible to other things in our lives. And it reassures us because it shows we can rely on God's consistency in matters of principle. That's how I knew 2 Ch 16 prohibited me from joining affinity with the *Coalition for Religious Freedom*. And that's how David knew he could take the loaves of shewbread and feed them to his men – *he understood God and the way He views things*. David *applied* what he'd learned during the days, weeks, months, and years he'd spent with the Scriptures. (All the Pharisees did was learn the *rules*, not the governing principles. That's how they ended up thinking the way to avoid being unclean was to wash your hands and everything you might touch.)

REVIEW OF HEALTH CARE

Now that we have a little Biblical perspective, let's review health care and God's people.

When God created Adam He did not make him solely a spirit like the angels. He made Adam a little lower than the angels so he could suffer death. In other words, God gave Adam a physical body that was mortal. Without God Adam would die because when God created our physical mortal bodies, *health* immediately became an issue because mortal bodies suffer from various diseases – including the curse of time. None of this was a problem for Doctor God; He issued a prescription for health: *Trust and Obey* – He would take care of everything else.

Adam did OK for a while because he stayed away from the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Without that forbidden fruit Adam didn't know good from evil; all he did was trust that God knew good and evil and content himself with obeying Him. Adam didn't realize his physical life depended on his continuing to trust and obey. He didn't know his physical body was designed to deteriorate and die unless it regularly took the medicine Doctor God created at the same time He created Adam's mortal body. So Adam ate regularly of the tree of life and received its monthly dose of medicine (**Re 22:2**).

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When Adam disobeyed God and became at enmity against Him by eating the forbidden fruit and becoming Enlightened, God kicked him out of the garden so he could no longer take his medicine. Since his physical body was designed to die unless it got that medicine, Adam became mortal the moment he was booted.

Until Abraham the entire human race was Christian, so there were no dogs in existence to tempt God's people to be like Asa by solving medical and other problems by going to God AND something else. But a few generations after Abraham the carnal minds of the Gentiles, who out-numbered Christians, began increasingly inventing health alternatives. More and more Christians – like Asa – began using these remedies. Oh, and they prayed, too – big deal.

The Lord was not pleased; He knew health alternatives would eventually make Satan's greatest weapon even more effective. So He put **Ex 15:26; 23:25**, **Le 26; Dt 7:6-8:20; Dt 28; 2 Ch 7:13,14; 20:9** in the Bible, and He demonstrated over and over that He meant every word – literally. (Other places are not worded quite so directly, such as **Ho 5:13-6:1**, but the principle is still obvious to all.) God forced His reluctant people to be His witnesses through the wilderness: He healed them of all kinds of things, provided food and raiment, and struck fear in the hearts of pagans as they watched a bunch of scruffy escaped slaves defy Reason by defeating army after army. By the time God's people reached Jericho even a whore like Rahab knew the God of the slaves was the true God and that Jericho would fall. She became a convert and became King David's great great grandmother. The church today is no longer that kind of wall-toppling witness of God's power and ability. May God give us humble, selfless men of faith willing to stand in the gap for Him!

One reason God doesn't allow the "God AND physician" method is we won't know if it is God who has healed us (**Ho 11:3; Is 42:8**). It was the same when Asa used the "God AND military help from the Syrians" method against Baasha. Asa didn't *know* God gave him the victory, he only *thought* He did – until God sent Hanani to tell him the victory was won by the alliance with the Syrians.

By the time of the First Coming health was already big business among Christians. The **balm of Gilead** is a perfect example. (There are a number of myths in Christianity that don't speak well of our knowledge of the Bible: Just as Christians think Christ is the lily of the valley, but in reality we are (**SoS 2:1-4**), they think the balm of Gilead was a good medicine that God approved of. Both the lily of the valley and the balm of Gilead are even referred to incorrectly in popular hymns. We can't even seem to get trivial details like these right because the Lord, unhappy with us, has sent us confusion of face.) Gilead was a big center of health care known for its medicine – primarily its famous balm – and for its physicians. And Christians were willing to spend their life savings trying to avoid death and disease. One of the ways the Lord likes to express His displeasure is to use derisive sarcasm. Examples of this are plentiful and well known in the New Testament. He also did it in the Old. For example, **Ju 10:14** is not an endorsement of the gods it speaks of – it is sarcasm used to point out that the "people's choice" wasn't accomplishing anything. **Ho 8:5** is not legitimizing the popular calf it speaks of. **Is 47:13** is not telling us it is OK to go to astrologers. Elijah is not saying Baal is a legitimate god in **1 Ki 18:27** no matter how popular a god he was – he's using mockery and derisive sarcasm to illustrate that Baal isn't doing anything. If you read the entire chapter to get the tone you'll see **Je 8:22** is *mocking* the physicians and balm of Gilead. In **Je 46:11** God is not endorsing worldly medicines or physicians. The balm of Gilead was a blight upon Christianity back then, and it remains so today.

A typical Christian is the woman with the issue of blood (**Mk 5:25-34**). This Christian, afflicted with a plague (v.34), used the old Asa technique – she did two things. She went to the doctor AND she prayed to God. In fact, she went to "many" doctors (v.26), used "many" medicines (**Je 46:11**), and "spent all that she had" (v.26). For our purposes it is irrelevant whether they cured her or not. I mean, what kind of Christian would want to gain the whole world but lose his soul? Aren't we here to glorify God? Isn't death preferable to dishonoring our Head (**1 Co 11:4**)?

You say, "But the Bible says Luke was a physician!" Yeah, and it says Matthew was a tax collector, Peter was a fisherman, and Rahab was a whore – so what's your point? The fact is the Bible has nothing good to say about physicians. Any time they are more than just mentioned it is in a negative way. But let's go with what you are implying about physicians with your reference to Luke, and let's ignore the fact that the Bible is very sarcastic and negative about physicians and medicines, and let's use Luke as an endorsement of Christians going to *both* God AND physicians in their hour of crisis like Asa did. (I know, it already isn't looking good but let's play out this hand because it is a popular one with Christians.)

Luke had something in common with every Christian physician in history until about the year 1900 – he shunned medical science. Luke and all the others were more like midwives, candy strippers, and bedpan changers; they used a little basic first aid such as splinting a broken arm, recommended some home remedies such as chicken soup and a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities (**1 Ti 5:23**), and a lot of comforting. And even if medical science had existed back then Luke would have rejected it because *medical science is by definition ungodly*: Modern medicine is the result of the "scientific method." The scientific method is also called "philosophy." It is a search for knowledge that takes place only in the complete absence of God and the Bible. (Having gotten this far in this book you should be an expert on that fact.) Therefore, a Christian who goes to medical science for help is going to an ungodly system that is a slap in God's face no matter what procedures and drugs it uses and prescribes. For example, let's say a doctor today had just learned of the latest procedure authorized and sanctioned by medical science, and your prescription read (in sloppy handwriting), "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake." Surely you know by now that the fruits of the carnal mind – no matter what they are – are at enmity against God and cannot please Him. If you carry out the prescription you are not glorifying God. And this late in the book I shouldn't have to explain why that is so.

Now, suppose a Christian had been knocked unconscious, woke up in the hospital, and was told he'd been examined while he was out cold. The findings were that his head would be OK, but they'd discovered his insides were being consumed by cancer. "Oh," our faithful brother replies, "so that's why my guts have been burning like fire lately" as he walks out of the hospital. His worst fear realized, he spends a lot of time with the Lord. Later he visits his pastor (who happens to be a good one). His pastor says, "Well, the Bible recommends a little wine for thy stomach's sake, maybe that includes the burning in your gut from the cancer." Or maybe the pastor says, "Let's apply a little **Ja 5:14** action: I'll call a few of the men and get them over here, and I'm pretty sure we've got an old bottle of vegetable oil in the kitchen." Both of those measures meet with the full approval of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because they are based on faith in His word. They depend on God AND nothing. And guess what? That's the way Christians lived (and died) until the twentieth century. Amen and amen, brother!

But we need to delve into the balm of Gilead a bit because it has reared its ugly head again here in the twenty-first century. The balm of Gilead was a medicine, and there is nothing wrong with medicines. A medicine is something that makes you feel better. That's why wine is a medicine; it makes the sad heart merry and takes away pain. Medicines are fine. The balm

of Gilead was a blend of 100% natural and organic ingredients and was reputed to cure many things. So how was it any different from “take a little wine”? What made it so bad? Christians made it bad by making an idol out of it. They *depended* on it. And if they got better they’d say to their neighbor, “The balm of Gilead did the trick! It’s the best stuff I’ve ever tried! Uh, and God, too – I give Him all the glory. If I were you I’d rush out and get a bottle!” It’s not the brazen serpent on a pole that heals us; it’s God.

Christians today don’t use a brazen serpent and they don’t use the balm of Gilead. But they might just as well. When you walk into their homes you’ll often say something during the course of pleasantries about some ache or pain you’ve got. Hearing that, many Christians will brighten up and take you to their closet. Inside you’ll be amazed to see more bottles and bags of herbs, liquids, weeds, leaves, berries, roots, powders, etc., than you can shake a stick at. Now let me say this very carefully: There’s nothing wrong with any of that, but the whole scene makes me uncomfortable. They are too enthusiastic about it, too knowledgeable about it, and too confident it will work. I get the impression they’ve spent more time reading all kinds of books by men than they have reading God’s Book. They tell me to rub this stuff on me for this pain, put this other stuff in my bath water for another affliction, take a tablespoon of this at meal time for a certain other problem (“and have a glass of something else handy to quickly drink to take away the awful taste”), and sprinkle this on my food to prevent something else because it sure works for them! It’s the best stuff they’ve ever tried, and I should rush out and get some! There is usually no mention of the Lord, and if He is mentioned He’s an afterthought.

Some people give the glory to medical science alone. But Gilead Christians give it to medical science AND natural remedies. And they mean well: after all, God gave us things like herbs and wine and honey and bread for our health, so they really get into it. Fine, but be careful. If in your heart you are going to God AND natural remedies, you are sinning like Asa. But if, like the good preacher I invented earlier, you’re just dutifully dragging out an old bottle of something you have absolutely no confidence in because you are so focused on God, you are pleasing God and are a man of faith. That’s the way to be. Any treatment you have faith in is robbing God. Remember, no treatment God ever recommended was a “respectable” one that inspired confidence in any Christian: Look at a brass serpent on a pole to cure snakebite; bathe in a river seven times for leprosy; a little wine for chronic stomach ailments; spit mixed with dirt for blindness; and some men from your church putting oil on you and praying. Not one of those is intended to inspire the slightest bit of confidence in us. They are intended to show that God rewards obedience. What obedience? Trusting Him to heal us. That is what He wants us to do. It is what He has always wanted us to do in both Testaments; He has not changed His mind or His word. We are to be witnesses of His authority and His power.

If I were to say any of this to the modern Gilead Christians they would hasten to assure me, with a measure of indignation, that *of course* their faith is in God because He has *given* us these natural remedies and they *are* glorifying Him by using them. In fact, they assure me, they *only* run to medical science AND God in those instances when natural remedies AND God fail! But of course, they don’t really make that last statement because it is too damning. Nobody uses that wording – usually because they don’t know enough Scripture for it to occur to them to think it through.

God has, in the Bible, given us His laws, His word. He compared His word to food and told us to eat everything on our plates. And He told us to eat it every day. And He told it to us already knowing you and I might not like this morsel or that. But because He’ll both take care of us and win the war if we eat all He has given us, He orders us to subdue our self-oriented willfulness and dutifully consume it all because it’s good for us whether we like it or not. If we insult His providence by complaining we don’t like something, He’ll send us to bed without any supper (**Ps 106:14,15; 78:11,17-37**).

All of that can also be applied to physical food: If we eat balanced and varied meals we’ll receive the nourishment we need for healthy bodies. And we need not concern ourselves when modern science tells us God screwed up when He created foods like milk, butter, and eggs. If I thought margarine to be better for me than butter I’d be blaspheming God. And that should be the extent of our interest in preserving our health with food (Mt 6:25). People who make a big deal of the balm of Gilead, because it is all natural and God gave it to us, are like the Pharisees were with the law; they think it will save them (even though the Pharisees insisted their faith was in the laws AND God – just like Asa). David knew certain foods wouldn’t preserve his health – God would. David knew keeping the laws wasn’t the key to salvation – God is. Having a Pharisaical focus on the law or on herbs is idolatry because it is Asa’s “AND” formula.

When I’m in someone’s home I never question their hospitality. I gladly and thankfully accept whatever they provide – as I do with the Lord. I never point to the food on my plate and ask with suspicion, “What’s this?” I eat it and find something nice to say about it. If I think it’s some of the man-made, artificial, plastic-tasting, chemical-laden stuff that medical science approves of these days, I keep it to myself and thankfully eat what my hosts have provided (**1 Co 10:27**).

And when I find something in the Bible that is distasteful to me, *I eat it anyway* while giving thanks to God – even if it kills me. My *death* is not important; my *witness* is.

Do I believe in snake handling and drinking deadly things in order to prove my faith? No. Christ wouldn’t jump off the pinnacle of the temple to prove to Satan He believed **Ps 91:11,12** because that would be tempting God. Paul didn’t see the deadly viper in the firewood and decide to give witness to God’s power by deliberately getting it to bite him; that would be tempting God. Had he seen the venomous beast he would have avoided it and yelled, “Hey, watch out, a snake!” But once it did bite him, he quietly resigned himself to the care of God. That is what I believe; I learned it from God in His Book while rejecting all human inputs.

I’ll tell you how I live my life as far as health is concerned. I assign the utmost priority to God and the church. I emphasize bringing myself into subjection to the Lord by studying His word and obeying it. If I please Him and if He has further use for me, He’ll take care of me. If something afflicts me I will *not* ask God to heal me; I’ll ask Him to heal me *if that is His will* because He may be doing it on purpose (**2 Co 12:7-10**). I also examine myself to see if I may be sinning or going in some direction *I* thought might be good, because the Lord has used afflictions to discipline me and to redirect me and I want to follow that guidance. I don’t use drugs of any kind such as sleeping pills, allergy relievers, aspirin, etc., although I’ve been known to suck on a lozenge for a sore throat. I do use basic first aid. For topical scrapes and cuts I use something from the grocery store like iodine. If you think that’s hypocritical because science approves of iodine, that’s fine and maybe you’re right. But the Lord and I know how important the iodine is or isn’t to me – and it’s His approval I crave. If a snake ever bites me, I probably won’t go through my day normally like Paul did; I’ll probably lie down or something. If you think that means I’m weaker than Paul was, I can only reply that you’re probably right and ask for your forgiveness.

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I tend to categorize external stuff like splints, eyeglasses, canes, wheelchairs, stitches, antiseptics, etc. as first aid. In other words, minor stuff that is not life threatening I tend to treat as “accidents” (**Ec 10:8,9**) that, yes, God knew would happen, but aren’t necessarily His trying to get my attention. The Bible allows me to do that. Anything that is internal such as surgery, radiation, drugs, etc., I avoid as life-saving products of science. Anytime my life is at risk I put myself in the hands of God because He specifically indicates in His Book that I have no option in the matter; He is to be given complete control of that stuff. I don’t want to out-live my usefulness to Him.

If your daughter breaks her arm, it is unlikely that you know anyone with any experience applying splints. And experience counts for something (that’s what midwives are all about). So you may want to take her to the local temple of science – the hospital – and have them put a cast on her. Some Christians will not want you to set foot in the hospital because, in spite of the fact that hospitals have chapels and allow prayers, medical science is an ungodly institution whose foundation and practices are firmly and irrevocably based upon science. They have an excellent point. However, they would also object if you went into a shambles to buy some meat because the meat was part of a pagan sacrifice. And they’d tell you not to buy a certain brand of toothpaste because somebody told them the company logo contains a “New Age” symbol! But remember, you and I are Christians who know false gods *don’t exist*. It is OK to get meat from the shambles (**1 Co 10:25-27**). It is OK to walk into a hospital. It’s OK to tour a Moslem temple. God knows how you feel about Him and about things secular and pagan. It is that relationship that matters. And that’s why all things are lawful for you. So if you have a use for a cast, or a bottle of iodine, or a tube of toothpaste, go ahead, cut a wide swath; there’s nothing wrong with it.

Some Christians would tell you not to cut a wide swath because you might **offend the brethren**. This offending stuff is covered in **Ro 14** and **1 Co 8**. Notice *the only Christians who are offended are the weak ones who don’t know any better* (Ro 14:1,2; 1 Co 8:7,9,10,11,12). Now that we know any Christian who is offended is a weakling, we need to define *offending*: It means being a stumbling block to a weak brother (1 Co 8:9); being a stumbling block means causing a weak brother to *fall* (Ro 14:13); to be *destroyed* (Ro 14:15,20); to *perish* (1 Co 8:11). In other words it means you are faced with a brother who is so young or weak you might *damage* or *destroy* his faith in Christ so he falls from grace by turning away. Anyway, you can see that *offending* and *fornication* are the same. This is confirmed by the fact that *offending* is called sinning against the brethren (1 Co 8:12), and by the fact that the opposite of *offending* is edifying the brethren (Ro 14:19). So when a brother tells you he’s “offended”, you must realize most weaklings don’t like to go around advertising that they are weak. Therefore there is a real possibility he is not offended. Here is how you tell if he is offended: Look at him. If he has a panicky, distressed attitude and is struggling to hold back tears because you are destroying his Christianity, then don’t buy the toothpaste. But if he has that overbearing, holier-than-thou, prissy-pants attitude, buy an extra tube or suddenly hold a tube towards him and yell, “Boo!” to get his attention. Then whip out your Bible, turn to Ro 14 and 1 Co 8 and start teaching. Sadly, in most cases you’ll be disappointed with his reaction. If you find he doesn’t want to discuss God’s word you should end the conversation with a rebuke, but don’t continue casting your pearls before swine; if he has ears to hear, he’ll hear.

MODERN LIP SERVICE

A pastor’s mother was a member of his congregation. She was quite old. One day in church, right after singing *How I want to see Him, look upon His face; There to be forever in His saving grace*, she stood up and made a request of the congregation. She had cancer and wanted them to pray for her recovery. She had already gone to the hospital and asked them to save her. She was told the therapy would be very expensive, would make her bald and weak, would be very painful, and might not work. I don’t think she literally dropped to her knees, but that old woman begged secular science to do anything and everything to save her mortal life. Oddly, no matter how much she might “yearn to be with Jesus”, she was still insistent upon doing everything she could to put off seeing Him as long as she possibly could. The only people in the entire congregation who saw the hypocrisy in her actions were the two elderly people who introduced me to what God says about this topic. If Christians were true believers there would be only two groups of people going to medical science: *evil* Christians who are trying to put off going to hell for as long as possible, and unregenerate pagans who have *nothing* but this brief mortal existence.

Here are some testimonies you won’t hear because you’ll get the lip-service version:

- “I’ve got a deadly ailment. I want you to pray for my recovery. I don’t know what God’s will is, so I don’t want you to pray that His will be done; I want you to pray that I recover.”

- “I’ve got a deadly disease. And I’ve been around God long enough to know He saw it coming a long time ago and could have prevented it if He’d wanted to. Obviously He chose not to. And I think He had a reason for afflicting me. It’s a test of my Christianity. He wants to test me to see if I’m selfish or if I truly love Him and go by His word. For example, death would be a good deal for me, but not such a good deal for you (**Ph 1:21-24**): The people at work would lose my good testimony, the church would lose my good works, and my family would lose its breadwinner – so if I die willingly I’d be worse than an infidel (**1 Ti 5:8**). And that’s God’s test: If I fight to stay alive I’m a good Christian whether I live or not. If I take the selfish route by not fighting the good fight against death I’m no better than Judas. So I’m going to prove I’m a good Christian by asking medical science to heal me.”

- This testimony would be a “half blessing”: “I have a potentially fatal ailment. I’m going to pray that God might reveal to me if it is His will that I live or die. That way if He wants me to die I can avoid resisting His will by staying home and not going to the doctor.” What half of that testimony do I not like? The unspoken half: “If God’s will is that I live, I’m going to go to the doctor in order to rob God of the credit and the glory.” Why do I even like half of it? Because at least the guy truly acknowledges God as if He were real by wanting to submit to His will. Most other Christians *ass-ume* God never wanted them to get sick, that He can’t do anything about it, and they always *automatically* go prostrate themselves before the secular god of science for salvation. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Clichés and specious analogies are the usual arguments in favor of Asa’s health plan (God AND science) because the Scriptures cannot be used. A typical cliché is, “God helps those who help themselves.” A typical analogy would be: “Just as our Blessed Savior doesn’t mind if we pray for a bountiful harvest AND ask the hired man to weed the garden in order to help produce a bountiful harvest, neither does He mind if we pray for a healthy recovery AND ask the doctor to treat our illness.” As you read that analogy you cannot help but see the Reasonableness of it *because that’s the way we’ve been trained to think!* We are Enlightened products of the Age of Reason. And we *want* to agree with it because we *like* it. But let’s reason together with the Lord by examining both counts in the analogy: First, God’s Book *specifically* tells us to weed the garden because He created weeds so we’d have to get our food by the sweat of our brows. (Weeds are also types of the carnal cares of this life that

will choke our Christian growth if we aren't aware of them and don't eradicate them.) Second, His Book *specifically* tells us not to use Asa's health plan, and it tells us to go to Him and only to Him for healing. The analogy ignores both of those specifics. (As the Brit once said, "So thehr you havit: You're wrong on *both* counts, now, ahn't you?") Please notice how easy it is to *ignore* Scripture by listening to Reason instead. Discernment is something we must constantly work at if we are to live by revelation instead of Reason.

The modern Christian reliance on medical science is a result of Reason replacing revelation in our lives. Enlightened religion claims God gave us *medical science* so we can accumulate knowledge about how to preserve our own lives, and God gave us *religion* to comfort us about the dwindling number of health threats we haven't yet mastered through science. Sadly, the more we "learn" the more we agree with science's blasphemous decree that the Bible is the result of superstitious ignorance: Two to four thousand years ago when it was written, mankind had not yet discovered the causes of disease and therefore attributed diseases to the gods. Science has now decreed disease to be a thoughtless, random process. And that was all it took to get Christians to reject what God taught them about the subject. The way modern Christians view disease and react to it is based upon their complete acceptance of what science has told them. And not a single Bible verse mentioned in this chapter has any real relevance or impact on their lives; all of them have been explained away by Reason. And here's what scares me: It doesn't bother Christians in the slightest; they have no fear of God whatsoever. They are completely blind.

Let me give you an example of how Reason has replaced revelation. Recently the national news media carried a story about a Christian family that has long believed in shunning (to some unreported degree) medical science. However, when one of the family was stricken by God with a serious (but not life-threatening) ailment, the family publicly came out in support of increasing the fetal tissue research medical science has been doing because it *might* someday lead to a cure. The stricken Christian looked somberly at the camera and said, "I don't want to go against God's will..." and then he smiled in triumph and said "...but who knows what God's will is?" Today's Christians are not afraid to say that! They don't think God has revealed His will even about such important and fearful subjects as sickness and saving our mortal lives! Do they think He *forgot* or do they think He was *negligent*? Christianity has become just another carnal do-what-you-think-is-best farce just like pagan religions. We are serving a false god; we are serving self.

Discernment will help you stay focused on God's instructions in His Book when you are challenged by a group of immature, carnal Christians who say: "You don't go to the doctor!?! Haven't you heard the one about the guy trapped on his roof by rising floodwaters? When a rescue crew in a motorboat came by he sent them away, telling them he was trusting God to save him. This happened three times. He was later swept away by the flood and drowned. In Heaven when he asked God why He didn't answer his prayers and save him, God said, 'Heck, I sent a crew in a motorboat to you *three times!*'" Notice the subject of the joke has nothing to do with sickness because it does not start out with; *Did you hear the one about the guy God afflicted with a grievous disease?* In order to justify their sin of direct disobedience of God's order to go to Him alone for healing, Christians must avoid what the Scriptures say, and they must appeal to their carnal knowledge of good and evil.

A preacher once called upon me during his sermon to go up and help him introduce a new subject. He had me remove my shoes and stand ten feet away from him with my eyes closed. He said, "I have just spread broken glass on the carpet. I want you to walk toward me with your eyes still closed." Unbeknownst to me, he was introducing the topic of "walking circumspectly" and intended for me to slowly probe the carpet for glass before each step. And unbeknownst to him, I thought he was using me to demonstrate faith in God and obedience to the directives of authority. To his surprise I boldly strode right toward the sound of his voice with no regard whatsoever for any glass. "Why didn't you slowly test for glass?" he asked. To which I replied in effect, "Because you *told* me to walk toward you: I was demonstrating my faith, trust, and confidence in your instructions, and demonstrating selfless obedience without regard for potential harm to me." That Biblical Christian viewpoint is how I view healing; it's how I view everything in the Bible. Walking circumspectly means to walk with discernment. Once I've discerned from the Bible what God wants of me, I instantly obey, in faith believing the Lord knows about any broken glass. I would rather die than make God look bad.

If I am afflicted with a deadly ailment I may go to medical science for help if I can answer any one of these questions with a *No*:

- Did God know the life-threatening ailment would occur?
- Could God have prevented it?
- Did God therefore *want* me to be afflicted?
- Does He deal with the issue of health consistently in both Testaments?
- Am I a Christian?

I may also go to medical science if I can answer any one of these questions with a *Yes*:

- Did my life-threatening ailment catch God by surprise?
- If my ailment did catch God by surprise, is it now too late for Him to heal me?
- Does God need medical science because He hasn't the ability to heal me?
- Was God pleased with Asa?
- Do I *suspect* I shouldn't go to medical science but still haven't fully searched the Scriptures on the matter?
- Do I *know* I shouldn't go to medical science but admit I haven't yet got the faith, strength, and maturity to overcome my fear?

If you answered one of the last two questions with a *yes* I have no more problem with that than I would if my son were too young to mow the lawn or drive a car. Christianity is a growth process. It is urgent that we mature because there's a war going on and we are needed, but our Family has people of all ages and levels of maturity in it and we are here to help each other. If you or loved ones have health problems, this chapter has been very difficult. In that case you might have to deliberately and wisely back away from this topic until you are ready to examine it Scripturally. Just be honest with the Lord and say something like, "Lord, I can't even *begin* to deal with this issue from the Scriptures; I instantly get defensive and attack the very *idea* that we should rely only on You for our health. Yes, Sir, I admit I'm terribly afraid to even take an honest, discerning *look* at the issue. And even if it turns out that medical science is OK, I still have to admit to You this may be something in life that if You ever *did* ask me to do, I might not love You enough to do it – and that lack of faith upsets and frightens me more than the medical issue." In the meantime, spend your time concentrating on other ways you can serve God. The Lord will understand and He will help you grow. Remember, our objective is *not* losing our dependence on medical science; our objective

is growing closer to the Lord and glorifying Him in accordance with His word. We are trying to develop the kind of intimate, trusting relationship with a very real God that we'll have for all of eternity. So if you aren't ready for this issue, don't push it.

If your state has laws requiring you to take your children to the hospital in cases of life-threatening situations, I suggest you'd be glorifying God by obediently submitting to the authority over you by taking your child to the hospital. The laws in those few states are usually based on "what seems Reasonably prudent to the average carnal mind." (In other words, the laws are based on the Enlightened philosophy that "man is the measure of all things": the state thinks your life should be governed by what the masses *think*, not by what God *says*.) That means, if your child dies, they aren't going to be impressed when you respond to their charges by bringing up the Bible, because they'll just bring a local Baptist preacher into court and he'll testify he thinks it's OK to go to the doctor because Luke was a physician. If you protest to me that Joseph and Mary resisted the government by taking their Child to Egypt, I'd applaud your reliance upon Scripture in your thinking, but would suggest two things for your consideration: First, Herod was trying to *kill* their Child, but your state is trying to *save* your child. Second, Joseph never *resisted* Herod's authority; he simply got out from under his authority by fleeing his jurisdiction. You, on the other hand, have apparently chosen to remain in your state.

If you are charged with a crime, you won't need a *Self*-defense attorney because your objective is not to *resist* the authorities (even wrong and froward ones), it is to *submit to* and *please* your authorities: Simply admit you are guilty of inadvertently violating the intent of state law, that had you understood the law you would have obediently complied, and humbly declare you were merely trying to glorify God by submitting to what He says in the Bible. Do not appeal to Caesar by claiming a right to freedom of religion. Even if we are innocent, God has ordered us to *submit to* authority, not *fight* it.

If you are in the military or have some other employer who requires you to go abroad, you will find some areas of the world require shots. Since you are under authority, submit and get the shots. If, on the other hand, your travel is voluntary – a vacation – I recommend you pick another destination. If you are a missionary, get whatever shots may be required in order to get in and out.

Many of you who are already knowledgeable about medical science will not like my advice to take the shots, because you are aware that science is now learning a number of these shots have serious long-term side effects. In fact, many people – both saved and unsaved – are beginning to avoid doctors if at all possible because the leading cause of accidental death in the United States is not traffic accidents, firearms, falling, fires, or drowning – it is mistakes committed by medical science. That includes mistakes during major surgery and minor surgery; it includes prescribing and/or administering the wrong medicine/dosage; performing procedures incorrectly or on the wrong patient, etc. The annual *accidental* and preventable death toll of patients under the care of the medical community in the U.S. alone is 180,000. (That means medical science unnecessarily kills someone every 2.9 minutes. No other cause of death even comes close.) And the annual number of avoidable non-fatal health problems caused by mistakes in the medical community is 1.3 million. Even if you look only at the number of accidental, preventable deaths inside hospitals caused by medical science and its health care professionals, you'll find hospital mistakes kill more people each year than the *combined total* of all fires, all motor vehicle accidents, and *all* types of homicides. That means in the U.S. alone medical science kills and injures over 4,000 people *every day* – not counting the usual unavoidable deaths.

Therefore, some will wonder how I can recommend submitting to medical procedures required by employers and other authorities. And the answer, of course, is always the same – to glorify God. The Lord has ordered us to obey the authorities over us. If He doesn't want the shots to harm us He will protect us. No health risk is too great for Him to handle.

How shall we view our Christian comrades who are doctors? Should we tell them to quit their jobs and go pump gas? No, we should look at them the same way we do the soldiers who killed the babies in Bethlehem: They are doing their jobs just like any of the rest of us. By doing our jobs we are *all* making the world "better" and are helping it come together under the Antichrist. God has ordained that the Antichrist will rule, therefore it is *good* for him to rule. But ideologically we must be on God's side. If a Christian doctor is doing his job to the best of his ability – like Daniel and Joseph did when serving the pagan world – he is to be respected and appreciated. If he is a slacker as a doctor he is not a good Christian.

FEAR

When I said earlier this would likely be one of those "for worse" subjects in our espousal to the Lord, I meant this topic would likely produce fear and offense. That is normal and is a necessary part of Christian growth. And this subject, because it involves the possibility of our death, is a good time to address being offended by the Lord and His doctrines.

Being subordinate to the Lord – like being subordinate to any lord – can be turbulent at times, especially if the master is trying to teach and train the subordinate. It is normal for the subordinate to be, in his ignorance, offended at times with his master. If you are a parent you know what I mean. You've seen your children overstep the bounds of respect; you've seen them get hurt and offended when you spared not the rod; and, ideally, you've seen them grow through the suffering into maturity and perfection (**He 2:10**; 5:8,9), into adults in whom you are well pleased. In retrospect you are glad you maintained your vigilance and discipline and put your willful children through whatever hardships you deemed appropriate for their proper development.

Peter in **Mt 16:22** demonstrated immaturity. A subordinate, for several reasons, had better be very careful when overruling his master. Peter wasn't careful and he deserved punishment for that alone. But I want to show you why Peter reacted the way he did. He was afraid of Satan's greatest weapon – death. He was afraid for the Lord and for his own life. The situation with the big-shot Christians, the Pharisees, had reached the point that there were rumors they would have Christ and His followers executed. Peter was trying to save their skins. That seemed like a good thing to him, and he was surprised and offended when the Lord rebuked him and told him how offensive He found Peter's actions. Here's my point: Peter faced a wall of offense around the Lord. Peter was dead set against going to Jerusalem because of what that meant. Peter could either stay where he was on his side of the wall of offense (**Jn 6:61,66,67**) or he could go through to the Lord's side. Only on the Lord's side is it possible to enjoy life from His perspective. Peter later tried to please the Lord by dealing with his fear by following Him when He was arrested. But fear is a powerful enemy (**Lk 22:61,62**) and is not easily overcome. I think when the Lord saw **Jn 21:7** He knew Peter would one day be ready to glorify God as a witness (**Jn 21:18,19**).

A careful reading of **Jn 11** will show that all the disciples shared Peter's reluctance to go anywhere near Jerusalem. They feared they'd all be taken and executed. Satan's greatest weapon is fear of death. So they tried to manipulate their Master

into doing their will. In fact, the disciples were so afraid of death that when the Lord merely brought up the subject they retreated into silence (**Mk 9:31,32; Lk 9:44,45**).

John the Baptist, too, found himself in jail staring at the wall of offense around the Lord. Satan's greatest weapon was at work and was causing John to be offended with the fact that Christ was doing *nothing* to save his life. That's why the Lord told John's men to tell John (page D23-11) it's a blessing when Christ does not offend you.

The Bible commands us to rebuke, to reprove, and even to not spare the rod of correction. All of which cause emotional and/or physical suffering and pain. In other words, God has designed life so *those who do endure suffering will profit from it*. He has designed it so each of us is going to stumble over the Rock of offense at one time or another. We will find some doctrine in the Bible we don't like and/or are afraid of. That's the way the Lord designed it – these things are tests. If these tests didn't exist nobody would object to being a Bible believer. But they do exist and they exist for our good. We have to gird up our loins and deliberately face our fears (pick out the biggest and commence firing!) in order to grow and achieve true fellowship with the Lord. Take this book as an example. Is there any doubt in your mind that most Christians will reject most of what this book has to say? If you've been faithfully searching the Scriptures as you've been going through this book you've seen this book is correct. That means Christians who are offended by the Lord and His doctrines just have to *get over it!* That is their test. He and His doctrines are not going to change and **Jn 12:48** is a big day on all of our calendars and it's getting closer. So don't worry if you are afraid and reluctant to face this issue; that is normal and is something we all have to go through.

Even Christ was afraid. In Mt 16 He rebuked Peter and called him Satan for savoring the things that be of men (staying alive by avoiding Jerusalem). But in the garden of Gethsemane His fear and anguish not only caused Him to sweat blood, but to actually ask the Father to let the cup pass; His mortal body was staring at the wall of offense surrounding God. But His love, dedication, and courage caused Him to submissively add, “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Two points: First, there was a tremendous amount of pressure on the Lord Jesus Christ for Him to even mention the cup passing. Second, in spite of the pressure, He didn't succumb to Satan's biggest weapon, and humbly went to His death in accordance with His Father's will. What a witness! What an example!

I want to make three points that have to do with fear:

- Think about all the ramifications of life under a king where **Ec 8:4** is true. Godly order makes men *completely* at the mercy of the king. You and I have no idea what benefits to our Christianity that kind of life would give us in the areas of humility, duty, submission, self-discipline, fear as a motivator, and understanding the truth, simplicity, and importance of *pleasing the king over keeping his laws*. But God's health plan, no matter what form of government we live under, does put us *completely* at the mercy of God. And that fear teaches us some of the above.

- Most Christians in history have lived daily with the possibility of death. Medical science didn't even exist a hundred years ago. And as popular as the myriad natural remedies have always been, they have usually been subject to, popularized by, or dependent upon fads that fade, localized folklore, superstition, and wishful thinking. And they have never been considered to be reliable treatments for deadly ailments. When God afflicted His people, they simply had no option but to trust Him. Medical science is now an option. And thanks to philosophy's scientific method it has worldwide favor and respectability because of its universal appeal to the Natural Reason in all of us. Medical science cannot be refuted with Reasoned debate. It can only be seen for what it is through faith in what the Bible says. No part of a Christian's thought processes should involve the logic, Reason, common sense, scientific fact, and morality that Thomas Aquinas and the Age of Reason have taught are good and necessary in order for mankind to “progress.” Because of the Age in which we live, immature Christians will simply not be able to *believe* this doctrine. It is good to teach them about it, but do not overdrive the flock, and do not be offended when fear causes them to resort to Reason in a desperate attempt to save the very life Christ told them to disregard. Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

- From a modern perspective the Bible has way too many references to fear of God. I'm not talking about those contexts in which *fear* may, or clearly does, mean *respect*. I'm talking about the sobering kind of fear related to dread that silently grips your heart. Democracy and medical science have liberated us from the here-and-now kind of helpless fear associated with the two points above. Some situations during combat and natural disasters can still result in the kind of helpless fear I'm talking about, but they are not usual, everyday experiences. Old-time Christians better understood why God put “too much” emphasis on “negative fear.” The clueless modern church, on the other hand, has almost completely rejected that stick aspect of Christianity in favor of the carrot method. Therefore, lacking a real threat from any quarter, Christians no longer *fear* God because they have no real way to know fear. That will change for those of you warriors who abandon Asa's dual-pronged health care and turn to the Lord your God only; you will live with fear on a daily basis. You will find yourselves under a King Whose power over you is completely arbitrary. If you do not please Him, He will spank you. You'll begin to pay more attention to your Christian walk because you'll begin to fear God's punishment in a way you never did before. You will also find as you mature that the presence of medical science can be a blessing. It exists as an option, as a way to duck the correcting hand of God. But you have chosen to stand in the gap like a man and accept whatever cross your King gives you to bear. That attitude or outlook will help and strengthen you in other areas as you develop into the kind of man God has always wanted you to be. Therefore medical science will be just another mountain your faith in God has moved aside. It will become a major milestone in your Christian growth.

This is an important subject, so I'm going to discuss *how* we win the war by not going to the doctor.

In **Ge 6:13** God was contemplating what I call the Final Solution to this War of Rebellion. What was He contemplating? *The end of all flesh*. Compare **Ro 7:17,18,24** with **He 2:14** to help gain some perspective. That means getting rid of the flesh is good for God and bad for Satan. But Satan didn't really understand all the ramifications until after the cross. Had he completely understood the subject he would not have crucified the Lord of Glory when God gave him permission to do so. Why? Because when he killed Christ's physical body, Christ showed him His death fulfilled the legal requirements of **Ro 7:2** and thereby legally freed the captive saints in Abraham's bosom from their marriage to Satan. Christ then took the saints to heaven for the first time in the history of this planet. Here's the point: Christ's physical death was good for the church in more ways than the one you hear about from the pulpit every Sunday. And Christ's death was bad for Satan. If Satan had it to do again he would not crucify Christ.

And Christ is still at work because we are Christ's body carrying on His work (**Jn 14:12**). Our work, like Christ's, involves fear, suffering, and death (1 Jn 3:16; 1 Pe 2:21; 4:12-19; **Co 1:24; 2 Co 1:5-10; Ro 12:1; 1 Th 3:3,4; 2 Th 1:5**). **Ro 7:18,23** tells us the war takes place between our mortal old carnal man and our spiritual new man. That's why the Bible

says stuff like **Mt 6:24,25,33**; 16:24-26; **Ro 6:16**; Co 3:2. The Devil's body is the old man; God's body is the new man. We must bring the old man under complete subjection. I said *complete* subjection – that means even unto death. And I say it not just because all flesh is our enemy, but also because the Devil may use his greatest weapon (Jb 2:4) to get us to destroy our witness. Which brings up my next point. Just as Satan learned it was a mistake to kill Christ, he does not want to kill us because *we are Christ's body*. Satan does not want you dead; he just wants to scare you into trying to save your life so he can win the war. If you are the kind of Christian who goes to the hospital, Satan is going to do everything he and medical science can to keep you alive *because you're just the kind of Christian he needs to win the war!* If you die he has lost your carnal influence on the rest of us.

If, on the other hand, you are the kind of Christian who rejects medical science in favor of God, Satan still does not want you dead. Why? Because if he were to inflict you with a deadly disease, and you faithfully put your life in God's hands, that kind of witness – that willingness to die – is exactly what God is looking for! God is looking for men (if He can find any) who are willing to stand in the gap for the rest of the church. God uses the "end of all flesh" to win the war. It's a war of brinkmanship: Satan tries to scare us with a death he doesn't want us to undergo, and God tries to get us to accept a death we don't want. We are born in complete agreement with Satan about death. Then we are born again to suffer that very thing. We are to do it figuratively daily, and once literally if the Lord so chooses.

Because of Jb 1:8,10,12; 2:3,6,7,10; 2 Sa 24:1; 1 Ch 21:1; **1 Co 5:5**; **1 Ti 1:20** we know that King Satan, like King Nebuchadnezzar, is a servant of the King of kings. The Lord sends Satan on errands that include physical punishments for sins, which are intended to get our attention and help train us up in the way we should go. Satan does not want us to humbly submit to the afflictions God sends; he does not want to teach us not to blaspheme; he does not want to save our spirit; and he does not want us to die a witness's death. He is merely carrying out God's orders.

I don't fully understand how our unheralded, misunderstood, considered-to-be-wasted deaths can be so important to God (**Ps 116:15**). But before the cross nobody understood the importance of human sacrifice, either. I'm just a soldier faithfully carrying out the orders of my General. He knows what He's doing, and none of us does. I believe if we all trust and obey Him by no longer trying to duck His slaps, we'll develop into strong soldiers who march in step with our King and He'll win the war. Just like God *wanted* His Son to die, He wants us to die – or at least be willing to die. It is sad that so many Christians are willing to die for democracy, but so few are willing to die for the Lord.

Philosophy convinces us that our deaths are bad and undesirable. Medical science allows us to save – or die fighting to save – our lives. And Reason fully supports both. Revelation does not. Christianity *always* gets down to whether or not we believe the Bible (Jn 12:48).

COVETOUSNESS

To refresh your memory about the seriousness of covetousness please turn to page D6-3 and reread the entire last section entitled *Why Authority Is*. With that in mind let's look at three examples of covetousness:

In the first example, a man who has secretly been grazing his livestock on his neighbor's land finds out the neighbor knows what he has been doing. So he goes to the neighbor, says he always meant to come over and ask permission before now but would it be OK if he continued grazing his animals on the man's property. The neighbor replies, "Because I now need to use that land, and because you didn't come to me in the first place, you have to stop grazing your animals on my land." If the trespasser gets angry and protests that he really needs someplace to graze his critters, and tries to convince the neighbor to change his mind rather than humbly rendering to his neighbor that which is his neighbor's, he is guilty of the sin of covetousness (**Dt 5:21**), which is idolatry (**Co 3:5**) because the covetous trespasser has exalted something over God. And by coveting physical property that belongs to another, he has become a robber (apply **Mt 5:28**).

Second example: God gave Lucifer some of His physical possessions so he could husband them for God. But Lucifer grew attached to the physical property God loaned him and became covetous – he didn't want to give it up.

Third example: God gave us physical life so we could serve Him. We have always known He has only given us physical life temporarily and that one day, sooner or later, He would require that which is His – our lives. But in order to win the war, Satan wants to get us to covet our mortal lives. God wants us to believe we have spirit life so we won't fear physical death. And He has reassured us that any sickness we get is from Him and is an opportunity to glorify Him by voluntarily allowing Him to take back that which He gave if He so desires. Therefore, when we turn our backs on Him and fearfully run to medical science, we are guilty of coveting His physical property – we don't want to give it up. In addition to coveting our physical lives, we tend to covet youthful physical appearance and to resist God's ageing process by using hair dyes, wigs, etc., because we want to look physically younger. We should honor God by humbly submitting to His will and His way.

As I conclude this chapter, let's put it into perspective with the rest of this book. The issue in the Bible is authority. We are God's witnesses when we submit to His authority. The rest of this book is important because it clearly shows carnality has taken over the church. This chapter, however, is not as good at delivering that message because our instinctive and often blinding fear of this topic tends to obscure Scriptural discernment. The other topics merely offend tradition; this subject offends us. The other topics are more general; this subject picks out Satan's biggest weapon and commences firing. And that's why I say this chapter cannot and must not be pushed on anyone. Maturity is produced only by a combination of time, experience, and understanding. Not all of us are capable of walking at the same pace – do not overdrive the flock.

Turn to Jb 2:3,4 and apply Is 43:10-12 and Is 44:8 and **Ex 33:16** to v.3. Think about being witnesses of God's glory, power, and authority for all of eternity. Then think about how and why v.4 is Satan's biggest weapon, and why Satan believes v.4 can defeat v.3. Now I want you to think about the fact that there are two ways to accept, believe, and do all of the things in the Bible. The first way is the legalistic way of the Pharisees. Their selfish carnality made them turn away from God by religiously adhering to a long laundry list of rules. That means they did not die daily to self. The second way is the loving way of expediency. Your love for God will make you want to exalt Him by being an obedient doer. That is dying to self. And that is the only way you can understand this chapter. Only in that way can *concepts* like love, authority, obedience, duty, eternity, and the everlasting spirit life of the new man defeat Satan's v.4. It's v.3 vs. v.4. This chapter takes aim at v.4.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?