

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

THE COVER-UP

Part 2

By Rayola Kelley

Last month we talked about the cover-ups that exist in humanity. To understand such cover-ups, we need to come to terms with the reason for them. The main reason is to cover up the harsh reality of our fallen state. It is hard for us in our pride to admit we are wrong, or in our fragile state that we are limited in our abilities to really comprehend what is going on around us. Such limitations simply point to the fact that we really do not understand the issues of life.

In our humanity, we can make terrible judgment calls that can haunt us the rest of our lives. In fact, we can find ourselves living in guilt and shame as the "if onlys" of life torment us about our lack of hindsight or foresight. If only we could have seen what was going on, we could have avoided this sorrow, loss or shame. When it comes down to what is unforgivable about humanity, it is that we are not God. We are not perfect, we cannot always avoid the harsh realities of life, and we do not have the means to change the events of life. If only we could avoid such times in our life.

Last month I talked about the remedy for our plight regardless of the circumstances that plague us. The remedy is Jesus Christ. He is the only One that can heal us and set us free from the loss, shame and sorrow life brings our way. As the great physician, He can heal the wounds of life; as our Redeemer, He has provided the means to be forgiven and to take away our shame. As our Life, He can bring hope that reaches above the despair of this

world. However, we must look to Him with a receptive heart, and



by faith receive Him and His work of redemption as the remedy or antidote for our miserable state.

This brings us to another important cover-up. Sadly, this form of cover-up has found its way into the Church. Instead of properly discerning this form of cover-up, we have embraced it as a remedy, solution or antidote to man's despairing lot. The Apostle Paul gives us insight into this form of cover-up in *Colossians 2:8*: "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*"

The big cover-up has to do with philosophies. Philosophies come down to your particular view or approach to a matter. We read of great philosophers that dealt with the mysteries of the universe. They tried to answer the deep questions of life. Their answers often influenced how people regarded life, and how they would approach the concept or belief about God. As you can imagine, such philosophies had a powerful and far reaching affect on people's perceptions.

The problem with such philosophies is that they represent the world's wisdom. As you consider Paul's own description, you will realize that such wisdom is nothing more than vain deceit. In other words, they are empty conclusions that are void of truth and life. We can also see where men take these philosophies and make them into personal traditions that must be observed by all. However, they represent the best of the rudiments of the world. Rudiments in this case point to the fundamental elements, principles or propositions of the world. Clearly, these philosophies make up the fundamental view of the world. By adopting this view, we are coming into agreement with the world. Today the philosophies of the world are marked by their many "isms." For example, in Paul's day there were Stoicism, Epicureanism and Gnosticism. Each of these schools of thought embraced the extreme attitudes about life. For example, Stoicism exhorts us to live

nobly, and death cannot matter. Epicureanism tells us all is uncertain; therefore, it is vain to deny self of the different attractions and lusts. The Gnostics on the other hand embodied the different schools of thought and embraced Pythagorean fables down to the evolutionary theories of the present time. The Gnostics felt that they had higher insights into the mysteries of life.

Although, we might be well aware of the Gnostic belief, we are not aware that the other two philosophies are also very much alive and well. Only today they are hidden in the concept of legalism found in many religions or the promotion of the selfisms of pride, which have been summarized in the self-esteem doctrine. We all know this self-esteem doctrine comes out of humanism, which in some cases embraces the Gnostic philosophy. The Gnostic philosophy has been fused into the New Age philosophy. It is important to point out that Satan's lies never change; they are simply repackaged and labeled with different terminology.

Last month Jeannette dealt with some of these philosophies. Keep in mind, they are not scriptural, but they have been presented in a way that the Church has bought the package. They sound wise, but are the essence of the world's wisdom, which is often demonically inspired. They have been disguised by religious terms, but they contain the very arsenic that will undermine and destroy the Church of its faith and resolve.

Let's now summarize some of the philosophies of the world that are very humanistic in their origins. They have actually deluded people about their own state and muddied their perception towards God. It is also important to point out that the core of these philosophies exalt man in some way. When man is being exalted, God is being redefined to fit man's perception of his personal best. This exaltation not only does away with our humanness, but also justifies or explains

away the imperfection of it such as sin. In the place of our depraved state, man is often exalted in a place of innocence, wisdom or perfection. These worldly philosophies will ultimately make people atheists, amoral, humanistic, or dualistic in belief. However, such beliefs will never make individuals born-again believers.

Self-Esteem: We have already made reference to one of these worldly philosophies: that of self-esteem. It is amazing that the Church would even give this worldly philosophy consideration. After all, Jesus clearly stated that if we are going to be His disciples we must deny ourselves. The biggest breakdown of any society is that of selfishness. Selfishness has no regard for others. It simply wants to be exalted in its arrogance. Self-esteem is nothing more than esteeming our wretched selfishness into a place of honor and worship.

Loving Self: If people are not encouraging us to esteem ourselves, they are telling us that all we need to do is love ourselves. After all, we must see our value and worth. If we do, we will love ourselves and we will cease from despairing over life and trying to destroy ourselves in some deviant way. The Bible already tells us we love ourselves. "Love your neighbor as you love or regard yourself." We are not despairing over our lives because we do not have a high enough opinion of ourselves. Rather, we are despairing about our lives because the rest of the world has failed to have the same high opinion of us. Others in our environment do not adore us for our abilities, worship us in our attitudes, or bow down to our self-serving, manipulative ways. How many people, even Christians, are entrapped in the bondage of getting other people to see just how valuable they are without any real success? The end results are anger, despair and feelings of rejection.

There is some good in all of us: How many times have you heard how there is some good in all of us, and how it is up to each of us to find such goodness? My question is where do we find such a philosophy in the Bible? The Word of God clearly states differently. There is

none that are righteous. There is no good or that which is beneficial in the flesh. Our best is considered filthy rags. And, as the rich young ruler stipulated, only God is good or possesses the qualities that are beneficial.

The question is where do we as Christians think we can accept a philosophy that contradicts God's Word, and not pay a high price for such unbelief? To accept a philosophy of the world is the same as telling God He did not mean what He said about the matter. In other words, God is a nice liar who is just being a little too negative for our wise, intellectual ways. Here a challenging thought: Since when did God's ways and thoughts cease to be higher than our fleshly, worldly, foolish, and perverted ways and thoughts?

The Word of God is clear; there is no good in any of us. Granted, there may be some decency in us that maintains a semblance of morals and manners, but the reality is there is no good in us that is acceptable to God. If there was good in us, then there would be a basis in which righteousness could be established. However, the truth is sin has marred and defiled any means by which any of us could be righteous. Therefore, God had to provide the way in order for us to be made in His righteousness. That way was through the redemption of Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus' redemption, we can positionally stand in Him as being righteous before God, and it is by the exercise of faith towards His Word that He reckons our actions or deeds as being righteous. In other words, our actions do not make us righteous, but our active faith allows God to count our obedience to His Word as being righteous.

The question remains. How can Christians claim that there is some good in people, when the Bible states differently? When we combine the worldly philosophies with the Word of God, we nullify all of the Word. In essence we strip it of its authority and power to instruct and impact us in the ways of righteousness. The more we adopt these philosophies and adjust the Word of God to them, the more we become dull to the truth. It is called an unholy alliance. Isaiah described the affect that unholy agreements had on the people of Israel. Heed His words because Jesus also quoted them: "*Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears*

heavy, and shut their eyes; least they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" (Isaiah 6:10).

The world can only make us dull of hearing, unable to see, and incapable of understanding. As we become dull, our heart becomes indifferent to truth, and our flesh becomes the source by which we wrongly test matters that can only be discerned by spirit and truth.

Next month we will consider how the world's philosophy of love has changed some of the Church's perception of God. Meanwhile, have you bought the rudiments of the world as your philosophy? If so, you need to know you are operating in vain deceit that will eventually destroy your soul.

LEANING INTO THE WIND By A. W. Tozer

"It is my considered opinion that under the present circumstances we do not want revival at all. A widespread revival of the kind of Christianity we know today in America might prove to be a moral tragedy from which we would not recover in a hundred years.

"Here are my reasons. A generation ago, as a reaction from Higher Criticism and its offspring, Modernism, there arose in Protestantism a powerful movement in defense of the historic Christian faith. This, for obvious reasons, came to be known as Fundamentalism. It was a more or less spontaneous movement without much organization, but its purpose wherever it appeared was the same: to stay 'the rising tide of negation' in Christian theology and to restate and defend the basic doctrines of New Testament Christianity. This much is history.

"What is generally overlooked is that Fundamentalism, as it spread throughout the various denominations and nondenominational groups, fell victim to its own virtues. The Word died in the hands of its friends. Verbal inspiration, for instance (a doctrine which I have always held and do now hold), soon became afflicted with rigor mortis. The voice of the prophet was silenced and the scribe captured the

Continued Page 5, Column 1

WHAT'S WRONG WITH JESUS?

Part 1

By Jeannette Haley

The other day I had a conversation with a lovely, but sad to say, very deluded woman. We began by casually discussing health issues, and then the topic easily moved on into the spiritual realm.

Having previously enjoyed several brief encounters with her, I was curious as to her beliefs, and hoped that my suspicions were wrong that, in spite of being an open, friendly and likeable person, she did not know Christ. It didn't take long to discover that my suspicions were correct.

In keeping with most idolatrous "Christians" today, she enthusiastically shared how "wonderful" and "gifted" her pastor is, "even though some people may think he is evil." At this point, I was biting my tongue because Rayola and I know that this man *is not of God, but rather he operates with a familiar spirit*. His "church" is an antichrist metaphysical stronghold of darkness in the middle of town.

Hoping to land on some common ground that would make it possible to share Christ, I agreed with her on certain points that she made about the "hypocrisy of religion" and how "every religion or church thinks they are the only ones going to heaven." But when she began shredding the validity of God's Word, I knew there was no point of truth to which I could hold her accountable. The final blow came when she (in so many words) stated: "Everything in this country (she is well-traveled) is about Jesus! It's not about Jesus! It's about the Holy Spirit! Jesus would be very upset about people treating Him as if He is God. After all, Jesus was just a man!"

My heart sank, for I know all too well that when a person has been blinded to this extent, it takes a great deal of prayer, time and investment (as the Lord leads) for them to even remotely consider that they may be dead wrong. The bottom line always has been, is, and always will be *who do you say Jesus is?* (Matthew 16:13-17.) This is the question that every person must settle in his or her own heart. It is the one question that exposes unbelievers, cults, false

churches, religious leaders, and hypocrites for what they are—workers of darkness.

Obviously, this lady's view of what is wrong with Jesus is that there is simply too much emphasis put on Him. His miraculous birth, life, death and resurrection, along with over 300 fulfilled prophecies concerning Him, mean nothing to her. The problem is, however, that the highly emphasized and commercialized celebrity Jesus of today, which is promoted through the emergent "seeker-friendly" churches, hip hop and rock music, man-centered) sermons, humanistic philosophies and teachings, moronic and sometimes downright demonic books, and so forth, has nothing to do with the real Jesus of the Bible. Such an onslaught of contemporary and often politically correct "Jesus stuff" only serves to deceive, delude, blind and alter a person's ability to seek and to know the real Jesus. Is it any wonder that so many people today have a *"form of godliness, but deny the power thereof?"* (2 Timothy 3:5)



be saved, yet nevertheless find the Jesus of the Bible "outdated and too controversial?" Is it unfair to conclude that such people are still dead in their sins?

To find the answer to that question, we must turn to the Bible—specifically the Gospels where we can follow and closely examine Jesus' life as He lived it on earth—along with the responses of the religious people, that is to say, those who had a "form of godliness," of His day.

We find a perfect example of professing believers' response to Jesus at the very start of His earthly ministry as recorded in Luke 4:16-30. In this chapter we read of Jesus returning from Jordan, *"full of the Holy Ghost"* and *"in the power of the Spirit."* At that time He *"came to Nazareth, where he had*

been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." This is what He read, concerning Himself, in the Book of Isaiah: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."*

All eyes were upon Him as he sat down. Then he began to say to them, *"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."* At this point, they *"wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"* Why were they suddenly questioning Jesus' identity? Could it be because of the power and anointing of the Spirit of God upon Him—a power and anointing so incredible that it set Him apart from anyone they had ever heard before? Not only that, but Jesus was indicating that He came to fulfill this prophesy.

The turning point in their astonishment, however, came after He prophesied to them about Himself in verse 23, followed by this statement in verse 24: *"Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country."* Now we see that Jesus is proclaiming to be a prophet whom they will not accept. He continued pointing His finger at them in verses 25-27. You have to admit that Jesus would not last long in today's political scene for five minutes. His statements of God's dealings with the wickedness and idolatry of Israel during Elijah and Elisha's time exposed their own sinful and hypocritical condition. Tragically, the result was not one of repentance, but rather, they were all filled with wrath. Not only were they furious with Him, but they led Him out of the city to the top of a hill so that they could kill Him by pushing Him off the precipice. *"But he passing through the midst of them went his way."* (Verse 30)

Obviously, these religious people found much wrong with Jesus. He was not only offensive, but, in their minds, worthy of death. Those of us who read this account two-thousand years later are shocked at the spiritual

blindness and wicked attitudes of these Jews of Jesus' home town of Nazareth. However, a closer look at what most of today's popular religious leaders pass off as "Jesus" in light of who the biblical Jesus really is, is likewise just as shocking, if not more so.

For example, today, around the globe, there is a type of "Jesus culture." This culture overlaps denominational boundaries. People caught up in this movement are in love with their perception of Jesus. This Jesus is "sweet" and non-threatening. Like the fairy godmother in Cinderella, he exists for the purpose of granting wishes, and making people happy. This fantasy Jesus loves everybody, regardless of their sin or whether they believe in him or not, and he enjoys their hip hop, rock n' roll so-called "worship". Contrary to Jesus of Nazareth who insulted not only the men of His hometown, but others throughout His earthly ministry, this new Jesus insults no one. He is not confrontational, nor does he intrude into a person's reality. You could say that this new, fun Jesus is a "seeker-friendly" type of guy because he is always "positive." And, according to his ministers, subjects such as sin, rebellion, pride, repentance and death to the self-life are no longer relevant. You can rest assured that this liberal Jesus isn't going to rock anyone's boat about the judgment to come and everlasting hell.

This liberal Jesus is popular with the modern multitudes because he somehow saves people *in* their sin, not *from* their sin. Therefore, the fashionable "Christian" who is in love with his or her idea of this liberal Jesus, need not be concerned with self-denial, separation from the world, or walking by faith on the straight and narrow. Instead he or she is free to look like the world, talk like the world, and live like the world. Jesus' admonitions, like those found in *Luke 9:23-26*, are conveniently ignored.

Pagan practices such as body piercing, tattoos, sensuous manner of dress (make that undress) fornication and immorality, idolatry and any other worldly practices are acceptable. Remember, the liberal Jesus doesn't make people feel uncomfortable about their moral deviations and perversions. As "CEO" of the seeker-

friendly emergent churches, all he wants to do is make sure that people are "churched" whether they are truly born again or not.

The second type of Jesus we encounter in these days of apostasy is the weak Jesus. This Jesus is not necessarily politically correct or popular like the liberal Jesus. While he may be given lip service as being the historically biblical Jesus, he is nevertheless subtly presented as weak for any number of reasons depending upon which group is spouting their particular brand of perverted theology.

For example, if psychological counseling is upheld within a particular church body as opposed to sound biblical counsel, then doesn't this suggest that Jesus is too weak to solve people's problems, and that He didn't mean what He said concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit? In other words, we need man's so-called "wisdom" to solve our problems, not the wisdom that comes from above. But, God says: *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* *Hebrews 4:12*. In *2 Timothy 3:16* we read: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."* The bottom line is if psychology is right, then the Bible is wrong.

Another example that presents a weak Jesus is the growing acceptance within religious circles of the theory of evolution as opposed to the creation account as recorded in the Scriptures. Evolution is one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest hoax ever perpetrated upon mankind, yet countless multitudes of fools continue to push this unfounded, ridiculous, idiotic theory upon the rest of us as if it were the ultimate in truth. There is not one shred of evidence that scientifically supports it. Yet today we have "Christians" (such as the lady I mention in the beginning of this article) who talk glibly about how God "used" evolution to create everything. What utter nonsense! Can you see how this presents a weak Jesus? My Bible says: *"In the beginning was the Word,*

and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" *John 1:1-3*. In *1 Corinthians 8:6* we read: *"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."* Then in *Ephesians 3:9* we read: *"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."* And, *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist"* *Colossians 1:16, 17*. *Hebrews 1:2* tells us that God *"made the worlds"* by His Son.

What do psychology and evolution have in common that presents a weak Jesus? The answer is that both elevate the so-called knowledge of man above the wisdom of God. Both are humanistic. Both were founded by base men who were unbelieving, faithless, foolish, and in more than one instance led by demonic spirit guides. Both psychology and evolution rob their innocent victims of faith, facts, truth and reason, undermining the veracity of the Holy Scriptures, and cast dispersions upon the Living God. Both mock the sinful condition of mankind as they seek to blind people to their need for a savior. Both exalt themselves as being a "science" while neither one qualifies as a true science. The Bible warns concerning such in *1 Timothy 6:20, 21*: *"... keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith."*

The third movement that presents a weak Jesus comes out of the Latter Rain movement, also known as The Manifest Sons of God. Their Jesus is weak because he "can't" return to earth to set up His kingdom until the elite Manifest Sons bring all the kingdoms of the world into subjection (to them) so that Jesus can return and

receive His kingdom from them. Much has been written exposing this insidious "Kingdom Dominion" or "Kingdom Now" movement, so we encourage our readers to do their own research.

Thus far we have briefly touched upon the liberal or tolerant Jesus, and the weak Jesus that is being promulgated upon people today. Yet, what is wrong with the real Jesus that makes these false presentations so universally appealing? Could it be His claim: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" *John 14:6*? Perhaps His words to Nicodemus go against the grain of our pride and independence: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" *John 3:3*. Maybe what is wrong with Him is His claim to be equal with God, making Him God: "I and my Father are one" *John 10:30*. Undoubtedly many are insulted by His strong statement as recorded in *Luke 13:3, 5*, ". . . except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Next month we will continue to examine more false presentations of Jesus that we need to beware of. In the meantime, ask yourself, "Is the real Jesus of the Bible too controversial for me in light of the Jesus that is being presented today?"

May God grant to us all a heart that truly seeks after Him in Spirit and Truth!

Leaning Into The Wind, Con't.

minds of the faithful. In large areas the religious imagination withered. An unofficial hierarchy decided what Christians were to believe. Not the Scriptures, but what the scribe thought the Scriptures meant became the Christian creed. Christian colleges, seminaries, Bible institutes, Bible conferences, popular Bible expositors all joined to promote the cult of textualism. The system of extreme dispensationalism which was devised, relieved the Christian of repentance, obedience and cross-carrying in any other than the most formal sense. Whole sections of the New Testament were taken from the church and disposed of after a rigid system of 'dividing the Word of truth.'

"All this resulted in a religious mentality inimical to the true faith of Christ. A kind of cold mist settled over

Fundamentalism. Below, the terrain was familiar. This was New Testament Christianity, to be sure. The basic doctrines of the Bible were there, but the climate was just not favorable to the sweet fruits of the Spirit.

"The whole mood was different from that of the Early Church and of the great souls who suffered and sang and worshiped the centuries past. The doctrines were sound but something vital was missing. The tree of correct doctrine was never allowed to blossom. The voice of the turtle [dove] was rarely heard in the land; instead, the parrot sat on his artificial perch and dutifully repeated what he had been taught and the whole emotional tone was somber and dull. Faith, a mighty, vitalizing doctrine in the mouths of the apostles, became in the mouth of the scribe another thing altogether and power went from it. As the letter triumphed, the Spirit withdrew and textualism ruled supreme. It was the time of the believer's Babylonian captivity.

"In the interest of accuracy it should be said that this was a general condition only. Certainly there were some even in those low times whose longing hearts were better theologians than their teachers were. These pressed on to a fullness and power unknown to the rest. But they were not many and the odds were too great; they could not dispel the mist that hung over the land.

"The error of textualism is not doctrinal. It is far more subtle than that and much more difficult to discover, but its effects are just as deadly. Not its theological beliefs are at fault, but its assumptions.

"It assumes, for instance, that if we have the word for a thing we have the thing itself. If it is in the Bible, it is in us. If we have the doctrine, we have the experience. If something was true of Paul it is of necessity true of us because we accept Paul's epistles as divinely inspired. The Bible tells us how to be saved, but *textualism goes on to make it tell us that we are saved*, something which in the very nature of things it cannot do. Assurance of individual salvation is thus no more than a logical conclusion drawn from doctrinal premises, and the resultant experience wholly mental."—*Keys to The Deeper Life, 19-20*

THE REAL TEST

What is the real test of a person's life? Jesus answers this question in *Luke 13*. He was told that the blood of some Galileans was mixed with the sacrifice made by Pilate. This is our first introduction to the man Pilate. However, the real issue in this discourse was that these Galileans suffered, but was it an indication of their sin? Was it also the same for those who lost their life at Siloam? The reality is that we are all sinners. So much of what happens is the result of the sins of others, but not always the result of personal sin.

Sin is an issue we all must confront. This is why Jesus calls for repentance. One will perish, if he or she does not turn from the old ways of doing. We all must turn from our destructive direction to ensure eternal life. We must turn to God to embrace a new life. Once we do, we will display fruits that express the changes that will occur in a growing relationship with God.

It is in *Luke 13*, we read about the tree that had no fruit. It may have had all the appearances of a healthy tree, but the usefulness of the tree was based on whether it was producing fruit that was acceptable to the owner. It was given another year. In this year the necessary investment was made to encourage fruit, but the tree had to bear fruit or it would be considered useless and cut down.

There was also another incident of Jesus' healing on the Sabbath. Satan had afflicted the woman eighteen years. The religious leaders were quick to rebuke Jesus. Jesus rebuked them for their hypocrisy. They would take time out to tend their livestock on the Sabbath, but He could not heal one of Abraham's daughters on the Sabbath.

It is God's good pleasure to give the kingdom to His people. You cannot receive this kingdom until you repent. You cannot embrace this kingdom until you are loosed from oppression. However, the kingdom of God has a tremendous way of taking root in receptive hearts, spreading out, and enfolding those who draw close to God. — Excerpt from Rayola Kelley's *Through the Bible in a Year Devotional Book*

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER GODLY, HOLY, OR BOTH?

Q: *I have a two-fold question. Can a person be a Christian and yet not be considered as a "godly" person? Is there a difference between being "godly" and "holy?" Is so, what is it.*

A: I have to admit this is an interesting question. To answer the question, we must consider what these words "godly" and "holy" mean. "Godly" points to conduct or practices that can clearly be traced back to the character, spirit and ways of God. If such conduct does not find its source in God, then it cannot be considered godly. Hence, enters the instruction of the Apostle Paul in *1 Timothy 4:7b-8*: "...exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." Exercise points to application of what we know is true and honorable to our lives before God and towards others.

"Holy" means to be set apart. In this case a person must be set apart from the world with its influences in order to be set apart unto God to be led by His Spirit. Holiness points to a state that people must come into to properly respond to, interact and obey God. The type of state that we possess is determined by what we allow to influence us, as well as what we come into agreement with. Positionally, we are set apart for the work of God in and through us. In fact, we are referred to as "saints" in the Bible. But, we must also become holy in our inward disposition to maintain an upright environment for our holy God to operate within our lives. Without this state, a person would pervert the things of God. This is why we are commanded to be holy for our God is holy.

Can a person be a Christian and yet not be considered as a "godly" person? In the Bible, we see where Paul referred to some of the Christians at Corinth as being fleshly or carnal. Obviously, these people's inward state, and possibly some of their practices would not be considered holy or godly. This brings us to the part that spiritual maturity plays in our lives.

When you study the Bible, it is obvious that God shows His mercy and grace towards us by establishing us in Christ who serves as our place of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. In our different positions as believers we stand positionally acceptable to God in Christ Jesus. For example, as saints we are being identified to His work, as His children we are being identified to our inheritance, and as priests we are being identified to our responsibilities. We are constantly being identified to Christ for His sake and our benefit.

However, we must be brought to perfection or maturity through application of what is honorable through obedience to God and His Word as we establish our inner state. We may start out carnal or fleshly, but if we refuse to walk in sin, and separate ourselves from the world, as well as give way to the Spirit, we will truly become holy people and godly before God.

To me the state of holiness and the conduct of godliness are not optional, but require us to take our position as Christians seriously. We must learn to be sober and diligent in our commitment, devotion and ways before God.

PATRISTIC QUOTATIONS

"He who beats his heart, but does not mend his ways, does not remove his sins but hardens them." - *Augustine*

"For there is nothing more destructive of sin than (self) accusation and (self) condemnation, joined to repentance and tears." - *John Chrysostom*

"Where there is no fear, in like manner there is no amendment; where there is no amendment, repentance is of necessity vain." - *Tertullian*

"Take heed lest without reason thou mistrust the power of repentance. Wouldst thou know what power repentance has? . . . Hezekiah by means of confession routed a hundred and fourscore and five thousand of his enemies. A great thing verily was this, but still small in comparison with what remains to be told: the same king by repentance obtained the recall of a divine sentence which had already gone forth." - *Cyril of Jerusalem*

LETTERS & EMAILS



"I am always so blessed by the newsletters and sermons (when I have the time to go there) and stand amazed at how the Lord continues to speak in and through you all in spite of weariness, ill-health and all the junk the enemy throws at you. Praise His wonderful Name!" - MT

"I am sorry to hear you [Jeannette] still have the effects of a serious sinus infection, but I'm glad that you are getting better. You and Rayola are always so faithful to the Lord, and the enemy wants to strike. I so appreciate your ministry, and will indeed pray for you and ask God's richest blessings on your faithfulness." - MO

". . . really enjoyed every bit of the Discipleship Course. We also used at our Scripture Union meetings. God bless you." - Ghana

"Rayola's article was such a FREEING lesson. It made my heart jump with joy to read it! Needless to say, the face-to-face article was SPOT ON! These days, NO ONE wants to come face-to-face with the sin in their own life, and REPENT! They think that if they ignore it, it will go away. How sad! Another meal fit for a queen was delivered in the newsletter." - FL

"The article you [Jeannette] wrote was very good. I also read Rayola's article 'The Cover Up' and was tickled. I taught at our home group the other night about the importance of embracing our humanity and that God is actually pleased when we do. Also the article on 'The Gift of Holy Hatred' was good. I've been thinking a lot about what it means to have a heart of passion towards God and have realized that hatred of the things God hates is a big part of that (even hatred of the sin in ourselves)." - Email

Remember _____? Well, she is "looking" for a home church, and her COMPLETE criteria is what kind of youth group they have for her 15-year-old son!!! As long as he's HAVING FUN, it doesn't bother her one iota that he's NOT learning anything about God and discipleship!!! This kind of mindset is moronic! You gals are doing a TERRIFIC job keep up the good work, sticking with the foundation that has been laid centuries ago!!! - FL