***Spiritual Reversionism

Colossians 1:21-23

COL-168***

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2 Timothy 3:16: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

1 Corinthians 2:9-10: "Just as it is written, things which eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man all that God has prepared for those who love Him. For to us God revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God."

1 Corinthians 2:14-16: "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they're spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things. Yet he himself is appraised by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him. But we have the mind of Christ."

This morning, we direct your attention to the mind of Christ as it is recorded in Colossians 1:21-23. Our subject is "Reconciliation of the Colossians," segment number 13.

**Physical Nourishment**

Anyone who becomes physically ill loses his appetite to eat food, and he will gradually become weaker from malnutrition, and eventually, he will die, if that condition continues. Doctors, therefore, consider having a good appetite as a sign of progress toward good health. And they will, therefore, frequently ask you, "How's your appetite?" That is because it is a signal of good health. Sick people who will not, or cannot eat, will be force-fed to try to keep them alive. Without feeding, there will be no living. People who eat unhealthy foods, lacking in essential minerals and vitamins, will also deteriorate physically, because they're eating what is often referred to as "junk food."

**Spiritual Nourishment**

Now, this same principle of nourishment to sustain one's physical life is also true of the spiritual life. Christians who do not feed regularly upon the Word of God cannot maintain a healthy spiritual life. God has therefore provided the spiritual food of Bible doctrine to be dispensed through the expository preaching of the pastor-teacher in the church services, and through various agencies of the local church ministry, which, from that pulpit instruction, teach, at different levels and different organizational structures, the Word of God. Bible doctrine knowledge learned is, by positive volition, stored in the believer's human spirit, where it is cycled up to the mind of the soul as needed, as the mind of God, to guide the Christian's emotions, and his will.

Now this is an absolutely fantastic, marvelous arrangement that God has made. The world knows nothing about it. The world has no contact with it, and no capacity to do this. And this is what makes a normal human being. Any human being in whom this system does not function is an abnormality of the human race, and acts accordingly.

Very quickly, the instruction in doctrine comes into the mind of the human soul. You perceive it. We do this silently right now. During this service, you'll hear somethings, and you will say (I hope, most of the time), "Amen." But someplace along the line, it's almost certain you're going to hear something, and you're going to say, "Oh, I'm not sure about that," and a mental reservation will come up. That's called negative volition. Now, if that negative volition is to something that is false, that's good. But if that negative volition is to something that is true (it is indeed what the Word of God says), then to be negative is bad.

Alright? You learn the Word of God. You say, "I believe it." That's faith. Immediately, that knowledge becomes what the Bible calls "full knowledge." The Greek word is "epignosis." And you store it in the human spirit. And there it lays – all these categories of information. They are not filled. You cannot be guided very far in the Christian life. God does not give you whispers in your ear. He does not talk to you. This is the way he speaks (through the Bible). And if the word is not here, you've got nothing in order to guide you in life.

So, now do you see how serious it is not to be taught the Word of God? If you are not taught it, everything is out of focus. But the minute you're taught it (Walla!), it comes into focus. . . . Isn't that magical? No. That's the way God made it work. You may say, "I learn it from the TV preachers at home." Bunko. You may say, "I learn it from my sweet little friends. We gather in our little Bible class, and we open our Bibles, and we read this verse, and we say, 'What do you think it means, Sam? Susie?'" And they give us the mind of God. Bunko.

This is the way it works. This is the grace system of perception. The pastor-teacher, from God, through the Bible, gives the Word of God. You learn it. You say, "I take it." It's stored here. Then, as you need it, under the filling of the Holy Spirit (you're in temporal fellowship), up to your directive capacity of thinking comes the Word of God. And it directs your emotions in spiritual things, and in temporal things. It directs your volition to positive response. If not, the old sin nature . . . guides, and you do nothing but human good and sin. If positive, you do divine good, and you work the works of God.

People who are on positive volition are the ones who have a great heaven. People who are on negative volition most of their lives (at least you're there, but), it's not as great as it could be. And that's what 1 Corinthians 3 means about suffering loss or gain in heaven. If you don't know how the system works, I guarantee you're going to be over here in human good and sins, which is what is evil with God.

This is the tremendous capacity you have, but always there's this old sin nature: that deadly factor that's in you, to make you turn negative; to make you turn to human viewpoint; and, to make you act from human viewpoint in temporal and spiritual things. Now, the younger you are, the better it is for you to learn these things – to know that this is how God works. And what the world has to say is not true, and it is not good. What God has to say – that is true, and that is good. But if you have nothing here (if you're not where you're being instructed), then there's no hope.

Now that's how the system works. Doctrine is learned. By positive volition, it is received. It is stored by the human spirit. It is stored by the Holy Spirit in your human spirit, where the Holy Spirit will then cycle it up to the mentality of your soul, so that you can use it when you need it. Therefore, you'll be nobody's fool. If you don't have it, you'll be everybody's fool. That's the way it works. Your emotions will be under control, and your will, will be directed to what is successful. You'll appreciate what you should appreciate. You'll choose what you should choose.

So, without the regular intake of doctrine into the mentality of the soul, the believer will deteriorate spiritually, because that's his food. And he will become a spiritual casualty in the angelic warfare. You cannot mature spiritually on junk spiritual food either. You cannot mature on instruction which played to your emotions. You're not going to go anywhere with that. You cannot grow spiritually on religious manipulations of your will. That's what psychology does, and psychiatry does. There's only one way you grow spiritually, and that's how you're doing it right now – by learning the way the system works as explained in Scripture. No Christian makes it in the spiritual life without spiritual food. And he cannot be force-fed if he is negative to it. You can do that physically, but you can't force-feed a person spiritually. And that person will reveal his spiritual degeneration by his self-confidence; his love for Satan's lifestyle in the world; or, his indifference in the attendance at the church service for instruction. He will stay away from church at the drop of a hat, for any reason, and he won't think it's important.

When I was in China, the chaplain we had in our field artillery battery was a Roman Catholic. And he and I were sitting at supper one evening, and he knew that I was very serious about spiritual things. We would talk about them. And he says, "You know, you Protestants don't take seriously absence from church services. It doesn't matter if you're there or not." He says, "But we Catholics take it very seriously. If a Catholic does not attend a church service, it's a very serious matter, because there we perform the Mass where he can eat the body and drink the blood of Christ. And if he does not do that, he'll not go to heaven."

Well, he is mistaken that that's what he's doing in the Mass, but he's right as to what they're teaching their people. And I don't care whether some Marine came off of a drunken spree the night before, tearing up the town, if he's a Roman Catholic, the next day, he's up there eating the Mass. He's up there taking the whole thing in, because this is how he makes it with God. It is no by faith in Christ, but faith in the church organization. Well, the chaplain was wrong about the fact of the Protestant being irrelevant whether he attends church or not. That often is the case when the pastor-teacher is not doing his job. But when he is, it's a very serious matter not to be in the church service.

People are going to find in eternity, I'm telling you, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, they're probably going to put up all the times when you were absented when you could have been there. And then they will say, "This is what you lost: so much this; so much this; and, so much this, because I'll tell you: about the time you think you shouldn't be at a church service, that's when they're going to teach you something, and you are the person who needs to know it. Even if you blow it off, at least you'll have a chance.

So for this reason, no Christian can make it without the spiritual food that comes to him from those instructions in the church service. And for this reason, God has placed the pastor-teacher in each local church, and given him the very grave responsibility of teaching the Word of God to his congregation.

This is pointed out, for example, in 1 Peter 5:1-3: "I exhort the elders (that is, the pastor-teachers) among you, as your fellow-elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed: shepherd the flock." And the word "shepherd" in the Greek means "feed" them. "Feed the flock of God among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God, and not for sordid gain (not for the money), but for eagerness. Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock." You do the job because you're called there. You feed the people of God because they cannot survive without it. And you don't do it because of personal gain.

I asked the men who are working on the parsonage whether now, since they had it finished and looking so splendidly, they were going to raise the rent. And they said, that's exactly why we're doing it. But I'm still going to have to stay and continue. That was a joke. You do it because the people of God are going to die spiritually. Whoa, whoa. How can you die spiritually once you're born-again? You won't die in separation from God, but you will die in separation from fellowship. Don't forget that being out of fellowship is a form of spiritual separation. That is a form of spiritual death.

Also, in 2 Timothy 4:1-5, there is very clear declaration to the pastor-teacher: "I solemnly charge you, in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing in His kingdom, preach the Word." That's it. Pastor-teacher, preach the Word. Explain the Word – expository preaching. That's the only thing the Bible says you have to do as a pastor: "Be ready in season and out of season." That means when the people are ready to listen, and when they're not: "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, and with great patience and instructions," because you'll have a bunch of dunderheads, sooner or later, who can't get the picture. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But you be sober in all things (dignity). Endure hardship; do the work of the evangelist; and, fulfill your ministry." How can you fulfill your ministry? By feeding the flock on the Word of God. If you don't do that, you have no ministry. You have fulfilled nothing.

On the other hand, God also commands the believers to attend their local church services to be fed the spiritual food, without which they cannot survive in the devil's world. They must have the Word of God to have the mind of Christ.

Hebrews 10:23-25: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. For he who promised is faithful." God said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved." You'll go to heaven, and that's true. God does not lie. Hang onto it: "And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds" – Christians encouraging one another: "Not forsaking our own assembling together (the local church service), as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day (the day of the rapture) drawing near."

If people see you in church regularly, I guarantee you that they're going to be encouraged to be there, especially if you're a person with some position of authority or responsibility in the church. They see you there, and boy, that's the thing to do. New people come into a church organization. They don't quite know what to do. People who come to us, one of the first problems they have here is Sunday night service. "What is this Sunday night service? We don't go to Sunday night service. We've grown beyond that." Or else they get it so early that it's a kiss and a promise, and that's it. It's a great disgrace to a local congregation when it does not close the Lord's Day with a service – with an instructional program. What else is the day for? What else should the day be devoted to except the Word of God? Nothing can be more important than that.

This is also confirmed for us in Acts 2:42, where the early Christians were described as: "continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching." That's all. That's why they gathered on Sundays. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. Then they had a time of fellowship which was breaking bread (the Lord's Supper), and prayer, but that's what it was all about.

So, God's word makes it clear that a normal human being must have both physical and spiritual food to be able to survive in life. Jesus pointed this out to Satan in Matthew 4:4 when he said, "It is written, man shall not live on bread alone (He does need that, but not alone), but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Do not get tired. I pray that this emphasis on the importance of the Word of God is repeated to you. It is the easiest thing in the world to forget. If you're going to have good physical health, you have to have good physical health habits in the food you eat; in the nutrition you take; and, the exercise that you do. And in spiritual good health, you must have expository preaching instruction that you receive with positive volition, and you must stay in temporal fellowship, so that God the Holy Spirit can teach you.

Isn't it terrible? Isn't it awful to think that you know a great deal about the Word of God? You've been very receptive to God's principles of truth. And they're all down there in your human spirit. And then you are stepping out of Christian fellowship. And right here, at the critical point, you're about to ready to break a moral code of God, or you're about ready to act a fool in some relationship of life, and there's a big short circuit. The whole thing is broken – right there. And the Holy Spirit is trying to shove up the information from your human spirit to warn you, and to call your attention to the disaster you're about ready to do. And the whole thing is broken there, because you are out of temporal fellowship. That's madness.

So, even those of you who are serious about the Word of God – you're not immune. You're not immune because of what you know. And one time, in the book of James, that's pointed out early on: "Do not be hearers of the word only, but doers." It's not enough to know. Be doers. But you can't do what you don't know to do, and you can't do if the Spirit of God is not there to help you to do it.

This is why we say you are saved by an act of faith in Christ. You're saved by grace. But we are also led spiritually by an act of Christ through the Holy Spirit. The spiritual life is by grace. We still have people who think that if they don't do certain things, they're going to be spiritual. If they don't go to certain places, they're going to be spiritual. If they don't wear certain cloths, they're going to be spiritual. If they don't talk in certain ways, they're going to be spiritual. All those things are important, but those do not come from some legalistic effort on your part. You don't keep rules to be saved. The Mormons think so. The Catholics think so. You are saved by what God has done. And you do not become spiritual by things you do, but by what Christ does through the Word of God with the leading of the Holy Spirit. So expository preaching; positive volition; and, staying in temporal fellowship – that's a winning team.

Now, sometimes the local church that is available to you is not fully doing its job of teaching the Word. I know that, and I don't know what the answer is all the time to that. I do know that the answer is not to cut out of attending church someplace. That's bad. You don't cut out, and don't attend church somewhere. You don't say, "Well, I get tapes from Berean Church. I don't need to go to church." That is a sign of spiritual degeneration. And this is bad for yourself; it's bad for your family; it is bad for other Christians that are around you; and, it is bad for people to whom you could be a testimony if you were there in that congregation.

We have people at a distance who are in that condition. They're in places that they know are not what they should be as churches. But they're going around handing out Berean tape catalogs. Jack Smith is always causing trouble in Kentucky, in a hundred-mile circle around him. But he says that for a 100-mile circle you may draw around Wingo, Kentucky there is not one place (and he travels all over) where people get what they get in the expository preaching at Berean Church. The one thing all these churches and Christians and people need is the one thing they don't get for 100 miles around. So, he goes out and gets into a church, and starts handing out catalogs. And pretty soon, we've got a new name coming through. And sometimes, we have a new name written down in glory, because they get the introductory tape on salvation. Now they know how to go to heaven. And suddenly, there are people who are being fed from this little congregation – hundreds and hundreds of people who will hear what you are hearing this morning. And the Word of God makes those people alive spiritually, and it sustains them just as it does all of us.

So, no matter where you are, God's institution of the local church must be respected. And you operate, whatever you have to, the best you can. And you take up the lack through something like our tapes. Make up your instruction, but don't cut out. Everybody loses that way. What you need to do is to grow up spiritually, and then fight the good fight, wherever God has placed you. That is the biblical pattern.

Hebrews 5:13-14: "For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the Word of righteousness, for he is a babe." Baby Christians have to have baby food. "But solid (steak) food is for the mature, who, because of practice, have their senses trained to discern good and evil." The practice of taking in doctrine then gives you the experience of knowing how to discern between good and evil.

Now, don't be crushed because some people do not respond to your invitation to the Word of God. I know what that is. That's one place I do have a little discernment. I can look into the eyes of a youngster, or an adult, and I can see the glazed eyeballs. I can see the jaded rejection of the Word of God. I can see the on-guard reticence when some instruction is being given. But your job is to give them a chance. Tell them that this is what God thinks, and that their friends are wrong.

1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

**Spiritual Reversionism**

2 Timothy 2:24-26" "And the Lord's bond servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all; able to teach; patient when wronged; and, with gentleness, correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses, and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." You stay there; you give your testimony; and, you hope that these people will come to their senses to escape the snare of the devil in which they've been held captive. How have they been held captive? Not because they're not going to heaven, but because they're not feeding on the Word of God, and they're descending to a horrible condition of reversionism as a result of spiritual malnutrition.

We are called upon as Christians to the life of separation, but to the life of testimony as the ambassadors of God. Be a stable Christian whose integrity is intact. Got that? Whose integrity is intact.

I loved it when one of my members said something one time to me. Somebody was trying to get him into a business deal, and there was a bit of illegality involved. And he was invited to be in collusion to an act of illegality. And he said to me, "I just didn't feel I should do that." He said, "Nobody would know it. And the man that was talking to me, he's a Christian too, and he says, 'Nobody will know it. We can do it this way.'" And he said, "My response was, 'But I'll know it. And God will know it.'" That matter of integrity is a big thing.

The devil was right when he said to God, "You take all the money away from Job, and a man will give his life for his skin. He'll do anything." God says, "That may be true of a lot of people (and it is), but it's not true of my man Job. My man Job – His riches are in the Word of God." Please remember that the book of Job was written 500 years before Genesis, and it's filled with some of the deepest theological concepts to be found anywhere in the Bible. Job was no dummy. He was head-and-shoulders above most of us in his knowledge of doctrine. And Job lost the money. He lost everything. But he never lost the most valuable thing he had: his personal integrity. So, God could do nothing but bless this man, even more so, after the testing period was over.

So, be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Be stable. Pursue your mission to fulfill your mission in life. And remember that that is what life is all about – to fulfill that mission to which God has called you. And you keep your eyes on the Lord. The only way you do that is when you have spiritual strength.

Matthew 6:33: "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all things that you need and want in life, and should have, will be added unto you."

1 Timothy 6:3-14 are a very sobering piece of information to feeding upon the Word of God, and living a life separated from the world to Jesus Christ. Paul is championing the principles of doctrine: "If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with the sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness (doctrine which produces godly living), he is conceited, and understands nothing. But he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise: envy; strife; abusive language; evil suspicions; and, constant friction between men of depraved mind, and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with those, we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil, and some, by longing for it, have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of eternal life to which you were called, and to which you made a good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate: that you keep the commandments without stain or reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is no way you're going to do that if the system of grace perception (learning doctrine) does not function in the life, and you are not functioning on this system of positive volition to the Word of God, and storage of doctrinal truth in your human spirit. You will not live a godly life. There is nothing to pump you up to keep you from being just another clown of the world.

1 Timothy 6:14-19: "That you keep the commandments without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time. He, Who is the Blessed and only Sovereign, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Who alone possesses immortality, and dwells in unapproachable light, who no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, Who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good; to be rich in good works; and, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life, indeed." We are to live life in such a way that treasures are stored in heaven.

All that comes because you have fed yourself spiritually. And when that is not there, and when what you have heard here is not your experience, and your heart doesn't cry out, "Amen, amen, hallelujah," it is because you are spiritually starved. It is not because you haven't heard. But it is from negative volition. So it's never gotten down into that human spirit storage.

**Separation from the World**

It is separation from the world (2 Corinthians 6:14, 15, 17-18). What do we have with the world? What association do we have? Nothing. In 1 Corinthians 2:14, Christians are described as acting like "natural men" (the unsaved).

In our passage in Ephesians 4:17-19, which has been expanded from our statement in Colossians 1:21, where the apostle Paul warned the Colossian Christians not to fall back to living the way they used to. Ephesians 4:17-19 has given us that terrible, terrible descent into complete reversionism: the mind devoid of all doctrine, and empty of divine light; the mind filled in with human viewpoint of Satan; and, the mind becomes spiritual darkness. The mind becomes hard and insensitive toward God in the soul. The mind is ignorant then of the will of God. Christians are then excluded from all spiritual maturity. They may think that they're in the know, but they've lost their way.

**A Carnal Christian**

They're what 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 calls a fleshly or carnal Christian. The soul of the believer has developed callouses toward God in the mind, and the emotions, and the will. Spiritual malnutrition then sets in, and the result is a rapid descent into reversion. Then God help the family of that person. God help the friend of that person. God help the fellow church members of that person, who has descended into this kind of spiritual malnutrition. The result is total enslavement to the sin nature, like Demas. The result is love for the world's way of life, like Lot. The result is being occupied with planning for a luxurious future, like the rich man building bigger barns. And they'll do it every time. They'll become slaves of the sin nature like Demas, and they'll go off there into the world. They'll be occupied with the world's way of life. They just want to be part of the world, just like Lot did in Sodom and Gomorrah. And they'll want to be planning for their future, being sure they have something for their future, just like the man with the bigger barns who died that night.

Spiritual insanity then sets in, and the carnal Christian descends into sensual immorality; disloyalty; deceits; self-centeredness; lack of lovingkindness; and, loss of his Christian manhood or womanhood. The soul is calloused toward God the Father. The Christian is enslaved to sensual experiences.

At that point, all Christian dignity is lost. Shame and disgrace will then reign in the life of that believer. The Christian, at this point, is getting very close to the sin unto death, which is the last straw of reversionism with God. All sense of Christian separation from the world system is gone.

Then what happens? What Luke 9:23-25 tell a Christian never to allow this to happen. It then happens: "And He was saying to them all (Jesus), 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself (get his eyes off himself, and get his eyes on the Lord), take up his cross (that is, his mission for which he was born), and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life (to use it in his way) shall lose it. But whoever loses his life for My sake (in My business), he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses (or forfeits) himself?" Nothing. And yet, how many Christians (we're going to find out) have lost their lives at the Judgment Seat of Christ. They just blew it all off because they were so deeply involved in the world they never could separate from.

In Ephesians 4:19, the end of the verse gives us the end of the line of the calloused soul. Two horrible, terrible conditions now ensue. And we are talking about the carnal (the fleshly) Christian. Ephesians 4:19 says, "And they, having become calloused, have given themselves over to sensuality" – every immorality, and they have given themselves over to every sensuality (immoral practices) for the practice of every kind of impurity." The word "practice" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the word "ergasia" (er-gas-ee'-ah), E R G A S I A. And the word "ergasia" means "making a business." Isn't that interesting? Somebody in the New Testament said, "I'm going to go into business. I'm going to go into an 'ergasia.'" Someone might have said, "Oh, are you? What kind of business are you going into?" And the man would describe what he's going to do. They have made a business. This Christian now makes a business.

Now, what do you do in a business? You think about it. You go to bed thinking about it. You think about something in the middle of the night. You get up the next morning, and you're going to work on it: "I have to take care of that." Your business is something that you pay attention to, and you pursue with a zeal. And what is the business (the practice)? Every kind of impurity. And that word is "akatharsia" (ak-ath-ar-see'-ah) A K A T H A R S I A. And "akatharsia" means every kind of impurity imaginable – every filthy thing. And it covers whatever is in the mind, and whatever you do outside – every dirty, lowdown, filthy thing. Can you believe this? That a Christian can descend to the point where his business (the thing he's preoccupied with, and the thing that moves him through the day) is to perform every filthy thing imaginable? The things you can hear on all the talk shows?

A calloused soul makes a business of all moral uncleanness. It destroys the business of inner happiness. Why? How did that happen? By not feeding upon the Word of God. Spiritual malnutrition destroys you. Don't tell me that the Catholic chaplain in China was right. I think that Father Mulkaney was his name. But only Ken and I understand that joke. But anyhow, he was wrong. It's important when Protestants don't come to church, if they're getting fed the Word of God. It's disastrous. A Christian can do that?

Okay, kids, wake up. Some of you are fortunate that you have godly parents who are standing up to you. Some of our parents are so godly that even when your bodies get big, they're not afraid of you. They know that you're nothing but a puny peanut inside, until you really become an adult. And they tell you what to do, and what not to do. And they don't let you be a whining wimp. They want you to stand up like a real man or a real woman, as a prince and a princess of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you should thank God when you have parents like that. Otherwise, you can become a person (and as you grow older, you will meet people like this) whose life is nothing but everything that is degraded and low down. That's what they are. Calloused Christians then have no inner happiness. It's been destroyed. So, what do they do? Well, they search for happiness in various ways. They look for it in fame. They look for it in power. They look for it in success. They look for it in materialism. They look for it in every kind of sensuality. They look for it in speaking in tongues. They look for it in miraculous works and miracles. They look for it in asceticism on the other side, and not doing certain things.

**Gnosticism**

Please remember that one of the first heresies in the Christian church was a thing called gnosticism. Gnosticism said that everything that has to do with material things was evil. The human body is made up of material things, so the human body is evil. In order to get rid of evil, one branch of gnosticism said that the way to get rid of evil is to do every filthy wrong thing you can. And then you'll flush it out of your system. So, the Gnostics were coming into Christian churches, saying to Christians, "Just be as dirty and lowdown as you can. Make a business of every filthy thing that you can do, and you'll become a really godly person." I wonder where they got that idea.

**Greediness**

Then the final thing was that they made a business of every kind of impurity, and they do it with greediness. And boy, is this a word that tells us something? And please remember that I don't know what God has to say except through these words (in the Bible). This is the Greek words that tell us what God the Holy Spirit has to say. Then we can tell you what it says, and you'll know what He thinks. Well, the Greek word for "greediness" is "pleonexia (pleh-on-ex-ee'-ah), P L E O N E X I A. This word "pleonexia" means "an insatiable, frantic, chasing about to find happiness." You're greedy, greedy, greedy for something that's going to satisfy. You are running about trying to find happiness, which their business of filthy living has driven out all happiness. So, they're running around, trying this, and trying that, to find happiness.

The Christian here is so spiritually calloused that he cannot respond in happiness with true love to God; no true love to the opposite sex; and, no true love to his friends. All true happiness ultimately depends on being able to be capable of genuine love. And that depends upon having a capacity of the Word of God to function in your life because your human spirit is full of doctrinal principles. Nobody loves who is not filled with the principles of the Word of God. Without doctrine in the mentality of the soul you are nothing. Proverbs 23:7: "As a man thinks, that's the way he is."

So, what's wrong with you girls when you take to your bosom some guy who's not even a Christian? Or somebody who is a low life carnality out in one of the nice little religious churches? And he's devoid of all spiritual doctrinal understanding in his human spirit. And after a little bit of association, you know it, and you say, "It's okay for me to be friends with this person." This person is an enemy of God. Why would you be friends with him? You just might get your just deserts. The guy might marry you. And then you can live with a pig, and see how you like living with that kind of a slippery animal. You just might get the just deserts, and marry a woman like that, and then see what kind of a slippery animal that is – one who has no capacity to have intimacy with you, or with God.

You young people who are parents, who take seriously their business of rearing you in godliness, have a lot to thank them for. And the one thing you don't want to do (don't ever do) is use the word "why" to your parents. When they tell you to do something, or when they tell you not to do something, never say, "Why?" And especially, don't say it in a whiny way. On my school bus, the kids, the last couple of weeks, were wanting to ride in the very back. So, because I am always a man of gracious heart, I didn't say anything. We have a big mirror on those, like you have on the side, such that I could see everything. And then they started punching each other, and horsing around. So, the next week, when they got on the bus, I said, "No one can sit in the last two seats of the bus." So, they would be up close behind me.

Well, one first-or-second-grade girl said, "WHY?" Boy, was I glad she said that? I said, "Because I said so." She was wanting to say, "I'm an authority. I can tell you what to do. I can debate with you. I want an explanation from you. I want to know why you're telling me this. And if I don't like it, I'm not going to do it." And the other kid said, "Sit down." They knew what to say: "Sit down and shut up. Someday you'll know why."

However, none of that is going to come on the part of the parents or part of the children if your human spirit has not been fed upon the Word of God. If you have nothing but spiritual malnutrition, God pity you; your family; your friends; everybody around you; and, everybody who has any contact with you. You'll waste your life instead of storing treasures in heaven. You will deny the people who need everything from you the most of all. And you'll not be able to deliver it, because you yourself do not have the spiritual feeding.

One last thing: Some of you thought that at Thanksgiving, on Thanksgiving Day, you could get this eating business behind you once and for all. So, you went at it with both hands and full mouth, and you stuffed yourself. And then somebody said, "Could you have a little more?" And you said, "No, I never want to eat again." And they asked, "How about a little sandwich? We have some of this turkey left." And you said, "No, don't ever bring any food to me again." But come the next day, you were elbowing your way up to the trough again. You can't feed yourself once-and-for-all on food to finish the job. Some of you try it repeatedly. And you can't do it spiritually either. You cannot live on yesterday's leftovers in spiritual matters. Each day is a new day with the Lord. Each day is a new beginning. And each day is a new day of feeding upon the Word of God, and a refreshing of the mind of Christ within you. Well, which way do you want to do it?

Dear God, our Father, we thank You that the Word of God has taught us, and we pray for capacity to obey it. May we live the life of Christ in us, the hope of glory. We pray in His Name. Amen."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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