***Moral Breakdown

Colossians 1:21-23

COL-170***

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Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2 Peter 1:19: "And so we have the prophetic Word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns, and the morning star rises in your hearts."

2 Peter 1:20-21: "But know this first – that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

1 Corinthians 3:19-20: "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness. And again, the Lord knows the reasonings of the wise – that they are useless."

Please turn with me in your Bibles this morning to the book of Colossians as we continue our study in Colossians 1:21-23. Our subject is "Reconciliation of the Colossians, segment number 15.

**Moral Breakdown**

It is not unusual for me to receive phone calls from Berean tapers asking for advice on how to deal with spiritual breakdowns of some church-age believer in their circle of their acquaintance. The sadness and the agony over a moral breakdown of a brother or a sister is evident to me in the voices of the callers. These people are in touch with us because they listen to our tapes, and they have a confidence that perhaps we can give them some guidance through the Word of God in these moments of real serious distress.

It's hard for anyone to comprehend the descent into spiritual reversion of a fellow believer who is doctrinally in the know. But it's an act of personal choice, and the Bible is filled with godly people who made the choice to go the road of evil. And you look at this, and you say, "Why?" Often, these people had everything in the world that they could ask for. And yet, at some point something happens. Something is triggered. Something of the structure of human relationships goes adrift, or goes amiss, and a person does the unthinkable. The shameful and the self-destructive course of sin that some Christians choose, and the circle of injury to family and friends makes little sense.

What's the cause? The desire of spiritual Christians on such an occasion is to help restore a fallen believer to temporal fellowship with God, and to a godly life of divine good service once more. In other words, they want to deal with people so that they will repent, forgive, forget, and move on.

Now, this objective is the subject of our study here in Ephesians 4:20-32. This deals with the Christian who has had the moral (the spiritual) breakdown. And then it goes on in this section to explain how to go back. It's bad to break down. It's worse not to know how to go back. And how to go back is so very important. We have gone in considerable detail, in Ephesians 4:17-19, and followed the steps down into the degeneration of reversionism.

All of those times that all of us here may look back upon at this moment, and wonder why we made that choice. Why did we get associated with this person? Why did we get involved with this organization? Why did we gradually compromise with a biblical principle that we knew was God's thinking. And instead, we played ball with the world's thinking. Why did we allow a child to do what we allowed that child to do? Why didn't we exercise better judgment in the people that we decided to marry, and maybe not to marry? Our lives are filled with looking back and wondering how that happened.

Now, very often the saddest part about that is that it didn't happen to some ignoramus. It didn't happen to somebody who didn't know the Word of God. It happened to somebody who, knowing the Word of God, permitted a system of Satan to be set in motion in their lives. And pretty soon, they found themselves on the slippery slope downward.

Now, the worst problem is the source of your information. If you do not appreciate the biblical call for separation from the world, and that means the human beings that make up the world, you're in big trouble. There is a great deal of attraction. Every now and then, one of my relatives, in chatting with me on the phone says, "Oh, we're going to Las Vegas." I say, "You're going to Las Vegas?" They're all excited: "It's wonderful. Las Vegas is a glamorous place. It's the place to be." Well, in reality, it's a cesspool. Who would want to live in Las Vegas? And these people are all excited about it. I guess it's an easy way to make a living though. With all the casinos, you just make money. You always win.

One time, I traveled from Chicago to visit my wife's relative in Minnesota. I had just gotten back from China. And I noticed that every gas station had a one-arm bandit (a slot machine). So I thought, "I wonder how does one win with a slot machine?" And they were only 10-cent jobs. And I concluded that people played the slot machine until they've run out, and the machine is just ready to kick. And that's when they quit. So I put a dime in, and I won. And I didn't do another thing. The next time we stopped for the gas, there was another one. I put my dime in, and I won. I did it several times right in a row – until I lost it all. Some sucker quit before he had spent his money, and he let me do it. Otherwise, I'd have been living in Las Vegas right now.

I mean, it's crazy what people think is wonderful, because it's the world's glamor. And we don't look at the world and say, "You are the enemy of our God, and therefore, you are our enemy. And we do not think that Satan's world is attractive in any sense whatsoever. If you do that, then you are a sitting duck, ready for the kind of spiritual breakdown, such that I get these sad calls from people who say, "What can you suggest to us, and how to handle this?"

Spiritual breakdown of a believer is caused by the victory of Satan in imposing his thinking on the mentality of the Christian soul. That's the bottom line. If you get that through your head, you'll have the first step toward protection. Spiritual breakdown of a believer is caused by the victory of Satan in imposing his thinking on the mentality of the Christian soul. The devil always goes after the mind of the believer. That is the target of Satan in his attacks all the time.

That is why the apostle Paul ended the book of Romans, in part, with the serious, final warning in Romans 16:19, when he said, "For the report of your obedience has reached to all (these Christians in Rome). Therefore, I'm rejoicing over you." Obedience to what? Obedience to the Word of God that they have been taught. They had doctrinal integrity. They were not hypocrites. They learned, and they took it seriously.

Then Paul says, "That's good. But I want you to remember this so that there'll be no spiritual moral breakdown. You're to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil." What a principle! It would be good if you could get your children just to believe that: "I don't want to know anything that is evil. I don't want you to tell me about evil things. I don't want to watch these talk programs that deal with evil. But I do want you to tell me about the things that are good, and the things that are godly.

Now, that brings you right up against the people you associate with, whatever your age level is. If you associate with people that are constantly pumping in what is evil of the world system into the mentality of your soul, it's contaminating you. If you associate with believers who are pumping into your soul the godly things of the Word of God, that's going to ennoble your soul. Instead of living by the wisdom of the mind of God through doctrine, the Christian goes negative to the Word of God. He goes negative to the Bible itself as a book of authority. And he lives, then, by the mind of Satan, under the control of his sin nature. Instead of feeding on the divine viewpoint of doctrine, he feeds on the human viewpoint of the world; the sin nature; and, all of the things that are contaminating around him.

This indifference to Scripture hardens the facets of one's soul against God the Father: in mind; in will; and, in emotions. Christians forget to maintain carefully their personal separation from Satan's world organization, and the people who are part of it. You don't do things the way the world does. You don't make promises you don't keep. You don't walk around pretending that, in your case, you can finagle something with no problem. You don't play with the potential dangers of Satan, who is a serpent, under the guise that you can break the rules of God, even in simple little ways, and not bitten.

The last time we were down at Padre Island with the campout (with our older clubs' campout), I noticed a snake. And I got curious, and I came up closer to look at him. And I saw that he had something in his mouth. And what he had in his mouth headfirst was a lizard. Now, that lizard probably was lonely. There were no other lizards around there, that I could see, to play with. So, he saw this snake. He knew who this snake was. And he knew how snakes like to eat other lizards. So, he came around and gave him a little jab, and ran around, and tweaked this snake's tail. And he said, "Oh, this is great fun. I'm careful. I won't have any problems." And then he came around to the front, and the snake pretended that he was not interested, and all of a sudden, he opened his mouth, and grabbed the head of that lizard. And then, he's sitting there. And, of course, his jaws get wider. And I'd see him open his jaws, and pull another quarter-inch. And the lizard's feet are kicking, and his tail is swishing. And I didn't know what to do. I didn't know whether I should kill the snake and save the little lizard, because (you know) all life is sacred. But then I didn't know if I killed the snake, I might be killing somebody's uncle. If I let the lizard be eaten before my very eyes, there goes somebody's auntie down the gullet. It was a very traumatic moment for me. But that's how the devil works. You play with him, and he sits there with his semi-closed eyes. And then he snaps. This is a breakdown of acting the way the world acts. It is a breakdown of saying, "I'll compromise with what I know to be true."

This is what is so appalling – that Christians, who know that they're being shortchanged in their spiritual lives, will still attend and support organizations that never feed them the Word of God – in fact, that work exactly against them because it feeds them things to their emotions rather than to the divine viewpoint of their minds. And years will go by, and people will tear themselves to shreds before they finally wake up and say, "Wait a minute. Why in the world am I sitting here, listening to this glamorous, famous person, and getting beaten around like a soccer ball by the devil? Because I'm a sitting duck for him.

Spiritual breakdown – Paul says, "I don't even want you to know about what is evil. I want you to know what is good, and that should fill your mind. Feed on God's point of view. Do not let yourself get hardened in your soul. So, Christians forget to separate themselves from the world system. And parents are very guilty often. I observe parents so often who do not appreciate the enormous potential of danger in the world system. I see them letting their young people go off to outings with other kids, with no adult present, and no adult Supervision. The worst combination is one boy and one girl in the car. And they're off. And their parents say, "Oh yeah, that's all right. You're nice person. You're not going to do anything you shouldn't.

In a wiser age, people who wanted to get married didn't date. That's an American custom. It's alien to Scriptures too. They didn't date. What they did was court one another. And that meant that they went over to visit a potential spouse: a potential wife; or, a potential husband. And while they were there visiting, the family was there. There was a mother, or a father, or a grandmother – somebody was always there. They didn't just get in the car and go off to some restaurant together, and whatever else. You didn't do dating. You did courting. And the result was that there was a controlled situation to be able to let the mind of God guide your mind in the decision-making of a major factor of your life. That is because once you step out of the order of spiritual intimacy; soul intimacy; and, then body intimacy, you're going to pick the wrong person. And you'll do it every time. And you cannot break these laws of God with impunity. Sometimes the results are so permanent that you can't get rid of them. Other times, there's always the injury and the memory.

So, what we're telling you is: when you have authority over someone, let that person get into a position where most adults can't handle it, let alone some youthful person raging in the prime of the enthusiasm of life. This was commonplace. I'm not making this up. This is just the way it was. I never knew anything else. And I'm amazed how things have changed. And parents now have lost their own memory of how to see that their teenagers associate with one another, and never on their own.

You might say, "Well, that'll give them the impression that I don't trust them." No it won't. It'll give them the impression that you don't trust the world; that you don't trust the devil; and, that you don't trust the mentality of their potentially unsaved or carnal friends. That's what you don't trust. And it will give them the impressions that you recognize that it takes maturity to be able to handle that, at best.

So, the spiritual breakdowns – that I get these calls from, I know where it started. It started right up here in the head. Satan went right for it, and the thinking was warped, and twisted, and unprepared, and went right down the tube with the devil's world. Fallen believers generally (almost always) do not have a healthy fear of the sin nature. And that's what I'm saying. And id the parents don't fear the sin nature in themselves and in their children, then they'll act without any sense.

It takes a very courageous person, because they're going to give you: "Why?" And they're going to say, "Other parents do." They're going to tell you everything that's irrelevant. And what you need to do is stand in the breach.

People who get in trouble do not appreciate the potential power of the sin nature, and its destructive deceits, and the result is victory for Satan, and he has a great time of glee. The sin nature is in all of us. It'll be there. It is potential. It is horrendous. And what it does is destroy the potential of a life.

It's worthwhile, once in a while, to review (as Peter tells us to do) what we know. The sin nature produces two things. It produces acts of sin. And it produces acts of human good works. What our society calls compassion, for which many socialist programs are designed, come right out of the devil's mind as human good works. And the Bible says that you will lose rewards in heaven, as a Christian, for all the human good works you do; that is, works triggered by your sin nature and not by the Holy Spirit. And you'll lose in heaven for your sins that are unconfessed. And if you are an unbeliever, the more human good you have, the greater will be your suffering in the lake of fire. Isn't that something? The more you spent your life producing human good, produced by the sin nature, because it is tainted, the greater your suffering will be. It's the enemy of God. It's what Adam put into us.

Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin, which so easily entangles us. And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." He's speaking to believers here. He is saying that you're surrounded by a cloud of witnesses – people who are observing. And you have something in you that is inclined as a propensity to do evil: sin. Set it aside, because sin will tie your hands in receiving the blessings of God, and in making your life count for eternity.

Mark 7:21-23 is even more explicit: "For from within" – out of the heart. What is the heart? "Within the heart man believes." The Bible says. It's the mind: "For from within the mind of men proceed the evil thoughts: fornications; thefts; murders; adulteries; deeds of coveting; and wickedness, as well as deceit; sensuality; envy; slander; pride; and, foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." This is not speaking of unbelievers only, because the Christian takes the sin nature into the Christian life with him. So, here's a horrendous factor within us. It's working 24 hours a day. This is the thing that, if you permit this to govern, this is what you'll produce. This is this horrendous list of sins. This is what you'll produce.

Now God has solved that problem. 1 Peter 2:24 gives us the divine solution: "And He (Jesus Christ) Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin, and live to righteousness, for by His wounds you were healed." He has solved the problem of sin. He paid the price for it, and when he paid the price for it, that means that, as a Christian, you are no longer enslaved to sin, unless you choose to be. You don't have to be. The unbeliever does.

On the other hand, there are some people who are very nice people, and they come through with a totally different picture. We call that the area of strength of the sin nature. From this comes our human righteousness. There's the great verse that Isaiah observed in Isaiah 64:6, when he said, "For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment, and all of us wither like a leaf, and all of our iniquities, like the wind, take us away." All of our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.

Now, how in the world can God say such a thing to a believer: "All of your good works is a dirty filthy garment?" And I tell you, the Hebrew is very offensive there, in the filthy garments it's speaking of. How can he say that – of a Christian? Because it's always potentially there. The sin nature can always get you to produce human good works.

Now, at the cross, these works were rejected by Christ. He handled those too for us. Titus 3:5, "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing by the Holy Spirit." He saved us by just wiping out and ignoring all of our good deeds. He just completely set them aside. He rejected them. He condemned them.

Now these two factors of the sin nature together: an area of weakness which produces sins; and, an area of strength which produces human good, put together, are what the Bible calls evil. And that is the evil that is driving the minds of most people that you know of.

Now, people have different kinds of sin natures. One kind is the kind to legalism. This is the person who is dealing with asceticism. They don't do certain things. They like to keep the Mosaic Law. They are very legalistic to get the favor of God. And they create a good image. Hebrews 6:1 describes that.

On the other hand, you have the hell-raiser. He takes the freedom of grace and uses it as a license for lasciviousness and sensuality. And Ephesians 4:19 (that we studied) told us about that. Jude 4 also speaks of that. And that person is a very wicked image.

Now, this will fool you sometime. The good moral people who end up in hell have a sin nature that is powerful on the good image side. And it's hard for us to believe that those people are not going to be in heaven. It's not so hard for those who have a sin nature which is on a very wicked side.

Now, when two people marry who are unbelievers, if they marry where one has a good image, and the other has a wicked image characteristic, those people are going to be in a lot of conflict. So, if you're an unbeliever, and you know that you're a legalist, and you like to play asceticism, and keep rules, then try to marry somebody like that. You won't have so much conflict. If you're a person that goes out for the sinful lifestyle, the marry someone who does that. Then you won't have so much conflict. It doesn't matter which side, because they're both condemned by God. And the results are going to be disastrous either way. That is the sin nature. That is the thing we're talking about – this thing that will produce these horrible sins, this thing which will fool you by producing something that looks so good. That's why you have to know who is leading you. And if the sin nature is leading you, it's of no merit with God.

So, a Christian who is at the super-grace level of maturity can gradually exchange that divine viewpoint of God for the human viewpoint of Satan. Unconfessed sin always festers. Unconfessed sin keeps festering, and keeps bringing that person down. What happens is that he degenerates into spiritual darkness of the world's human viewpoint. Then you lose your way with God. You're following the same thing that the world does. That's why you cannot, especially you ladies, go into a store to buy clothing, and not filter it through the mind of Christ. You cannot just look at what's the style, and what's up on the shelf, and put that on. And I notice that the little shorty skirts are so demean women are seemingly coming back to be the style.

I remember the last time the short skirts went out, one girl said was horrified. They were interviewing her on TV, and she said, "If they stop those shorty skirts, I'm going to commit suicide."

Well, I don't think she did, but she had to give up that style. She didn't know what dignity it added to her. You cannot just live in this world, and say, "They're going to make the decisions that are right." They're not. They're going to make what is wrong for you, because the devil is behind it with his sneaky little slanted eyes. His cat-like eyes are watching you, ready to pounce.

However, the calls that I get are about Christians. Here's a Christian at super-grace level. And all of a sudden, they're down here in the pigsty. The person suddenly lacks a spiritual maturity structure because he is now in spiritual ignorance. His soul is hard toward God. He gives himself over to sensuality as a planned business. He plans the sensuality he's going to do. He lays it out, expressed in the practice of every moral vileness. And with greediness, he satiates himself with evil. And he's able to rationalize this conduct which is forbidden by God.

I'm talking about a Christian. Paul is talking about a Christian. How can that happen? It happens because you do not feed upon the Word of God. You're negative to doctrinal principles, and you choose to let unconfessed sin fester in your soul. And you choose to accept the standards of the world about you.

The result, then, is that a godly Christian becomes a moral pig, loyal to Satan's principles of conduct. He has a wasted life. He has great unhappiness. He enters spiritual death out of lack of temporal fellowship, and maybe into physical death. American society itself is a very great temptation to Christians today, because all the influential forces and people of our society today are promoting what God condemns as good. God condemns evil. They say it's good. This is merely an alternative lifestyle, we're told, in their choice of conduct. The goal is to destroy our national frame of reference of reformation Christianity. And American society is no longer a reinforcement like it once used to be in spiritual matters. And it is so tiresome.

When you get a little spiritual material, you really get tired. The world gets so tiresome because they're coming around, and they finally catch up with the Christians. Those of us who know, from the Word of God, the essential necessity of nutrition, are now seeing on TV all the stuff we've been taking for years, and all the things we've been doing, and all the exercise things, and all the health things, and now they're promoting it as a great new discovery. I knew a long time ago that there is something in a mother's milk that a baby gets from the mother's breast that has an immunity quality to it. That is the most important thing for a newborn child. And what did we hear on TV the other day? The great New England Journal of Medicine (or somebody) has concluded a vast study, and they say that it is essential for a newborn baby's ultimate wellbeing, that, as soon as possible (within a matter of hours) that he begin feeding on his mother's breast milk, in order to immediately begin building in the qualities of immunity that he needs at that stage of his life.

Then, as if they weren't satisfied enough to tell us that, the feminist world which exploded with the next statement – that it is necessary for a mother to nurse that baby for at least a year, several times a day, as is required – for a year. And the feminists said, "It's just an idea to destroy a woman's freedom to have a career. You're going to stay home for a year nursing your baby? That's some kind of a dumb fundamentalist Bible idea, isn't it?" They're shocked by that. We recoil from that. Why? Because we have all this stuff about us in our head from the world. I'm telling you that what Satan impels into our thinking, from all the things about us in society is horrendous. You have to be on your guard all the time, so that you are not made a fool. You are a child of God. You're a prince. You're a princess. And God has given us all kinds of guidelines – 7,000 promises that you'll never be able to use in eternity – only now. And all you have to do is enjoy them left and right. And instead, we follow the world's way of life.

Who but a crazy, stupid fundamentalist would think that a family should live on one income, no matter how they have to scrape to do it. Recently, somebody said to me, "Dr. Danish, you said that the Bible wants mothers to be at home, and to be keepers at home, but you're reading into it. That isn't what it says. It doesn't mean that that's what they have to do." And I said, "That's not so." Proverbs 31:10-31 is the great example of the Christian wife and mother. She's a homebody, and that's what Paul says. And then she's got a little business on the side. She earns money in this way and that way. She does it within the context of her home. And when all the kids come home from school, there she is.

Mrs. Danish had to substitute for Nancy Cooper who was in Japan these past two weeks. So she's been sitting with our after-school-care children. And she comes home, and we know these things. She comes home, and shakes her head, and says, "It is so sad. I look at this child. He walks in here at seven in the morning, and then I say goodbye to him at six at night. That's his day, when his mother finally comes to pick him up."

Now, because your society is so wretchedly torn apart with divorce, many women have to do this. One problem has created the other problem. Then you have a government who says, "If you get married, you get penalized for that. You pay a higher income tax if you're married than if you're two single people." And some, without moral quality, when they have no moral character, then they'll live separately without marriage so they can file their taxes separately. I mean the whole world system is what we're talking about. And if you do not get an idea to stand tall and clear, and ride high in the saddle as a child of God, you're going to be right down there graveling in the dust with the rest of them. The world is our enemy. It is not our friend. And the sooner you learn that, the less scars you'll have on your life.

When the moral breakdowns come about, it is very, very sad for everybody who's involved. It is s a great tragedy. And where do we go from there? It is our desire to destroy the heritage of godliness in this nation. Galatians 6:7-9: "Do not be deceived, however. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall, from the flesh, reap corruption. But the one who sows to the spirit shall, from the spirit, reap eternal life. And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary." Now, there it is, folks. Do what you want with it. God has his way, and God is right. And you can go ahead and follow the sophisticated ways of the world system of Satan, and you will pay the price. They're wrong, and they can never be made right. You can never rationalize it. You can never readjust it.

The lady who told me that I was reading something into Scripture was quite wrong. Not only was I able to point out that that's exactly what the Bible says – Paul's admonition to the young women to be married caretakers at home. I used the word "home." But I also was able to point out that the Bible, in 1 Timothy 5:8, says, "A husband who does not care or provide for his own family is worse than an infidel." So, it makes it very clear where the funds are going to come from, and where the nurturing is going to come from. But if you don't want to do that, grace gives you the privilege of going ahead and not doing it. But at least don't be dishonest with yourself. Don't say that that is something that is God-ordained.

Now, you may have a situation in life, which in the providence and sovereignty of God has come upon you, and you have to do that. Then that it is between you and the Lord to decide that that is what you have to do. And for some people, there is no other alternative. I'm talking about the norm.

So, the moral breakdowns about which the tapers call me – they do occur. And it's essential for them to know what happened, and how it came about, so that they may help this person get back into spiritual grace maturity and service to God. And that is never a pleasant chore. But there are some things, again, where the Bible comes in, as I pointed out, that they must keep in mind.

Galatians 6:1-2, "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual (you who are in temporal fellowship), restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each one looking to yourself, lest you to be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ." You don't beat up on some poor Christian that has broken the rules of God. You say, "That's not good business. That is costly. That will work against you. This is unbecoming of you." But the Bible is full of the record of great saints of God who did exactly that. They let the bars down. They compromise at a critical point. And sin was entered, and then they added other sins to it to try to resolve the first one. And it never works.

However, every one of us can be tempted. The sin nature, this miserable diamond of evil, is in every one of us. And all you have to do is have the right combinations, and the right circumstances, and the right opening for Satan into your mind, because of your compromise with the Word of God, and He'll get to you.

So you bear each other's burdens when this happens. And you try to help a person get back out, and get back on his feet. 1 Corinthians 10:12 is another caution on how to handle this: "Therefore, let him who thinks he stands, take heed, lest he falls." So, don't tell me that a Christian can never again rise up back to super-grace level, and again serve God. He may have to do it in another context, or another place. But he can again serve God with all the brilliance he once did. The Bible also has examples of people who did just exactly that. So, you never shortchange the restorative qualities of grace.

2 Corinthians 2:6-7 also guides us in this restoration process: "Sufficient for such a one." Here is a case of moral illicit sexual breakdown in the Corinthian church. The man has been dealt with. And now the apostle Paul writes back, "Okay, here's what you do now. Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, so that, on the contrary, you should rather forgive and comfort him, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow." That's the other thing I had to caution. You don't want to do anything to people that brings them so excessively sorrowful for what they have done that they just throw up their hands, and they don't ever want to be involved in the things of God again. That is not the will of God. The will of God is restoration. So, Paul says, "Don't go too far. Don't be too heavy-handed."

I like the way the prophets in the Old Testament put it, in Psalm 22:6: "We're one worm dealing with another worm." That's the picture. Therefore, none of us is high and mighty.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10: "Therefore, also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." You and I will not be held responsible for what other Christians do. We will be held responsible for alerting them to the fact that they will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be evaluated for what they have done. Therefore, it behooves us to help them to know what is potentially there for their self-destruction – how these things could come about, and how these tragedies arise.

Satan understands the structure of the soul. The average Christian could not explain it to you for their life. A famous evangelist is going to be speaking about the soul (or has already). I'll be curious to see whether he explains the facets of the soul, and the potential hazard of what people have as their frame of reference in the mentality of the soul, as the entree of Satan into that soul. And it is with that mentality that the decision is made to believe the gospel, or to reject it, and all the enormous consequences one way or another. It's the soul, and the soul, and the soul. And the mind is the key point. The mind is the control element. Whatever is there does the decision-making. And what does that mean? That means your mind makes the choice; that is, your mind permits the feelings. Your mind decides. That is the decider. If you want to go on the basis of the world system of deciding things, then you are sowing what the Scripture says "to the flesh," and you'll bear the consequences. But if you want to follow God's way in principles, then you are sowing to the spirit, and you'll bear the consequences of enormous happiness.

Trust and obey. Let us walk in the light of the Lord. Let us walk in the light of His word. That's what it's all about. Trust and obey. Trust the doctrine that it is the mind of God, and obey it in your practice. Let us walk with each other in the Lord in the light of His Word.

Heavenly Father, we pray that You help us have a new appreciation for the problem that existed in the Ephesian church, as in the Colossian church – this great potential tragedy of the mind. And we thank You for the fact that the Word of God has alerted us of the kind of a downward condition that can develop in the life of a Christian, so that we sit like beaten dogs, whimpering in our agony, and wondering how we could have come to disaster, looking back with the distress, and looking back with the wonderment that we, who knew so much, could have acted with so little insight. But our Father, help us to remember that that's why we have 1 John 1:9: to confess; to repent; to change our ways; and, to pick up the threads of our lives, and to restore ourselves once more to a place of Your blessing and of Your care, and using us to store treasures in heaven.

We thank You, our Heavenly Father, for the fact that the Bible is true, and Satan is false. We know the difference, and we know that there is a stream of ideas that comes from Satan, but the true ideas come from You. May we follow the wisdom of God. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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