***Problem Solving Techniques for Christian Living

Colossians 1:25-29

COL-208***

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Our subject is "The Mystery of the Church," segment number 23, in Colossians 1:25-29.

**Now is the Appointed Time**

The dispensation of the church is the greatest expression of the grace of God to date in human history. The church age, in contrast to all other dispensations, provides a believer with the thinking of God in the form of Bible doctrine, and the power of God the Holy Spirit, to be able to live in obedience to it. That is the perennial problem: knowing; and, then rising to the capacity to live up to what we know – not forever excusing ourselves, and never forever waiting for a better day when we have the intention of doing better. When you become my age, you realize that time is ticking along, and I've seen it again and again – that people who were thinking someday something would happen, and they would do some magnificent things with their money; with their time; with their spiritual gifts; and, with their talents, only to suddenly realize that they're struck down physically, and they're gone. They're out. They are either incapacitated physically, or through death, cut out of any future. That's why the Bible says, "Now is the appointed time."

It's so hard for Christians to realize that. And I guarantee you that the thing that Satan always wants to do is to keep you from being aware of the tenuousness of your life. And the younger you are, the more arrogant you are inclined to be – that you're going to be around forever.

**Losses at the Judgment Seat of Christ**

To be denied an access to the Word of God that pertains to the church-age assets is a horrendous disgrace that is common in the Christian community. And the sad part is that most Christians don't understand how they're being robbed; how they're being cheated; and, how terrible it will be for them when they stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Bible does not say without reason that the Lord Jesus is going to have to walk up to some believers, and wipe away their tears. Where are those tears? They're up there in heaven at His Judgment Seat, when they realize all of the assets, and all of the blessings, material and spiritual, that have been stored up in heaven in your name, ready for you to write the check to bring it down, but you never knew how to do it. You never gained the spiritual maturity to be able to bring those blessings down. And if you don't bring them down, you will not stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ with blessings stored for your service there either. You lose out both ways.

**Church-Age Saints can have the Mind of God**

So, the church age, in contrast to all other dispensations, provides you with the ability to have the mind of God. And you should never hold that in low esteem. And where do you get it? Right here in the local church with the pastor-teacher's expository preaching. I do not take lightly the fact that many Christians are not in a situation where they're under expository preaching. And if you're not under expository preaching, which gives you an objective relationship to God, then you have only one other place to go, and that is to be subject to your emotions. And the devil will have a field day.

The church age provides unique close personal relationships to the members of the Godhead – relationships never experienced before, in other dispensations. The spiritual assets given to the church-age saints enables him to live a supernatural lifestyle in the image of Jesus Christ; that is, in the humanity of Christ. We can live in the same humanity capacity as the Lord Jesus did. He did not use His deity to live His life. And wouldn't it be nice, if you're a kid, and you're young, to start your life and start living that way now? You would not need to have all those scars, and all those marks, and all the things that come when you arch your back and resist the Lord.

The contamination of the church dispensation grace way of life, with the legalistic, ritualistic, human-ability way of life of the dispensation of the Jews, is totally destructive to the Christian's special privileges and powers. And that's the fouled-up view that most people have of what Christianity is all about: the Ten Commandments; the golden rule; the sermon on the mouth; the rituals; the Holy Days; and, all the paraphernalia that belonged to the picture era – the lack-of-reality era of the Old Testament.

Now the reality of the power system that God has provided for us – people don't know about it. So, they muddle through their lives.

The church, we must stress constantly, does not replace God's chosen nation Israel. The church does not become the new spiritual Israel. The principle of literal interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures preclude any idea of God abandoning His promises and His program for the Jewish nation. The Jews have a future as a nation. And the church is not it. Mixing Israel and the church results in total loss for the church-age believer of his special material and spiritual blessings in time and eternity. If you want to kill your special place in the royal family of God, just start bringing Old Testament stuff into the Christian way of life, and you will do it.

The church-age believer's personal life mission cannot be fulfilled on the basis of the principles of Old Testament Judaism. What God expects you to do today, and He has a mission for you, can only be done on the principles of the power grace system of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. The church-age believer has been provided by God with scores of divinely designed techniques for solving human relationship problems. I'm touching only on a few prominent ones. And the Bible is full of these. And that's why the constant instruction in the Word enables you to come up against these human relationship problems – these human circumstance problems, and to be able to deal with it.

**Confession**

So, the church-age believer is provided by God with these divinely designed techniques. Lack of divine guidance and blessings in one's life, because of the loss of his temporal fellowship, and thus of the filling of the Holy Spirit, denies him direction, and he cannot walk until he resolves this fracture with God through the confession of his sin. When you are faced with the sense of lack of direction in your life, that's when you need to get on track in temporal fellowship. That's the reason. Confession brings you on. That's the first technique.

**Faith Rest**

The second one we observed was that we meet problems that are beyond our possible human relationship to solve, and we fall back on the faith rest technique. We believe the promises of God. We call on God to keep His promises. And then we do everything we can on the human level to get things squared away. Then we leave it with the Lord. That's faith rest. And there come times in our lives when you just cannot do anything to fix things. And that is when you have to use the faith rest principle.

**Prayer**

The third thing we looked at was that the times when you need guidance and provision from God, and they're very clear – they're not coming. The use of prayer has to be brought in. But as I pointed out this morning, your prayer has to originate in heaven or it's no good. Your prayer cannot originate in your human reason, nor can it originate from your sin nature. For it to be the will of God, it has to originate in heaven. God does things on the basis of your prayer, but He gives you the guidance to do the praying.

Sometimes you don't know how to pray for something. And the apostle Paul says, "Well, when that happens, then the Spirit of God utters these things for you. He verbalizes your prayer. And sooner or later, you will have a situation where there's a need, or there's a problem, and you don't even know how to pray about it. You don't know what to ask for. So, you sit there, or on your knees, in silence, telling God, "Here's the problem." And the Spirit of God enunciates what needs to be said.

We pray to God the Father, on the authority of the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

To the verses that we looked at this morning, we should add two more passages. James 4:2-3 deals with resolving problems with prayer: "You lust, and you do not have, so you commit murder. And you are envious, and you cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures." That's the difference between prayers that originate in heaven, and are the will of God; and, prayers that originate within yourself; your human reason; and, your sin nature, and which therefore are not answerable.

To this we may also add 1 John 5:14-15 which summarizes it so well: "And this is the confidence which we have before Him – that if we ask anything according to His will (God's will), He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." If your prayer comes from heaven, you're asking for things that God wants to do for you, and because you ask (you are not asking a miss now), He will do it. That's a marvelous privilege of the church-age believer – the power of prayer unknown in ages past.

**Full Knowledge**

Here's the next problem solving technique. A life that does not know how to walk before God, and a mind that is not capable of coming up with divine viewpoint answers. The only solution for this is that you build a reservoir of, not just knowledge but, that full "epignósis" knowledge of doctrinal truth. Full knowledge is truth you've been taught, and you have accepted. You build this up and store it in your human spirit. There, the Holy Spirit will cycle up to your mind, for divine viewpoint guidance at any particular point in time, for a situation in your life.

So many Christians have no divine guidance. They struggle, and they know something is wrong: "I wish I knew what to do." Heaven is silent because you have nothing in your human spirit in the way of doctrinal principles that the Holy Spirit can shine the light on, and cycle up to your mind, and say, "Here it is. This is what you need to do." And when you're walking by means of the Spirit, that intuitive knowledge keeps popping into your mind. That information keeps cycling up to give you the guidance. You just need to be sensitive to act upon it.

**Job**

Job understood this principle of storing God's Word in the human spirit. Job 32:8 says, "But there is a spirit in man (his human spirit), and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding." What is the breath of the Almighty? The New Testament calls it "inspiration" (God-breathed). The information of doctrine comes from God. It's breathed into our intelligence. So, here Job understood that, as we are surprised for how much Job understood of great theology. There is a human spirit in man, and the God-breathed information of doctrine of the Almighty gives man understanding. That's how we know what to do. The Spirit of God takes the Word of God; He illuminates that Word to us; and, we have guidance.

Also, Job 32:8 is very clear. God gives you the information, and that is your solution for the fact that you have problems in life which you cannot deal with.

**Ill-Will**

Then there are times when you sense that you have an attitude of ill-will. Bitterness is overwhelming you. Self-centeredness is the key feature of the sin nature, countered by mental attitude love of the fruit of the Spirit. When that bitterness is there, and when that angry attitude is there, and when that self-centeredness is there, nothing will remove it but the "agape" love of the Spirit of God, which will then express goodwill, self-sacrifice, and the kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's always an ugly scene when a Christian is unkind. Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such there is no law." The primary thing is love. A Christian who has the fruit of the Spirit operating in him because he is in temporal fellowship (he is filled with the Spirit), is not going to have mental attitude ill-will, bitterness, and act with selfish self-centeredness.

Ephesians 4:31-32: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another: tenderhearted; and, forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

The city of Irving has put all over town signs that say, "Be kind." We can't do it. For most of the people look at that – this is an appeal to the sin nature. This is an appeal to the human will: "Be kind." We can't do it. A Christian who acts with unkindness because of his bitterness (his lack of mental attitude goodwill love), and his lack of the self-sacrifice quality, is the Christian who is not going to be able to be kind. He is not going to be able to be tenderhearted. He will not be able to be forgiving. He, therefore, will not act in the person; in the image; and, in the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ Who forgave us so much. And when a Christian cannot be kind, and cannot be forgiving, you know that that person is in deep trouble with God, and out of step in the most horrendous way.

Hebrews 12:15: "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God – that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it, many be defiled." This business of personal bitterness is madness, and it is characteristic of the Christian who is not filled with the Spirit. You cannot have the sacrificial, goodwill mental attitude love of God, that the Spirit of God gives through the fruit of the Spirit, functioning in your life, and for you to have bitterness.

So, while it is a terrible experience to come up against that, we must always weep for the Christian that demonstrates that kind of an attitude – that lack of Christ-like character.

**Personal Anger**

Next, there is the problem of personal anger – anger relative to people or circumstances. And what should we do with that? We get angry at people. We get angry at circumstances. Sometimes we even get angry at God. How do I handle that? Well, a grace-age believer has a marvelous capacity to be able to do that. Very simply: you never let the sun go down that day of your anger, so as to allow that thing to fester, and to give the devil an opportunity to ruin your peace of mind.

How many sleepless and restless nights have people spent because they had anger, often as the result of bitterness, and they would not set it aside when the sun went down?

Ephesians 4:26-27: "Be angry and yet do not sin." There are some things of unrighteousness – some reasons that we should be angry even as the Lord Jesus was: "Be angry and yet do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. And do not give the devil an opportunity." What a terrific technique that is. Think of all the human grief that would be gone (or would never take place) if somebody in a hotheaded moment did not take a hotheaded action, and then didn't have the sense (didn't have the godliness) to come back and say, "The sun is setting, and I have to put aside this anger. It's had its moment, and I will not permit myself to sleep on that evil."

**Death**

Next, the time may come when you'll face the fact that the physical body is running down. You will begin to suspect that you're getting near the end of your allotted lifespan. And you begin to see that illness is creeping over you, and that isn't something that you can get over. Some of these more serious things are permanent, for which the medical world has little or no capacity to resolve. So, at that point in time, you begin running down the clock, and living in the anticipation of coming into the presence of God. Sometimes there's a long stretch of time, and then when that happens, that's when you must turn to God to handle that situation in stride with dying grace.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57, "But when this perishable (this dying body) will have put on the imperishable (has died, and put on a sinless resurrected body), and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O, death, where is your sting? Where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And sometimes I have heard people say, "Here's what's wrong with me (and there was something seriously wrong with them – one of those irreversible things), but we're working on it, and we're making some progress. But whether I die or I continue to live, I win either way." That's exactly what the apostle Paul said. He was talking about dying grace. Philippians 1:21: "For me to live as Christ; and, to die is gain." Therefore, it can be taken in stride.

Sometimes a believer does not have time to think about it, and for things to be prolonged. An air traffic control man once told me that, in the process of training to be an air traffic controller for commercial airlines, they listen to the messages recorded on the black boxes. I don't think they are black, but that's what they call them. When planes go down, they can keep a record of the final conversations, and what's going on, to try to analyze what has happened. And on one occasion, he told me that it was very sobering. Everybody in the class was really quiet, because they heard the pilot and the copilot discussing a problem they had, and it was a problem they could not resolve, and the plane was going down, and things were getting increasingly out of control. And the copilot turns to the pilot and said, "What are we going to do?" And the pilot said, "Get ready to meet your maker."

At that point in time, dying grace is available to the believer. It was not to the person of the world, and it was not the kind of thing that was at hand in other dispensations to other believers.

Now I think that that's magnificent. And that's why the dispensation of grace should not be contaminated with the things of the Law system.

**Marital Strife**

Then there's a problem of marital strife can happen. It can happen. It's all potentially lying there under the surface. And how's that to be resolved? Like anything else again, there are provisions and techniques and guidelines in the Word of God, such that if we are responsive to them, and we coordinate our lives with them, these things will be resolved. And it requires, as always, the positive volition of what God thinks. It is: not to your feelings; not to how you feel about it; and, not to what the psychiatrists and the psychologists would try to do to play upon your emotions to resolve this thinking. Marriage counseling is a bunko operation from start to finish, because the world does not understand that it requires certain principles of human relationships that God has enunciated in Scripture, and it takes a divine power of the Spirit of God for resolution.

Turn to Ephesians 5:22-26: "Wives, be subject to your own husband as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church – He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives (mental attitude goodwill; never a moment of bitterness; never a moment of getting even; and, never a moment of unkind rebuking), just as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify he (set the church apart), having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word."

We deal with marital strife on the basis of the Word of God. It takes positive volition on both sides for it to work, but God takes care of the positive believer, even when faced with a negative one on the other side. And the vision is for husbands to be able to exalt their wives, because when she is exalted, she is his crowning glory.

Ephesians 5:27-29, "That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she should be holy and blameless. So, husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife, loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body."

Now if you see somebody who is cutting up his own body, or beating up his own body, or doing things that are destructive to his body physically, your immediate reaction is that the guy is crazy. And that's right. And when you see a Christian (man or woman) acting in a way they're destructive of the one-body union of a husband and wife, instead of nourishing it, as one does one's physical body, and instead of caring for that union body, that person is insane. He is spiritually insane. And until God resolves that, there's nothing to do but to wait upon Him. Act on the principles that you know, and wait for Him to perform the work of resolution.

1 Peter 3:1-4 touches on the same thing: "In the same way, you wives be submissive to your own husbands." That's a military term. It means to line up under your husband: "So that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won over without a word by the behavior of their wives." If a husband is going to act in an ungodly, doggy way, you act with nobility. You can't nag him to do right? You certainly have the right to present creative alternatives. And you certainly have the right to express yourself. But then, that's all the words that can do any good. Now, it takes the Word of God to fix it.

"If any are disobedient to the Word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. And let not your adornment be merely external: braiding the hair; wearing gold jewelry; or, putting on dresses. But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God."

Many people think that they can have class through material things. And many women think they get class by their adornment. The Word of God says, "No, this is the person on the inside – that gentle and quiet spirit."

1 Peter 3:5-6, "For in this way in former times, the holy women also who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands. Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him 'Lord.' And you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear."

Do you, as a wife, do what is wrong? No. You do not submit to what is contrary to the responsibilities of the Word of God. And you take protective actions for your wellbeing, and for the wellbeing of the family, as per whatever the situation may be. But the basic concept is that men are responsible for their families, and they are responsible for how their wives react toward them.

1 Peter 3:7, "You husbands, likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman. And grant her honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." This is one of the most serious problems of marital conflict. This is why you want to get it resolved. You certainly don't want to let the sun go down on it. That's a very stupid thing to do. That is because, from then on, your prayers are zilch. Prayer, as one of the other techniques for meeting the problems of life, are simply not going to be functional.

1 Peter 3:8-9, to sum up: "Let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil-for-evil or insult-for-insult, but giving a blessing instead. For you were called for this very purpose, that you might inherit a blessing."

Now, how much strife would that remove in human relationships right there in verses 8 and 9: harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, and kindhearted. What a big one that is. And humble in spirit. You're not all that hot yourself. And to give evil-for-evil, and insult-for-insult, instead of giving blessing for evil, and blessing for insult? That's not easy to do. But this is the only hope to resolving marital strife.

**Orientation to Life**

Next, tonight, is my orientation to life; my priority; and, my focus. Why do I get up tomorrow morning? What is the objective for which I'm going to live and breathe through that day? We are to be focusing in life on spiritual things of the work of God, ahead of the things of this world. You are to be putting your divine mission, that for which you were born, first in your life. You need to do that – put your divine mission first, and live for the Lord Jesus Christ, and let the Spirit of God lead you to fulfill your spiritual gift. And remember that's what service is – one of those magnificent nine spiritual gifts. Whichever one rings the bell in your experience, that's what you're living for.

Do you need material things? You betcha. Do you need to take care of yourself? You betcha. In 2 Thessalonians 3:10, the Bible says, "He who will not work should not eat." Our society says, "No, we believe in socialism. Everybody is equal, even though he doesn't deserve it, and people need to live off of other people – the fruit of other people's labor. Well, God says that this is: "Not so." Focus upon your spiritual calling; and, your association with the local church. Don't think that that pastor-teacher in the pulpit has some greater reason for being there every service than you do. The two of you are not different. He has a different job, and he has a different responsibility. And if he's playing square with you in fulfilling his duty, then God will care for him and will bless him. But you have as much of a duty and a responsibility, as we shall see in a moment, to be in that service as he does. So when you're not here, you're up against explaining why you're not there, because it impinges upon your focusing on spiritual things.

I guarantee you, that if you let the time go by, and you're not in those services, and boy, you'll get so disoriented. I don't care how much of the Word of God you know. Matthew 6:33 summarizes it, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

What magnificent testimonies we have heard. Sometimes these are from younger adults, who were distressed over what they felt they should be doing, but it conflicted with the things of the service of God. They believed that verse, and they went with the service of God, and everything they needed was provided, on the material physical level. The Lord God says, "I guarantee it.

Colossians 3:1-2: "And if then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on this earth." That's pretty explicit. What is the focus of my life? I have a business to run. I have an employment that I have to check in with. I have to provide the means for my ministry. But I don't have the ministry anymore. I don't exercise my spiritual gift. I'm up to my eyeballs just in the material world, and enjoying the things that I have. No: "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

You've been raised up with Christ. You're not a dead unsaved dog anymore: "Keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." That is the focus and the meaning of your life.

**Meeting the Temptation to do Evil**

Next is meeting the temptation to do evil, in the promise of the divine capacity that God says that He will give you to resist it, in the history of God's faithfulness in keeping His saints from being overwhelmed. Are you going to be tempted to do evil? Yes. And I'm not just talking about gross evil. I'm talking about all the kind of negligent evil that it is so easy for Christians to be guilty of – not the least of which is to get mad at the pastor-teacher because he called your attention to something, and you forgot that you were your own priest, and you didn't have to do what he suggested; you didn't have to take his interpretation; you didn't have to take his observation; and, you could carry on and live your life as you chose, and as you pleased. But you had the good sense that you were not bitter; that you were not resentful; and, that you did not cover your ears and flee from what God said. But you left it with Him.

If you do not do that, you will open yourself to serious temptation and moral breakdown. 1 Corinthians 10:13: "This is the comfort we have: no temptation has overtaken you, but such as is common to man." You're not being tried above anything that other believers have been tried with, but such as is common to man: "And God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able." No temptation that ever comes into your life is one that you cannot say "no" to. That's important. You cannot say, "I'm overwhelmed." No. No temptation comes in that you cannot say "no" to. It's because you decided to be positive to it: "He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you're able, but with the temptation, will provide you the way to of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." He'll give you the way of escape also, and you'll endure the temptation. You'll not give into it.

Sometimes the temptation, as I say, isn't something really gross. It's just bad judgment. And young people hate to have people, who are older and wiser, giving them advice. They don't like good judgment. And what they do is they feel that that's a great burden upon them, and they want to escape it. But God says, "Take the judgment, and face the evil." Even your sin nature is crying out to do it. Yes, you can say "no." And the reason for it is that all sin begins in the mind. That's why mental attitude sins are the worst kind, because they are the ones that lead to things outside the mind. So, clean up your mind. Get in with the Word of God. Do not use your mind to walk through the cesspool of evil that is out there in the world. And I guarantee you, if you listen to television entertainment programs, your mind is totally besotted with evil thoughts and evil ideas. And it's a constant bombardment. The whole world now has no shame. They take pride in the things that they should be ashamed of.

James 1:13-15: "Let no one say, when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away, and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust (mental attitude sin) has conceived, it gives birth overtly to sin. And when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." In the unbeliever, it brings forth eternal death. That is not because of the sin per se, but because he refused to accept the payment for that sin. In the believer, it brings spiritual death, in terms of separation from God the Father (in terms of breaking of fellowship).

**Church Attendances**

Then there is the uncomfortable awareness sometimes that you have an indifference toward attending the church services. And when you don't do that, you fail to encourage your family in their attendance of the church services. And you feel you have many reasons that you come up with: "I can't make it to this morning service. I can't make it to the evening service." Churches all over town are falling all over themselves to cut out as many Sunday services as they can. And they get them up as early as they can, so that instead of the Lord's day, it's the play day. It's the self-centered day. Everything is working against you.

Well, here's the solution. God has addressed this. What is the right thing to do? What is the wrong thing to do? Hebrews 10:23-25: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." We believe in God. We are children of the living God. We are in the family of the body of Christ. That is our hope: "And let us stand with that as our lifestyle."

Hebrews 10:24, "And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and to good deeds." We have a responsibility to the other believers, to encourage them to an attitude of mental-attitude love, and to encourage them to do divine good deeds: "For each of us to help each other along the way." That's one of the main reasons of attending the church service.

Therefore, in Hebrews 10:25, the summary is: "Not forsaking your own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more, as you see the day dawning near." So, when we encourage you that it's not a good idea to be absent from the morning and evening Sunday church services, there is a greater reason than just the fact that we like to see a lot of people here, and we'd like to have a good attendance, and that'll help us to have a good offering. It's because it is so vital to you personally. And you should, therefore, with great fear and trepidation, decide that you cannot make it to a service. Will your children pick it up? You betcha. They'll soon learn that they don't need to be there either.

And the reason for being there is Matthew 4:4: "It is written, 'Man shall not live on breaded alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Now, we have covered some very serious human problems, and for solving those problems, we see that the Word of God has an answer. It's commonplace. And the more you know about the Scriptures, the more these things will come to your mind.

Now we come to some very serious ones. These are bad enough that we've looked at. But here is one of the deadly features that brings a Christian down, and that is the handling of your material wealth. More Christians are destroyed by this, perhaps, than all kinds of evil attractions of the world. This is a tough one. And this requires some very specific guidelines from the Word of God to be able to ride it, and to overcome that natural self-centeredness, and to excuse yourself: "I've got my credit cards to pay up. Business is slow. Christmas is coming. I have to help my relatives." None of these have anything to do with the responsibility of handling your finances as a steward of God, instead of as money that you think is yours to dispose of.

There is the terrible attraction to be involved in the system of the world. That is a really tough one. There is the terrible attraction of the sin nature's lust pattern, overwhelming a believer so that a Christian sits: beaten up; whimpering; and, wondering: "How did this happen to me?"

There is the problem of conflicts and employment in business associates. How am I going to resolve that kind of a problem?

Then the most important one, perhaps, of all, is the family structure and the authority lines. That is the primary attack of Satan today. Do Christians know what the Bible has to say about handling that phase of their lives, in a way that is compatible with their standing in the church age as members of God's royal family? These we shall look at next time.

God our Father, we want to thank You for the fact that whatever the problem is, the Word of God is there to give us the wisdom; the direction; and, the understanding. We thank You for these who have been here by Your sovereign choice tonight. And we pray that what we have heard would orient us a little more closely to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that the life that we live is the life that He, Who indwells us, is living through us, and that we're not shoving Him aside and doing it our way. These are not admonitions; these are not responsibilities; and, these are not principles of God that we have looked at tonight, that can be shunted as if they were optional. They are that for which we will give an account someday at Your Judgment Seat.

Therefore, we consider ourselves privileged to have been here this night, and to have been informed. And we pray that our positive volition response will know no limitations. And for those in the circle of our influence: family; friends; and, other church members, who need a word of caution, we pray that we will deliver that to them as their lives have lost their way, and that which is propriety for the person who lives in the privileged dispensation of the church age. Thank You for these offerings which we bring You this night. Take us safely to our homes. And we thank You for the Word, and the Word, and the Word, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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