***Freed from the Law

Colossians 2:18-19

COL-457***

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Our subject is "The Error of Angelic Worship," segment number 14, in Colossians 2:18-19.

The apostle Paul warns the Colossian Christians not to follow the Mosaic Law way of life – a system which never could save a person, nor would enable a person who is a believer to be a spiritual Christian. The Mosaic Law told you what should be, but it gave you no ability to be able to do what should be. The Christian's call is to be Christlike in his life. And this requires a supernatural enablement of the church spiritual power system of grace doctrines, and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

**The Mosaic Law**

The Mosaic Law could not make people Christlike under the reign of Moses and Judaism, and it can't do it today. It may be a simple little thought, but you are privileged and you're honored, because of the fact that you are not in the line of reformation churches. What came down from the Protestant Reformation was very confused, when it came to the issues of the spiritual life. It was very confused on the relationship of the Law of Moses to the body of Christ, the church. They thought that Judaism had been replaced by the church. It was a terrible victory for Satan. It was devastating to theology, and it still bears bitter fruit today. The truth of the matter is that that's what's behind his Colossians passage: "Don't let them rob you of your grace-age power system to live right; to do right; and, to be under the maximum blessing of God. Just don't do that.

Yet, that's what people are often trying to do. Christians fail, by and large, to rise to their great heritage of grace blessings, now, and into the eternal rewards in heaven for their divine good service. No human effort is done under the grace system. It's all of God. When we are in temporal fellowship, He does it for us.

**The Exodus Generation**

We showed you this morning that the Exodus generation of Jews are a classic example of a people who knew God, and saw His power demonstrated on their behalf, but they did not trust His promise to bring them safely from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land, in Canaan, of milk and honey. It is very hard for us to look back, and realize what they saw, as they escaped the clutches of the Pharaoh, and the work of God in their behalf. Yet, when the time came at Kadeshbarnea to go into the land, the spies told them that it was filled with giant men: "We cannot take this country." The Jews refused to follow the divine viewpoint leadership of Moses. They would not, under his leadership, enter the Promised Land at Kadeshbarnea. They feared the inhabitants more than they feared disobeying God.

That is a stupid thing to do, but it is not uncommon among Christians either now – to fear something in this world more than it is to fear what we know is the way it ought to be in the Word of God.

Moses himself was a faithful servant in bringing these people in touch with spiritual reality. God told them, "Build a tabernacle." He told them exactly how to do it, and that's exactly what Moses did. And he was, in his ministry, as we pointed out, a true priest of God. Jesus Christ, now in heaven, also serves as a true priest of God in His body of believers, the church. All of us, as Christians, furthermore, are declared to be priests of God under a high priest, Jesus Christ . We are not in the Aaronic priesthood. We are in the Melchizedek Priesthood, which preceded the Aaronic priesthood in the eternal priesthood. It is a priesthood of Jesus Chris, Who is now in heaven. And this priesthood has the responsibility to lead the people of God in worship, and in call to service.

We pointed out in Psalm 95:7-11, where God reviews what these people did when they got to Kadeshbarnea: they would not go in; and, they would not trust Him. So, finally, He turned them back out into the desert wilderness. And for 40 years, they wandered in that desert – one year for every day of the 40 days that the spies had reconnoitered the land. And Caleb and Joshua came back with a good report: "Go with it. We can take it. God has made the promise. We don't care if they are huge-sized human beings." But the ten said, "No. Do not go in." But the people listened to the ten, and thereby ignored God. Now, what is interesting is that you run your eye through Psalm 95:7-11 is what precedes it: verse 6; and, the first part of verse 7. Verse 6 says, "Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker, for He is our God, and we are the people of this pasture, and the sheep of His hand." Isn't that amazing, that with that introduction, "Come on folks, worship Me, and follow Me. You are my sheep. I'm not going to let you starve. I'm not going to let you be injured. I'm not going to let you wander off from me. I may have to discipline you, and bring you back in line, but I'm going to take care of you. I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you.

So, the worship of God was the problem. What was the problem with the Exodus generation? They didn't worship God, because they weren't subject, in reverential fear of Him, they wouldn't listen to Him, and they wouldn't obey Him. Christian priests today who compromise your grace way of life, and you go back to the Mosaic Law, by doing it yourself, in the self-effort system. They are not worshiping God. That is a great tragedy, to fail to worship God the Father will end up only in one place. Where is that? It's the same place that the Jews ended up back in the desert: in the wilderness; the sand blowing; and, the heat.

And one-by-one, as we read this morning, God said, "Your corpses will die, and we'll bury you along the way, all over that desert." And for 40 years, anybody who was 20 years old and up dropped one-at-a-time, except for Caleb and Joshua. They went in because they believed God. Even Moses did not get to go into the Promised Land.

**Moses' Death**

On the verge of their entry in the land, God took him up to a high mountain (Horeb). He said, "Look over there. That's it. That's what you've been leading them here for 40 years. But because you disobeyed me the second time, for water out of that rock which represented Jesus Christ, and you struck it with the stick, when I told you to *speak* to the rock." Christ can only be crucified once. You don't sacrifice Christ again and again, as the Roman Catholics do. If there's any question in anybody's mind, that Catholics do not go to heaven, the very fact of the Mass (repeatedly sacrificing Christ on the altar), so that they may benefit by His death.

So, Moses saw the land, because the people made him so mad that he took his staff, and he hit the rock again. Well, the water came. God's mercy comes through. But it cost him the honor of being able to enter the return company into the Promised Land. For the Christian, you do that same game of failure to worship God, and thus to respect Him. And the result will be wandering in the spiritual desert of the world system, and the loss of treasures in heaven.

Remember, in the Bible, Egypt is a type (a symbol) for the world system. In Galatians 2:19-21, we have a warning to the believers. In the Galatians churches, which tended to be attracted to the legalisms of the Mosaic Law code. We're talking about compromising your privileged position under grace by incorporating the selfish human effort system of the Mosaic Law; by trying to live by the rituals of the Mosaic Law; and, by trying to not look to God for how much money you should give Him as your offerings (the sacrifice of your substance as his priest), but taking the 10% of the Mosaic Law, which was never applied to Christians.

The ceremonials system of the alters – to still have an altar in your church, and the priest performing rituals in front of it, as if Christ had not died, and permanently made altars unnecessary. The whole system of burning candles; burning the incense; and, trying to do something in order to gain merit with God.

**The Penalty of Death for Breaking the Law**

Galatians 2:19, the apostle says, "For through the law (that is, the Mosaic Law), I died to the Law, that I might live to God." The Mosaic Law, when you broke it, and everybody did, had only one penalty. There was no way back. When you broke the Mosaic Law, the penalty was death. And Paul is saying, "I broke the Mosaic Law. But I have, as a result of that, suffered death, but I did it through Jesus Christ." Every one of us has paid the penalty of death demanded by the broken Mosaic Law, and it didn't matter how much you broke, or how little it was, or how innocent it was.

If you have a China tea cup of great refinement and value, and you make one little chip in it, it's no longer perfect. All you had to do was break one of the 613 laws of the Mosaic Law, and you were dead. "And that," Paul says, "was my condition. But the Lord Jesus Christ paid the death penalty for all of mankind, on the cross." Did you get that? The death penalty was paid for all mankind.

One of our ladies is taking a religious course at college. She was telling me tonight, that in the discussion, she pointed out that Christ paid for the sins of the world. Therefore, for all human moral guilt, the death penalty, demanded by the law of God, has been paid, and the people who chose not to accept Christ the Savior, and to trust in Him, will be in the lake of fire forever with all of their sins paid for. She said, "One lady in the class went bug-eyed over that." She hadn't really thought of that.

How horrible it will be to be in the lake of fire (to be in hell) with all of your sins paid for. That's not the issue. There is no problem between you and God. The only thing was that you have to be responsible to accept the gift: "Whosoever will, may come," An, if you do not choose to accept salvation as a gift from God, you cannot do it by works. Why is it that a Catholic cannot go to heaven? Because Romans 11:6 says, "If it is by works, it's not by grace; and, if it's by grace, it's not by works."

You can't say, "I'm doing my part to pay for my temporal sins," which is what Catholicism teaches, "and Christ died on the cross to pay for my original sin. So, it's not a gift from God. It is what Christ did, plus my works." That doesn't work, no matter how indignant you get over this idea.

If you have relatives who are Catholics, boy, you think about them. There, sincere Catholics died, trusting in the system of the sacraments, and of the idea that the Roman Catholic Church dispenses salvation by its authority, with the pope holding the keys to heaven or to hell. People don't like to sit around here. It makes them so mad they leave, and we never see them again. Has that changed anything? No. Paul is telling us right here that he died to the Law. He paid the death penalty. How did he do that? Because when he believed in Christ as Savior, God the Holy Spirit baptized him into Christ. The death of Christ on the cross accrues to the benefit of Paul.

So, he died to the Law, which passed that judgment on him, so that he could live thereafter to God, because having trusted in Christ, the Mosaic Law had killed Jesus Christ, and that those who trust Him as Savior paid that penalty by faith with Him. And what did they did to? The whole Mosaic Law system – the whole thing?

Now, why doesn't somebody explain that – a simple little principle like in this verse, to the folks down the street here, and around town: the Seventh Day Adventists who are out on Saturdays going to church, so that they can keep the Sabbath day? We'll give them credit for, at least, the fact that they're not doing like the Reformed Churches do, out of the Reformation, such that they have changed Sabbath day to Sunday. At least they do think that the Sabbath is the day it's supposed to be: Saturday. But that is all dead. If they're in Christ, that has no application to them.

So, the believer now is spiritually alive. He's free to live his life for God. He is able, through the Holy Spirit, to be Christlike. He is freed from the legalism of the Mosaic Law all the way. And he is free to live unto God. If he's not free from the restraint, and laws, and system of the Mosaic code, so that he can do evil. He still has rules: the moral rules to keep; the will of God to keep; and, the whole system that applies to him as a member of the family of God – as a child of God.

**Freed from the Law**

So, here it is. We are freed from the legalism of the Mosaic Law.

Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who lived, but Christ lives in me. And the faith which I now live, in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." The Christian has believed the gospel, and by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, has been placed into Christ, so that, vicariously, he died through Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty that the Mosaic Law had imposed upon Paul. He paid the penalty of death. Therefore, he is free from the whole Mosaic system and its power. The Mosaic Law had only one power: to put you to death. A Christian, at the point of salvation, is now placed into Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13 is where this is recorded for us: "For by one Spirit (one Holy Spirit), we were all baptized into one body," whether we were Jews or gentiles, and whether we were slaves or free men. And we were all made to drink of one spirit. We are filled with the Holy Spirit. So, by one Spirit, we were all baptized at the point of our salvation.

Verse 12 says, "Even as the body is one, and yet has many members (that is; the body of Christ), and all the members of the body, though they are many, have one body, so also is Christ."

Verse 14 says, "For the body is not one member, but many. So, what you are being baptized into, is the universal body of Christ, the church. But if you go to charismatic churches, they give you the chance, periodically, in certain meetings, to come forward and get the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And some preacher lay his empty hands on your empty head, and you believe him, because it's an emotional game.

Paul describes this also in Romans 6:1-7. Please notice: This principle of Paul says, "Christ lives in me" – this union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Because he's united to Christ, and because he's been crucified with Him, therefore, he shares in everything that belongs to Christ: His death; His burial; and, His resurrection.

Romans 6: "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin, that grace might increase?" The context here is that Paul says, "God's grace is without limit, no matter how bad the sin." That's good to know. The greater the sinner, the greater the grace of God comes in to take care of it, no matter what is in the past – once it's confessed, it's out; it's gone; and, it's forgotten.

**Baptism**

So, Paul says, "Having said that, somebody is going to say, "Oh, hot dog. Man, I can really live a simple life. Because God's grace is so great, it'll cover me anyhow:" "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin, so that there can be more and more grace? May it never be." This is a technical phrase in the Greek language: "megenoito." It means "absolutely unthinkable." We're not telling you that you can live a sinful life because God's grace will cover you: "How shall we who have died to the sin nature ('sin' is singular – that's the sin nature) – we, who have died in Christ, to the sin nature, how are we going to live according to that sin nature? Do you not know that all of us have been baptized into Christ Jesus, and have been baptized into His death?

Now, here you have the word "baptized," and if you're in some churches, they'll interpret this as water baptism. But water baptism is a ritual. It is a symbol. It has no saving merit. It never did. Baptism is never attached to the gospel as part of salvation. So, obviously, he's talking about Holy Spirit baptism here: "Do you not know that all of us have been baptized into Christ Jesus – into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through that baptism, into death." When Christ was in the tomb, you were there. In order that, as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so, we too might walk in newness of life. When Christ was resurrected, in a life totally free now from sin and its impact on Him, we were there. We are positionally already perfect in the eyes of God – experientially, when we come into His presence.

If we have become united with Him (Christ) in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." If you died with Christ, you'll be resurrected with Christ. What kind of a body will you have? Well, you'll be sinless and perfect. What physical ailments plague you now – it'll all be gone. I cannot help you on how you will look. We will recognize you. The looks will be the same. But it will be a body untouched by sin. And it'll be as perfect as a body of Chris.

Verse 6: "Knowing this: that our old self (that death-in-Adam self, that we're born into), was crucified with Him, so that our body of sin (this body, which is controlled by sin now), might be done away, and we should no longer be slaves to the sin nature." Now, how is that possible? It's possible when you walk in temporal fellowship. It's possible when you obey the principles of doctrine for the church age. That's the way that you should walk, and not be a slave to this in nature. And if you do not walk that way, you're one of those people who evaporates out of a congregation like this. You drift off into carnality. You drift off into a sinful condition. And, all of a sudden, you're walking hand-in-hand with the world system. That can be very dangerous, and God can bring all kinds of discipline. And He does – even the discipline of death: premature death.

Verse 7 says: "For he who has died, by being buried with Christ through faith in Him, is freed from the sin nature." Before you were a Christian, no matter how you tried not to be a lowlife sinner, you couldn't win. The sin nature, sooner or later, beat us down. But now we're born-again. Now we have the capacity of God Himself residing in us in the form of the person of the Holy Spirit. We can be Christlike. We can do it the way Jesus did it. Unfortunately, most Christians, I'm particularly aren't interested in that. Most Christians are very happy to live to live the lifestyle of the world. They're very happy to be part of the things of the world. And the things of God – that's a bone they throw to God. They're not about to pour their money into His purposes. They're not about to spend their time in the Lord's work here in this world. They're not about to pass out evangelism brochures, so that people can pick them up, and be born again. They're not about to use the life (the time of their week) away from other things they'd like to do because of Christian service.

"Having been united to Christ, believers have been crucified with Him. So, we share His death; we share His burial; and, we share His resurrection. The Christian no longer has to live the old evil life of selfish, self-centeredness. But Christ dwells in the Christian to live the life of Christ through the believer. And as long as known sins are confessed. You will be walking the Life of Christ. That's the way it is. Do you want to go back to the Mosaic Law, where you were always a loser? When people are not taught the Word of God, they don't understand what they're robbing themselves of, because anybody who lives under the Mosaic Law way of life is not storing treasures in heaven. Oh, you'll go to heaven, but you're not storing treasures in heaven, because you're not in fellowship with the Father. You're still back with Moses.

The daily life of the Christian, in His physical body, is the product of his faith in Jesus Christ, Who loved the sinner, and delivered Himself to death on the cross for us all. So, Divine Power is available, and is released in us, who walk by means of the Holy Spirit, and by the guidelines of the church-age Word of God – church-age doctrine. That is the Christlike life under grace.

Then, in Galatians 2:19-21, Paul finishes up this observation. He says, "He died through the Law. He died the penalty that the Law imposed through Christ." In verse 20, He says, "Christ now lives in him, because he is in Christ. And when he is filled with the Holy Spirit in temporal fellowship, he lives by faith in the son of God, Who delivered himself up. So, now he is a winner.

**Most Christians Nullify the Grace of God**

Then in verse 21, Paul says, "I do not nullify the grace of God, for righteousness comes through the law that Christ died needlessly." This is what most churches and most Christians do. They nullify the grace of God. They so try to live by the Mosaic Law-doing system. Paul says, "I do not nullify (ignore) the grace of God, which is the only way I can come to eternal life. He said that if you could come to absolute righteousness by your keeping the rules of the Law, then God would not have sent His Son to bear that penalty on the cross. There would be no need for that death.

Now, coping with Satan, therefore, in this world, is not an easy thing. And the sad problem is that most Christians aren't aware that. They're not really concerned about getting hurt in their spiritual lives. They'll wake up tomorrow morning; they'll go out into the world; and, they will not be on their guard. The Bible says, "Watch out!" Satan and his demons are right there, just out of your sight, looking around carefully at you, and evaluating where they can bring you down into sin.

So, God has given us resources for resistance. The Holy Spirit-filled Christian is under daily temptation (under an attack from Satan and his demons. This is day-by-day, to cause us to sin. The Christian who does not take this seriously can really get into deep trouble, because Satan is that subtle.

1 Peter 5:8, says, "Be sober. Be of sober spirit. Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." And he will devour the Christian who does not walk in the power of the Spirit of God. That's your protection, because the devil's goal is to incapacitate you as a believer in the angelic warfare. He does not want you to be on top of your spiritual gifts. Whatever gift God is giving you, the one thing he does not want you to do is to use your spiritual gift, on a regular, day-by-day, moment-by-moment basis. What he wants to do is to keep you incapacitated.

It doesn't take much. How much would a lion have to do to you, to incapacitate you physically? With a few good bites, you'd have broken bones, and you'd be out of commission, and that's what Satan does us spiritually. He can't keep us from going to heaven, but boy, can he keep us from doing our spiritual gifts.

God the Father has given us, however, adequate spiritual resources to resist and to beat the devil at his own game. The church-age, power system of the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit, kept operating through confession of known sins is a system that Satan cannot outmaneuver.

Please remember 1 John 4:4. It reminds us: "You (you Christians) are from God, little children. You have overcome them because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." Well, Who is in you? The Holy Spirit. Who's in the world? Satan. And God the Spirit will beat the devil every time.

**Defensive Mechanisms**

So, when you and I go down in sin, whatever level and category, it's not because we don't have a defense mechanism. It's because we have ignored the Word of God, and we have ignored staying in fellowship. The defensive measures to be taken by the Christians, in the church-age – her they are. These are very important. These will take you a long way toward being where you're protected in the devil's world.

1. **Guard against Indifference toward Learning the Word of God**

The first one is that Christians have to guard against indifference to learning the Word of God. It is our spiritual food. So, read the Bible, and study the Word of God. Read it at home. Go to a church where that's what's being explained, so that you have the frame of reference of what God thinks. Do not be indifferent in your day, to sit down, and read a little bit of the Word of God.

That is one of the nice things. It's an advantage for those of us who work in Berean Christian Academy. Every morning, come 8 o'clock, we're all there around that table, and teachers take turns guiding us through a formal, structured reading of the Word of God, and our discussion. And we get into that, and it is amazing how much we learn, and how much you sense: this is the quarter, as John calls it: "the cleansing water of the Word." And the Word of God, as we read it every morning, flushes out the misconceptions of Satan, and gets us ready for the battle of God in Christian education. It is your spiritual food. That's not just a cute expression. Without it, you will become emaciated spiritually, and you'll become a spiritual casualty. Don't trust yourself. You may be a real go-getter, on the human level in life, but without physical food, you'd be nothing. And you can be a real go-getter in your spiritual life. But it's the mind of God, to be found in Scripture – that's what you need.

1. **The Christian must Avoid Remaining in a Carnality Status**

The next defensive measure is that the Christian must avoid remaining in a carnality status. Here's what happens. When we are saved through faith in Christ, we immediately enter the inner circle of temporal fellowship in our experience. We are controlled here by God the Holy Spirit. When we sin, whether it's human good or an act of evil, we step out, into the outer circle. Here, we are still in Christ, but now we're out of fellowship. Now we are carnal Christians. And here we are controlled by the sin nature. The only way back is to say, "I was wrong;" confess what was done (1 John 1:9); admit that you were wrong; and, that God was right. And immediately, upon your confession, you are back in, where the Spirit of God is now controlled. This is what the Bible means by being a spiritual Christian. You're a spiritual Christian when the Holy Spirit is directing your life. You're a carnal Christian when the sin nature is guiding your life.

When you are in this inner circle of temporal fellowship, you're producing divine good works. If you're not there, you can't use your spiritual gift. You won't even want to. But when you are there, you're producing divine good works, for which God will reward you in heaven. When you are on this outer circle, you're controlled by the sin nature, and you're producing something. But it's all human good. It's all useless. It's all down the drain. It makes all the difference in the world, whether you're in this inner circle of temporal fellowship. But the whole circle is eternal fellowship. The inner circle is being filled with the Spirit.

How many of your relatives know this simple little concept? How many of your friends (your church friends), who go to a whopping big, high-powered churches, know this. If you don't know this, you will spend the days of your life wasting them, and Satan will be a victor in your life every time. So, first of all, defensive measure number one: guard against indifference to learning the Word of God, and a positive volition attitude toward it.

1. **Avoid Carnality Status**

Defensive attitude number two is to avoid carnality status. Once you realize that you stepped out of line to the Word of God, confess. If you do not confess, the Bible says, in Philippians 4, that you will develop callouses on the soul. Do you understand what that means? You'll become hardened toward your Heavenly Father. You know what callous does. The bigger callouses, the less sensitive it is to your touch. And what will happen in your soul that your mind will be hard toward God; your feelings will be hard toward God; you will not love Him; the love will be focused on yourself, and the world; and, your choices will be ungodly. That is all because of the spiritual callouses.

One of the problems of growing up in a church like Berean, is that you think you know it. And you think that you have no problem. Don't kid yourself. Every day is a new day in the devil's world. And every day is a day where you should take an evaluation (take stock) of yourself, of how you stand with the Father.

1. **Avoid Permitting Emotions to Control your Soul**

Defense mechanism number three is that Christians must beware permitting emotions to control your soul. This is the difference between the sin nature controlling and the Holy Spirit controlling. This is the difference between sin nature emotions, which you can crank up, and the Holy Spirit emotions. We are not without emotions, but those emotions come from God, and they are the result of our knowledge of doctrine. You do not act in the Christian life on the basis of your touchy-feely perceptions. You act on the basis of your knowledge of the Word of God – "Thus says the Lord." This is Christlike. This is the way he would do it. This is the principle in the Word of God.

1. **Domination of your Soul**

So, you have to be very careful because you can hardly walk into a church (and the bigger it is, the more you can count on it) that the core of the ministry is how people feel). And the core of the ministry is to guide people in their feelings – that there's a satisfaction. The core is to help them through their week, as if some church service, as an entertainment center, can help you through your week – to make it through your week. This is what's called emotional domination of the soul, in place of Holy Spirit domination of your soul. It can happen easily. This is what is called by the code phrase (in churches – even Bible churches): It's called "having meetings of praise and worship."

When you hear that word phrase, "praise and worship," you know that there is going to be a bunch of people in a room. Bongo drums are going to be beating. If you go down the street, not so far from here, you'll see the sign on the church, come 9:30 in the morning – that's the traditional meeting. That's for all you slow, backward type of people. But come 11 o'clock in the morning, it's the contemporary meeting. And the drum traps are up there, and the people are clapping, and the music is jumping and jiving. And it's all built to the emotions. This is what is commonly done in youth work. They get kids together. They have a riotous time; strum the guitar; and, they have a good, oozy, praise and worship service, and all the girls get teary-eyed. And then at the end, you do the most sacred thing of all – you have a pizza party. And that's it. That's godliness. That's emotional domination of the soul.

1. **Be on Guard against Reversionism**

Next, Christians have to be on guard against reversionism. This is staying in carnality to the extent that you begin going backwards in your Christian life. This is why you and I have seen people who were very mature Christians; very great servants of the Lord; highly honored; esteemed; and, that we look to, and learn from. And all of a sudden, they began to drift off. And we began to notice that they're kind of wacky now. They're going downhill. Instead of growing up spiritually, they're going the other way. They're becoming babies again. That's the danger of reversionism. This happens when you do something that is out of the will of God; you have an attitude out of the will of God; and, you grit your teeth, and refuse to yield to the information that you get, that this is not of God, and that this is out of his blessing, and to get back in thought. The longer you stay out, the more insensitive you will become. That is revisionism.

1. **Maintain the Spiritual Maturity Structure**

We have one more defensive mechanism. The Christian has to maintain the spiritual maturity structure of his soul. You have to build it. It's built one factor at a time. This is a whole study in itself, that we had at some point in our tape catalog. I think that it is in Philippians perhaps. In 2 Corinthians 12:10, the apostle Paul says, "Therefore, I am well-content with weaknesses (number one); with insults (number two); with distresses (number three); with persecutions (number four); and, with difficulties (number five. For Christ's sake, I am content with these things, for when I am weak, then I am strong."

* 1. **Grace Orientation**

Now, if we take these words, as we have, and analyze what's behind the meaning and the concept of these Greek words, we come out with grace orientation: I know how to live by the grace power of God. That's the first factor of the spiritual maturity structure. It's a Pentagon in shape.

* 1. **A Relaxed Mental Attitude**

Another slice of the pentagon is a relaxed mental attitude. That is love that we have for people. This is not "agape" love. This is the emotional type. We treat people with that kindness. We treat people with the way they don't deserve to be treated – as Christ treated us. And we don't get all botched-up and bunged-up because people tell us off. You can expect how often I get told off by people who think that they really know something theologically, and that they have a better knowledge of the realities that exist, perhaps, out there. And you can get all hot-and-bothered about it, or you can feel sorry for them, and have a relaxed mental attitude about it. That is because you understand, if you are versed in the Word of God, and then that you have some experience in life (a frame of reference), such that you're way ahead of them. They are children. And they think they can tell you, "Here's the way it is." And it is very easy to lose your relaxed mental attitude, and say, "Well." And I read this verse periodically. Jesus says, "Everything that's hidden is going to be made known. Everything that's not true will be revealed for being a falsehood. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we're going to find out who's right and who's wrong. So, stay relax.

* 1. **The Mastery of the Details of Life**

Then there's the mastery of the details of life. That's control of material things. One of these words here is telling you, Paul says: "I know how to be in poverty, and I know how to be in prosperity. But God is blessing either way. I know how to have enough money to conduct my missionary ministry, and then I know what it is when I have to go back to being a tent-maker, and a tent-repairer, just to earn the money to do God's work." But he said, "I also know what it is to have a church, like the Philippian church believers, who come along and say, 'We're sending Epaphroditus with a big offering. We're his stewards. He has blessed us. You are doing the work on the front-line, and you can't do it without money. So, here it is."

And all of those women that used to minister to Jesus and the apostles – this is what they were doing. They were taking their material goods, and investing it for eternity.

So, the mastery of the details of life is a wonderful thing. Very often, people have this when they are not too rich. But when they really prosper, boy, that then really gets to be tough.

Do you remember the old fable of the woman who was baking little cakes, and the poor beggar came in, and he was so hungry that he asked if she could bake a cake for him. So, she made one. Then she looked at it, and said, "That's too big." So, she made a little smaller one: "That's too big." And then she baked another one, smaller than that. And that one was too big also. And finally, she baked got really a small cake, and she could finally let him have that one, only to discover that the beggar was Jesus Christ in disguise. That means" not having a mastery of details of life. Christians, who knew how to handle their poverty, cannot handle their prosperity when they get, as if they're going to starve to death.

* 1. **The Capacity to Love**

Then there's the capacity to love. Now, here's "agape" love. This is the capacity for God's love, that Galatians 5 tells about, as one of the segments of the fruit of the Spirit: "I love the unlovely. I can love the unbeliever. I can love the attractive Christian, as well. It is God's love that is doing it." What is God's love characterized by? Self-sacrifice: "I'll put myself out for you in Christ. That's a wonderful thing. The world knows nothing about this. All they have is a human-viewpoint, sin-nature, emotional love. But here is Christ working in us – the love of God, through the believer.

* 1. **Inner Happiness**

Finally there is inner happiness. Inner happiness means the millennium in your soul. No matter what your circumstances are outside, life will be good sometimes, and life will be not so good. But always there's that inner happiness (that trust in Christ, and the rejoicing in Him).

These are our defensive measures. So, we, who are capable of living the life of Christ, do not have to be defeated by Satan and his world system.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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