***Reversionism  
  
Mixed Motives in the Lord's Service  
  
No. 4 - PH20-02  
  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:15-18***

We are continuing to study the fact that it is possible for a Christian to serve the Lord very zealously and in a very commendable way, but out of a wrong motivation, so that the Lord does not accept it, though good may proceed from what you have done. The Word of God may perform its function in spite of you.

Satan is primarily seeking to create a perfect social environment on planet earth which is now under his control. A major technique in achieving this objective is getting the societies of this world to seek equality while destroying an esteem for personal liberty. If there is anything that the word "grace" means, it means freedom. Grace is God's way of dealing with us in this age. If there is anything that is our heritage as Christians, it is freedom. Satan is going around the world and saying. "Let's make the material goods equally available to everybody in the world. We'll give all of you an equal amount of food in your stomach; we'll give you equal medical care; we'll give you equal clothing; we'll give you equal education; and, we'll give you equal entertainment," and the whole thing sounds like a very wonderful idea. However, the joker in the deck is the fact that equality is an unattainable quality in this age until the Lord Jesus Christ returns and sets up a society where that becomes possible. That will happen in the future in the millennium. It will never happen until Christ returns.

In this way, Satan, by promoting the concept of equality, is hoping to control the old sin nature and to achieve a perfect society on the earth. Here's his tactical plan, and this is the background of our study of what is happening to Christians who give up their liberty and fall into reversionism as the result of their own negative responses to the Word of God or their ignoring of the Word of God. The result is the same. You are serving Satan's cause when you lose your freedom; your liberty; and, your respect for it as an individual believer.

Satan has created systems of government in keeping with his objective. He has devised systems of social organization which are dedicated to creating equality for people. Satan wants to create perfect environment. He wants to do that by creating the condition of equality among the people of any particular society. These systems, however, as they find themselves expressed primarily today in socialism and communism, are systems which are willing to exchange individual liberty in return for the will of the wisp promise of equality. The pursuit of equality always leads to dictatorship. This is because, as we see in socialism and communism as it works today, they violate the divine institution of volition (that is, of man's freedom of choice), and when it destroys the personal liberty that flows from that divine institution, the inevitable result is dictatorship.

There is no way to secure equality in a society without going to dictatorship. No society in the history of the world has ever pursued equality without ending up under some autocratic dictatorial system. Therefore, there is a great difference between pursuing equality and pursuing liberty. You may be promised everything under the sun so that everyone is equal, but you have to yield individual liberty in the process. Satan and his demons today are a very frenzied and desperate lot. This is because their time is running out on them. The level of violence and the level of secret police coercion and cruelty is steadily mounting in the world which has conformed to these organizational systems (such as socialism and communism) in order to bring about equality. This is being done with the utmost brutality and with the utmost violence. This is the reason behind the growing number of concentration camps in Russia and in China. It is the reason why Solzhenitsyn had his Russian citizenship stripped from him and why he was expelled from his country, because he had been refusing to give up elements of his individual liberty, and he had been calling for the restoration of personal freedom to the individual Russian.

That brutality that is governing and driving those men comes from this concept that people should be equal. Behind this concept is the idea of creating a perfect social environment. And behind that concept is Satan himself. Now get it straight. You don't have much time. We have men in Congress who are hell bent on bringing us into a situation of equality; they are oriented to Satan's thinking; and, they know not what they do.

This concept of equality that our leaders were leading us to has been a concept of Satan in order for him to bring us under the control all over the world that ultimately he will achieve. Who knows how close we are to the rapture, and this is the road to that worldwide control. Someday there's going to be a world in which everybody will be controlled just like the third of the earth's population is under communism today. It is the most brutal; the most vicious; the most destructive; and, the most hellish system of social organization that has ever appeared on the face of the earth. You would do yourself a great disfavor if you are so unintellectual as not to understand that communism and socialism are concepts of Satan. They are concepts of Satan because they lend themselves to the will of the wisp idea of equality. Equality always destroys liberty, and that means dictatorship.

This is in direct contrast to what the Word of God teaches. In John 8:32, we have God's view as to what a society should pursue. By the way, this happened to be the background of the men who formed this nation and wrote our Constitution. This was the colonial heritage of the people who founded what became the United States of America. Consequently, they operated on a totally different frame of reference from that of the socialist and communist world. The ideas for socialism and communism came from Satan. The ideas for a government such as we have came from God. Here's the background:

**John 8:32**

John 8:32 says, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This is the goal that the Bible constantly holds out to us--individual personal liberty. It is achieved through the truth, and the epitome of truth is the Bible. The epitome of truth is the Word of God. The freest person on the face of the earth is a Christian who has built a spiritual maturity structure in his soul and is living in the overflowing grace stage of his life. That is the freest person on the face of the earth. He has perfect capacity to be free to do everything which is right and free to resist everything which is wrong and self-destructive. Those who oppose this concept of individual liberty, such as declared here in the book of John, are the same people who, when Jesus Christ presented this concept, looked at the Lord Jesus and said, "We're going to kill that man. We're going to kill Him because he is promoting liberty."

Notice John 8:36: "If the son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham's seed, but you seek to kill Me." Why? "Because My Word has no place in you." These people were ready to kill the God man because he said, "I have come to make you free. I have come to bring you personal liberty, and the means to that is the Word of God, the revelation that I bring unto you."

The Jews said, "Who do you think you are, mister, bringing anything to us? We happen to be the descendants of Abraham. We happen to be the depository of all the Old Testament Scriptures and of the knowledge of God." The Lord Jesus Christ points out to them that while they are Abraham's physical seed, they are certainly not Abraham's spiritual seed, or they would not be out to kill Him because He has promised them liberty through the truth.

Where does such murderous motivation come from? The murderous motivation for this came from Satan himself who is the father of those to whom Jesus was speaking. Notice verse 38: "I speak that which I have seen with my Father (the truth), and you do that which you have seen with your father." Who is their father? Verse 44: "You are of your father the devil and all the (old sin nature) lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it." If there is anything that has characterized communism and socialism in our day, it is lying. There is no treaty that communism has ever made that it has ever kept its word on, only so long as it served its purpose. Men like Stalin had no hesitancy in saying that, "Lying is a method of truth. When we lie to our enemies, we are advancing the cause of communism through that lie, so that lie then becomes the truth."

Where do you get thinking like that? Wake up. Satan is around, people. He's cunning; he's sophisticated; he's clever; he is out to get God; and, he is out to get you because you stand between him and that goal. He is out to create a perfect social environment so he can point his finger at God and say, "I told you. I told you I can handle this world; I'm going to be like You; and, I'm going to create this society where everybody is equal and everybody is happy." He will kill; he will lie; and, he will do anything he has to in order to achieve that goal.

Now Satan can't do it himself. He is an individual creature who can only be in one place at a time, just like his demons. They're not omnipresent. Therefore, they have to work through systems, individuals, and peoples. That's why society has to be organized under a system that will lead to that goal. Now that's equality. Our problem is that this insanity now possesses the world leaders and, consequently, they are seeking to establish a violation of the principle of volition which was established in the Garden of Eden when God said, "This you shall do; this you shall not do; you'll eat of this; and, you won't eat this. This indicated there was a freedom now of choice, and, consequently, the goal is to destroy individual liberty. This insanity possesses the rulers of the world. The problem is that ignorance of this among the American people, and particularly among our youth, is slowly destroying our nation and our way of life which has been based upon personal freedom. We are being overwhelmed by laws which are gradually eroding our individual liberty for the vain promise of equality.

This attack is upon the most generous; upon the most prosperous; and, upon the best kind of society that this world has ever seen, the society of the American people--the capitalistic free enterprise system. Our youth are spitting upon it in contempt. Why? Because they have college professors who are fools that have turned them into fools because they don't know the difference between equality and liberty, and how God has provided the securing of that liberty. So our youth view our system as something that they should loathe.

I don't want you to be deceived by the preacher who tells you that the Bible does not reflect in favor of a certain economic and social system. That is false. A preacher has to be dumb, blind, stupid, and also lack having any sense in order to think that the Bible does not commend a certain economic system. The Bible is clearly in the favor of private ownership. It is clearly in favor of a person's freedom of choice as to what he does with what he owns. It is clearly in favor of every man possessing his own vine and his own fig tree. The whole system is a system based on liberty, not on equality. The Bible very clearly recognizes that there are poor people and that there always will be poor people, and that those who manage to prosper under the blessing of God should do something about helping the poor, hopefully to get them to the place where they can be productive.

There are two systems inherent here in our American heritage that I want to clarify for you today. I'm not just trying to teach you a history lesson. I'm trying to show you how doctrine expresses what is going on in our society. The explanation for what is happening around the world has to be the concept and the goal that Satan has--perfect environment on this earth without God. There are two systems of representative government. First of all, you may have representative government in one system which is called a representative democracy. You may have another system which is called a constitutional republic. They are similar in some respects, but they are very different in certain vital respects.

**A Representative Democracy**

Let's look at representative democracy. In a representative democracy, the people periodically go to the polls and they select their rulers by majority vote. These rulers then gather together in a law-making body, and they have absolute power to make any laws which they please to govern the people. This is a democracy. A democracy has no restrictions upon the laws which the lawmaking body may make. Have you got that? A democracy has no restrictions upon the laws which the lawmaking body may make for the people. The goal of this system is to secure equality. A representative democracy wants to secure equality. Thus, they have no restrictions upon the laws that they may impose upon people.

It took me a while to catch on to this. I remember when I was a student at Baylor University, I would read magazine articles on Russia presenting its political system as a democracy. I used to sit there and smile, and say, "Boy, what a fraud." I realize now that indeed the Russian system is a democracy. It is a democracy, and it supposedly has a politburo of representatives. They have elections in Russia periodically where the people select their rulers. It's much simpler than over here because when you go to the polls, there is only one set of names on the ballot. You don't have to be picking between a democratic candidate and a republican candidate and finding that you don't have any difference anyhow. They found what we are gradually finding out. They put it all in one, and you just say, "Yes" or "No." It's simple and it's no strain-no pain.

The result of that is that these rulers in Russia as the Politburo have absolute power to make laws for the people. That's called the central committee, ultimately, of the Communist Party. The purpose of that system is to bring equality to everybody in Russia--the same amount of food; the same amount of clothes; the same amount of recreation; the same amount of entertainment; and, the same amount of education. Everything down the line is provided; everybody is cared for; and, everybody is equal.

However, in that kind of a system, a democracy gradually concentrates power until it results in a dictatorship. There is no way for a democracy to function toward the goal of equality without gradually centering the power more and more to the people who can force the equality. That's what has to happen.

**A Constitutional Republic**

On the other hand, we have a constitutional republic. Here the people also periodically go to the polls and they elect their rulers. But these rulers by a majority vote are able to make laws to govern the people, but limited by a constitution. They can only make certain kinds of laws on certain kinds of things. They do not have complete power to make absolute rules as they choose for the people. That is a very great difference. In a constitutional republic, the rulers are limited by the Constitution. Only the people can change that written constitution. It is not even too easy for the people to change, in order that the people may not get carried away at some moment and move to a destructive end for themselves.

What is the goal of this system? The goal of this system is liberty. The goal of this limitation upon the rulers to make laws is to preserve liberty. A republic keeps the power distributed in a system of checks and balances.

**Equality vs. Freedom**

So the ideal of a democracy is universally quality. That's the plan of Satan. The ideal of a republic is individual liberty. That's the plan of God. These two goals are mutually exclusive. You cannot have both. A political system does not secure liberty and equality because there's no such thing as equality. The only equality that exists is that we are equal before God, and we have the right, consequently, to be equally treated before the law. However, after that, we're on our own according to temperament, capacity, drive, interests, and whatever else is involved in what a person does with his life. We cannot secure equality for everyone. These are mutually exclusive. Any sustained effort on the part of any government to achieve material equality for the people always ends in tyranny of some kind. It could be tyranny of a one-man dictator; tyranny of a legislative body; tyranny of a central committee or a politburo; tyranny of an uncontrollable bureaucracy; or, tyranny of a judicial oligarchy. Whatever it is, it is some kind of tyranny when you press the idea of equality far enough.

We have two great examples historically of these two systems in the American and the French Revolution.

**The American Revolution**

In the American Revolution that began in 1776, you remember that our Declaration of Independence said that all men are created equal before their Creator, and thus created equal before the treatment of the law. However, this statement in our Declaration of Independence did not ignore the obvious inequalities in human society due to personal differences. Governments were viewed in the Declaration of Independence as being ordained by God. This is the divine institution of nationalism. They were viewed as being ordained by God to protect what the Declaration of Independence says are certain unalienable rights. Among those unalienable rights is the right of liberty, along with that of life and the pursuit of happiness. Every man has certain unalienable rights among which are that of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I want you to notice that they did not say equality. They did say liberty. There are some people who are so ignorant about American history; about the Constitution; and, about the Declaration of Independence, that they actually think that these instruments were devised to provide equality for the people. Never. Read them again, and you will see that the key word in these documents is liberty.

Therefore, the goal of the American Revolution was to establish a constitutional republic where maximum individual liberty would be preserved in an orderly organized society. The American Revolution was led by uncommon men. Others who followed them wanted to be able to have the opportunity (the freedom) to rise to their stature, and they certainly wanted to see their children (their posterity) have the opportunity to rise to the stature of these uncommon men who led this nation into liberty and freedom.

**The French Revolution**

On the other hand, we had the French revolution which began 13 years later in 1789. The battle cry of the French Revolution was "Liberty, Equality, and Brotherhood." However, the French Revolution turned into a representative democracy. The result was that liberty, as it worked out, was something that only the few at the top enjoyed. The key word of the French Revolution became equality--equality along with brotherhood. The spirit of hatred for individual superiority that permeated the French society during the French Revolution was something absolutely fantastic. They were determined that everybody was going to be equal. They'd had enough of nobility; monarchy; and, all of that.

So how did they make people equal? Any time they saw somebody standing with his head above the crowd, they stuck him in the guillotine, and they cut him down to size. Pretty soon, heads were rolling left and right, and they had a beautiful society where you looked out and everybody was equal. Nobody put his head above anybody else, and they achieved equality. The result was that equality led to concentration of power under the representative democracy system of the French Revolution more and more. It created more and more turmoil until along came a young artillery officer by the name of Napoleon. He shot down a few people with a few of his artillery pieces, and he took charge, and a dictatorship was the result of the representative democracy seeking equality in the French Revolution. And Europe sustained a bloodbath under Napoleon.

Now the American system of a constitutional republic has produced sensational material prosperity for the maximum number of people. I don't have to remind you of that, but it has also become a beacon for all of mankind. All over the world, there is a third of the world's population that would long to sit in your seat today; would long to be here in your place; and, would long to be in a nation where liberty was the key feature. Yet, we know that we sit in a nation where liberty is being constantly attacked. This is because the socialistic founders of our society make no bones about telling you that if you pursue liberty, it works against equality. When everybody is free to rise to his capacity, there are some people that aren't going to make it. They're going to be very unequal.

Therefore, our constitutional republic is under ferocious attack by those who are calling for a limitation of individual liberty in exchange for government promises of material security and equality. In that kind of a role, you have to convert from your constitutional republic to your representative democracy in order to try to secure the government's promise of your material provision. As we become more equalitarian, absolute power is gradually (and almost unnoticed) moving from the hands of the people into the hands of certain individuals and small groups. It's almost a laugh when you hear these people put their fat clenched fist in the air and yell, "Power to the people." These fools don't know what they're talking about. The very system that they're calling upon is the system that is going to take power from the people. Most of them know it. It is the poor people who are the dumb cattle who don't understand the difference. They have never had the difference pointed out to them, and therefore they don't realize that power to the people means limitations upon personal individual freedom within an ordered society.

The United States is playing into Satan's plan--the plan of trading freedom for equality so that he can enslave people and cause the perfect environment to come about. The preamble states that this constitution was written to secure, among other things, "the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." Do you understand that? Right at the very start of the Constitution, in the preamble, it says that one of the purposes for which this document was formed was to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. Those are great words. That reflects that these men understood what they were doing. As a matter of fact, you can go back and read the documents. A fellow like James Madison had made very copious notes of the Constitutional Convention. He made records for us of what these men set, warning this convention against democracy. They knew where democracy led. They knew where equality would lead. Therefore, they picked up the battle cry of the Declaration of Independence which was personal individual liberty, and they put it right at the very first of the Constitution. It says, "Now, when we sat down to write this governmental document, this instrument of government, it was for the purpose of securing individual personal liberty.

Therefore, the Constitution of 1787 was ordained to safeguard the principle of liberty which had been proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence of 1776. These men understood the danger of a mindless tyranny that was possible when the majority rules, unless there is a constitutional restriction upon that majority. Even the people can hurt themselves if the system does not have checks and balances upon what the people can do in any moment.

Therefore, thank God today that when your children stand up here in Berean Christian Academy and pledge allegiance to the American flag, that they are pledging allegiance to the *Republic* of the United States of America, and not to the democracy. It is a very very great difference. Any changes that need to be made in our system can be made, but they can't be made by thoughtless whims. And only the people can make them.

Well, you can see why our Constitution is against Satan's goal. Getting back to what I started with. Here is what he is out to do--perfect social environment. How is he going to do it? He has to bring equality. He creates the system of socialism and communism to do it. That destroys the divine institution of volition; that must cancel out liberty; and, that brings dictatorship. With dictatorship, he hopes to be able to control people so that he can bring about this perfect society. Our Constitution is a grief because it protects us against anarchy and tyranny which grows when equality is imposed upon people.

So you and I as believers are faced with this matter of our personal liberty. The place of maximum freedom is the super grace life of a functioning spiritual maturity structure. However, that kind of a Christian is going to be under maximum attack for his liberty. The Christian with a spiritual maturity structure is a bulwark against Satan's program of a perfect society without God. Therefore, he hates that kind of a Christian. The Christian with a spiritual maturity structure is a preservative of individual liberty within a nation. That's why we tell you that it is important that we have many many Christians in this nation who are really taught the Word of God; who understand doctrine; and, who understand the principles that flow from doctrine. These include the principles such as we have been demonstrating here. We must have people in a maximum number who know that this nation cannot stand against the aggressive attacks against its free open system.

**Revelation 3:14-22**

Satan's demons, consequently, are seeking to divert the believer from doctrine. This condition is amply illustrated in Scripture in the Laodicean church that we began looking at last time. Therefore, please turn to Revelation 3 where we have exemplified for us this system of madness that Satan seeks to impose even upon Christians to yield their individual liberty. Here's a whole church full of people who yielded their liberty because they deteriorated from their spiritual maturity structure status.

Remember in Revelation 3:14-16 that we are reading a letter sent by Jesus Christ to the pastor-teacher of the church in Laodicea. This city was famed for its wealth; its black wool cloth; its eye medication; its hot springs; and, its culture. The church congregation is in a spiritual status of reversionism in relation to Jesus Christ. They are not cold toward the Lord; that is, they're not unbelievers. However, they're not hot toward the Lord which means they're in a carnal state with their spiritual maturity structure deteriorated; they have no super grace flowing; and, some of them have completely broken down into reversionism. They were in fact lukewarm which means backsliding into a reversionistic state.

The pastor-teacher obviously has not been doing his teaching job. Consequently, that flock is ignorant as to content; the implications; and, the applications of doctrine. God's reaction to this church and to these Christians, He says, is to vomit them out of his mouth, which means discipline to the extent of the sin unto death. The first step, however, we notice toward this breakdown into a reversionistic state from a spiritual maturity status was in their lack of being able to handle the details of life when they became prosperous. They began to break down on the facet of the mastery of the details of life. Material blessings had now come to where they are crowding out the intake of God's Word. So their spiritual judgment is broken down, and they're in the darkest of God's views and they don't know it.

So what detail of life has ever sustained you in your trial and in your heartache in the moment of your pressure? What detail of life has ever sustained you in in those times that you stayed home from church because you had something else to do: you're going to rest your body; you're going to watch a program; you're going to read something; or, you're going to keep from going out into the cold, into the wet, into the heat, or into the pleasant night air? What has sustained you when you made that exchange for the Word of God that you could have had at that moment, that could have cycled up from within the depths of your being up to your soul to have stood you when you were under fire? Some of you are going to make it when the crisis comes in this nation. Some of you will never make it. It all depends upon what you have done in your time of opportunity with the Word of God--what your sense of priorities and values were. I'll tell you that you're going to be hustling.

Some of us are old enough to remember World War II. We are old enough to remember how we used to sit in church, and there were those Christians who would come very faithfully, and there weren't too many. They dropped the bomb on Pearl Harbor, and right away, people were coming to church. That Sunday morning service on December 7th was about like usual, but the Sunday night service was packed. They were out there hustling all over the place, and all of a sudden church attendance starts rising all over the United States. For many, it was too late.

The next time something like that happens to this nation, you might my not even have a church to come to. You're going to be on your own. It's all going to be over, and it's going to be like somebody thrown into a prison camp, and then you're going to sit there you're going to say, "Now what do I remember about God? What do I remember about the principles of the Word of God?" All you're going to have is what's in your mentality. That's all. So take care. If you are a discerning person, you will see that we have touched upon a very crucial factor here--that we are hard-pressed to find politicians who know the difference between liberty and equality. Therefore, they are completely disoriented and playing right into the hands of our enemy, his majesty, the devil.

Well, in verse 17, their brag was that they were wealthy; they have all that they need; and, they were rich--"increased with goods." The word "increased" is "plouteo." It is in the perfect tense which means that they became wealthy in the past, and that's their status now. There was a time when they didn't have it so good. However, Laodicea was a banking center. It was a place where you could make money. Now things have become, through their own active efforts, pretty good. This is the status that 1 Timothy warns about. In 1 Timothy 6:9, Paul says, "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil. While some coveted after it, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." There is the principle.

This is exactly what happened to the people in Laodicea. They are now piercing themselves through with many sorrows. They have become subject to many errors and to many sorrows. Why? Because God has blessed them materially, and look what they say. Consequently, they're increased with goods, and they have need of nothing. All of doctrine now is incidental in their life. The super grace status that brought them prosperity is now being used to bring them their self-destruction. The spirit of society in Laodicea was one of very great self-confidence. When they had an earthquake in 60 A.D., they rebuilt the city refusing any aid from the emperor because they were so pleased with the fact that they were a people of such means and wealth. They had need of nothing.

Yet, the Lord says, "Do you not know?" This is the Greek word "oido." "You don't know your real true condition," and then he lists what the true condition of these reversionists is. They see themselves in a very commendable light. Callouses on the soul have shut out the light of the Word of God. They don't see themselves in the grotesque condition that they are really in. They move in a circle of other reversionistic Christians so they all complement one another, and there is no enlightenment from each other. Therefore, here's their true condition; this is their spiritual reality, and only doctrine can make it clear:

**The Condition of a Reversionist**

1. Number one, God says, "Your trouble is that you are **wretched** ("talaiporos"). This first part of this word "taiai" means to endure. "Poros" is our word for "callous." What these people are, he says, is enduring calluses. You have become hardened toward the Lord so you're in a state of unhappiness. You think you are great. You have everything, and what you are is a bunch of wretched people. You're calloused in your soul.
2. Secondly, they were **miserable** ("eleeinos"). The word "eleeinos" in the Greek means "somebody to be pitied." This is a very shocking idea to these folks who are moving around in their fancy dude Cadillac chariots and their nice clothes, and going out after Sunday morning church and they're going to downtown Laodicea to the Southland Life building for a little smorgasbord lunch. These people knew how to live. And here, the Lord Jesus Christ says, "You're to be pitied." They say, "What do you mean, to be pitied? Man we've got it made." They think they are someone to be envied. This word is used one other time in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 15:19. A reversionist is a pathetic sight. It makes a person sad to view his complacent spiritual disorientation. Now that Christian who has rebelled against doctrine and that Christian who has deserted a position of truth, God says, "He's miserable. He is a pitiful sight, and he is to be pitied." He is callous; he is wretched; he is pitiful; and, he is to be looked upon with the utmost sympathy.
3. Third, it says, he is **poor** ("ptochos"). "Ptochos" means "beggar." It refers to a beggar type personality who has no desire or ability to care for himself. This carries the image of one who crouches. He cowers and he is fearful. The Laodiceans are in a state of abject spiritual poverty. They have no desire to correct themselves. Outwardly, what do they look like? They look bold, arrogant, and sophisticated. But what are they inwardly? God says you're a bunch of cowering beggars. You may walk around, and other people see you, and you look like a very self-composed sophisticated character. They were a bunch of beggars, no matter how large their bank accounts were. Because they were beggars, they could not enjoy their money.

Every now and then you read in the papers about some poor slob that dies, and they go in and they find his shoddy little apartment. He's got newspapers stacked up and old junk that he preserved. Finally, somebody gets to his smelly mattress, and they open it up and there's $100,000 in it. Every day he was on the street corner begging for coins. Here is a beggar, sleeping on his $100,000, and he couldn't enjoy his money.

1. Also, God says, "You people are **blind**" ("tuphlos"). They were blind to spiritual realities, and blind to what they were really like. These Christians viewed themselves as people of great insights and of great spiritualism. That was what was the joke to the Lord. These people thought they really had some great spiritual insights. God says, "You're a bunch of blinded fools, and you don't know what you really are." Remember that this is the condition of the vanity that we read about in Ephesians 4:17-19. This is the condition of emptiness which develops in the soul when you go negative toward God's truth. When the condition of emptiness develops in that carnal state, you suck in all kinds of human viewpoint, doctrine of demons, and false concepts. Gradually your soul becomes darkened toward God. Understand that. That's what happened. These people were walking around with their arrogant ways. They should have all been wearing dark glasses because that's the kind of spiritual eyes they had. They were blinded. They could not help but to move in spiritual darkness because of their deterioration spiritually.
2. Finally, God says, "You're **naked** ("gumnos"). This means that they lacked the spiritual clothing which is befitting a new creature in Christ Jesus such as we have in Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:24. If you had been able to attend the Laodicean church service, it would have been a style show every Sunday. Everybody would have had a new toga, a new drape, and a new brooch. It would have been beautiful. A new hairstyle every Sunday would have been an exciting experience, better than even Berean Memorial Church. And God comes along and tells these style-minded women and these classy men that they were a bunch of naked idiots.

Put yourself in that conversation. I want you to understand that one morning all these sophisticated people came to church, and the pastor-teacher gets up and says, "I have a letter to read from the apostle John that is a communication from Jesus Christ. Dear Friends, God says he wants to throw you up. You make him sick. You think you're really loaded, don't you? You think you've got everything, and you don't have any need of anything. I'll tell you what I think of you people who are loaded. You're wretched. You're calloused and hard toward God. You're miserable. You're a bunch of beggars. You're to be pitied. You're poor. You're beggars scrounging around. You are blind. You can't see things. You have no sense of reality of life. You're completely naked." You can see the rustle. People are looking around, wondering who He's talking about. Not me.

The spiritual maturity structure is what God was looking for. That "Shekhinah" glory dwelling upon the soul of the believer was not to be found in Laodicea. Only knowing and responding to the Word of God was going to solve this pathetic condition. Apparently, the thing that was so sad in Laodicea was that there was nobody giving the Word. Therefore, these poor slobs didn't even have a chance.

However, you do have a chance. But, if you move in the direction of reversionism, these five things will be true of you. It will be true of you just as it was true of them. Anytime a Christian who has a spiritual maturity structure that is functioning and the grace of God pouring into his life starts going negative to the Word of God; starts ignoring it; and, starts being sophisticated and smart and loses his sense of individual personal freedom and liberty, he is starting on the backslide trail. When he gets to the bottom, this is what is going to be true of him.

It's rather interesting, isn't it, that just as spiritual maturity has five main facets to it, reversionism also has five main facets to it. You might want to research that a little on your own.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

[**Back to the Advanced Bible Doctrine (Philippians) index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/philippiansdanish.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)