***Guard the Word of God

RV44-02***

We are studying Revelation 3:7-13 as we continue with our exploration of the information in the letter sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to the church in the city of Philadelphia.

It is not uncommon for divine viewpoint believers to be rejected and to be oppressed in spite of the genuine good which they produce. There are various forces in Satan's world which find Bible doctrine Christians a threat to them in their evil goals and in their lifestyle. A current example of that, of course, is the agonies that the Wycliffe Bible translators are going through. The Wycliffe Bible translators with Chet Bitterman, who is still being held by the guerrilla forces in Colombia, and whose purpose; whose goal; and, whose requirement is that the Wycliffe translators get out of Colombia entirely, or they will pay it for with the life of this missionary. This is a current living example of what believers in various parts of the world face in circumstances where their very lives are endangered by the forces of Satan's world, simply because they are Bible doctrine oriented believers. They are oriented to the Word of God. They are oriented to the principles of divine viewpoint, and the world rejects this.

This is no surprise. The Lord, of course, made that very clear. Before He left, He made it clear to His disciples that they should understand that if the world rejected Him, all of His followers could count on the fact that they would be equally rejected.

So, the fact is that rejection is not an uncommon experience on the part of believers, and not the least of these areas of rejection are to be found in the religious forces that make up Satan's world. These, of course, are epitomized by such organizations as the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. These liberals belittle and discredit biblical fundamentalist Christians. These liberals reject the authority of the Bible as God's message, and they hold in contempt those who look to Scripture as being the Word of God, and as being the final authority.

Religious liberalism, you remember, is economically socialistic, and it is politically collectivist, which Bible doctrine believers oppose because the Bible opposes that. The Bible is against economic socialism. The Bible is against political collectivism. The National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches are for these. These organizations, as you know, have on many occasions used the money that people who sit in churches such as yourself sent to these national organizations to support guerrilla actions in various countries of the world. These are literally terrorist groups which have been killing off the kinds of people that were represented by the Philadelphia church.

We have, on the news, the current picture of the Roman Catholic Pope who is touring the world, and who is publicly embracing some of the most way-out Marxist clergy, for the explicit purpose of bringing into stable control under his authority what now amounts to something like 30 to 35% of Roman Catholic clergy who are outright Marxists. If you know anything about the Roman Catholic Church, this would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. If there was anybody in the world that we could count on to oppose communism, it was the Roman Catholic Church. They were bitter antagonists in every way. Now we have the Pope publicly conveying his approval of this segment of his clergy – Marxists, who are creating the problems that you're hearing about in some of these Latin American countries. While they are decrying what is happening to some of the people who have been killed from the Roman Catholic Church, don't forget that it is the Marxists themselves who have brought this about – the very thing that these clergymen are promoting.

The results of this can be very fascinating, I think, as you think about the end time with the antichrist ruling the world, which is dominated by Marxist thinking, and that's what the Bible indicates. The Bible indicates that it's going to be a totalitarian, central, organized, centrally-controlled world, and it's going to be a world in cooperation with an ecclesiastical organization. Suddenly, the people that we thought never could get together like the Communists and the Roman Catholic Church are now indeed getting together, and very much so.

So, here you have before our very eyes again, Philadelphia type believers being cast out, and the way being prepared for the non-Philadelphia type believer to take over the ecclesiastical control of the world. And that would be a perfect setup and a perfect situation with which the antichrist may cooperate.

1982 still looks like the year of destiny. More and more, it is almost breathtaking to stand and to realize that now the ten-nation economic confederacy is in place – ten nations. It's finished. It is amazing to realize that in Brussels now there is a capital for this Western Confederacy, and that they have a parliament. They are considering issues of a political nature. They are issuing their own currency. The thing is gelling at an unbelievable rate now. You have one of the major power blocks (the antichrist's base of operation) set and ready to go.

So, it's not going to get better for the kinds of believers represented in the Philadelphia church. The liberals are going to continue to seek to neutralize the influence of believers who proclaim the biblical gospel of personal salvation, because this undermines the religious liberals' goals of a social action and of a social gospel. I'm glad to see that some of us are beginning to understand that the word "liberal" is a very, very non-biblical title. It's a disgrace. It's a great dishonor to be known as a liberal.

I'm getting sick and tired of being treated like we are the stumblebums, and we're the idiots, and we're the ignoramuses, and that we don't know what is behind a word like "liberal," and what is behind the concept – what it represents in the way of secular humanism. This is the issue with believers today. We are outcasts, and it intimidates us unless you understand your position. If you understand your position, then you are ready to stand alone; you're ready to fight alone; and, you're not ready to subject yourself to any forces of this world just to get their approval and to get their cooperation. You don't care whether you have it or not. The only source of authority and power you want is that of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, biblical believers from New Testament times to this day have found doors of various kinds closed to them. That's one of the things the Lord is discussing here in this letter to the Philadelphia church: doors to Christian service; doors to social acceptance; doors to material support; and, doors to a respectful hearing. The spiritual maturity structure type of believer is treated as an outcast by the power structures even within the born again Christian community.

And don't kid yourself that, within people who are going to heaven, who are totally in our camp, that there is not a political power structure that looks with reservations and looks askant at people who are of the local Philadelphia fundamentalist type. Competent, honorable, and dedicated soldiers of Jesus Christ are often treated with contempt and indifference by carnal believers who are seeking their own vested interests. It is discouraging with people like that. It's depressing to find yourself as an outcast at the hands of those who should be most supportive of you, and who are often the most blessed by your efforts and your life.

It's the old story of Christians who think that they must share the unbelieving world's lifestyle in order to be able to witness to it. They are willing to go along with the world, and they reject the believers who say, "Nothing doing. That's not my lifestyle, and I'm not going to have anything to do with it." It is depressing. It is discouraging.

I talked to a lady recently whose husband has been very, very high in evangelical circles, and a very famous radio preacher whose name everybody here probably would recognize immediately (practically all of you if I were to mention it), has had a little petty little indignation toward this man. And many of you will come up to me and say, "Hey, did you hear what so-and-so said on the radio? It was sure good last week." I have to think to myself, "Boy, if only you knew the pettiness and the cheapness of that famous man as he seeks to close the door to this man that he's got it in for. The result is that this man is so depressed and so discouraged. It's kind of sad, but I told his wife, "I suggest he check back with the Philadelphia church, and see who opens doors and who closes doors, and get a different perspective." I don't care what that man is doing. He is a petty little man. Oh, he's famous, and everybody drools on his words. But he's a petty, cheap little man. Unfortunately, he is not surrounded by manly men who would stand up and cut him short, as famous as he is, in that kind of cheap pettiness.

So, within the Christian evangelical community, don't kid yourself for one moment that there are not forces under Satan's manipulation who are trying to close doors. The Lord Jesus promises that He is going to open doors to his faithful Philadelphia type believers. Therefore, when you run into a closed door, always remember that it is an indication from the Lord of the direction that He has given you, and the direction He wants you to travel. If that door is closed, don't bemoan it like this man is doing and saying, "You know, I'm practically destroyed here. It's unbelievable."

This famous radio preacher was invited to speak at a certain occasion, and this man was invited to lead in prayer. The master of ceremonies had to call him up and say, "I'm sorry, we can't have you lead in prayer. The speaker won't allow it." That gets discouraging. That gets wounding, unless you understand the principle of the God of the open door. If that door is not open, then you consider it a door that the Lord does not want you to go through. It is hard to do sometimes because you think that that's exactly where you should go. You can't believe that that's not where the Lord wants you to go. But if He's got that door closed, then you accept it as the God who has the capacity to open it if it is to be opened. There is no human power and there's no power group, whether it's Christian or unbeliever, who can close the door that the Lord wants his servants to enter.

So, being true to the Word of God and seeking only the Lord's approval in our life is not an easy road, but it is the only satisfying one. The Lord Jesus knows the rejections. He knows the antagonisms directed toward you. He has experienced them. But He opens the doors, and no one can close them. You must understand that principle.

**The Inerrancy of Scripture**

These people here in Philadelphia were commended because, though they had little influence and little power, they still kept the Word of God: "And has kept My word." The word "kept" means to guard the Word of God. The basic issue, of course, in guarding the Word of God is the basic defense of the inerrancy of Scripture. The basic attack against the Bible is against the inerrancy of the Bible. This is blasphemous nonsense against the integrity of God. We've gone over that in some detail. I only want to remind you that when inerrancy is rejected, it is only a matter of time before the absolute authority of the Bible is abandoned. And that's the point of the attack against the inerrancy of the Bible (that the Bible is a book without mistakes) so that eventually you don't have to obey what the Bible says. That's the whole point of it.

Many Christians, unfortunately, are deceived again because they cannot believe that influential and learned man could be wrong in rejecting the inerrancy of the Bible. These are godly men, and they love the Lord, and they think that if they say that the Bible does have mistakes in it, "I can't believe that those men could be wrong." I could mention to you names now that all of you would know immediately, and some of you might be shocked: "Do you mean that he doesn't believe that the Bible is without error?" And then you might be tempted to say, "That's hard for me to imagine." There was a time when Fuller Seminary on the West Coast stood very strong and firm for the inerrancy of Scripture. Then, eventually they tolerated professors on their staff who had mental reservations about it. Finally, they changed their doctrinal statement, so that they now believe that the Bible contains errors, and the Fuller Seminary has gone down the drain as an effective school. It has gone farther out, and the people that are coming out of it now are rejecting other areas of doctrine that the original people who rejected inerrancy never would've believed possible.

So, this is a very, very serious matter. Just because some great, wonderful Bible teacher (that you happen to have a great deal of confidence in) rejects inerrancy, you better believe that he's wrong, no matter how famous he is and how dedicated he may be. His sincere error is just as devastating as anybody else's – as the most livid, unbelieving liberal's error is.

Many Christian groups, unfortunately, will tolerate the heresy of rejecting inerrancy in their midst for the sake of denominational or organizational peace, with money and power being placed above the Word of God. That's why you will see some very fundamentally sound groups who reject the doctrine of inerrancy. They're doing it for money. They're doing it for power. They're doing it for acceptance. There is only way to deal with those who reject biblical inerrancy, and this is at the heart of what the Lord is talking about here, when it says, "You guard my word." The first place that you do not guard the Word of the Lord is when you deny the inerrancy of Scripture. And the only way to deal with people who reject biblical inerrancy is to remove them from one's fellowship. That's it. Period. Over and out. You don't give your money to a group like that. You don't invite them to speak in your groups. You don't invite them into fellowship. You just say, "OK, you've got your world out there. You run with that world. It's a doomed world. You're going to go downhill. And we're not going to take the ride with you."

That is not easy to do. I have had to be faced with that occasion here in Berean Memorial Church, where somebody comes in periodically with some way out kooky idea, or some just ordinary run-of-the-mill heretical idea. I have to tell them, "You can't teach here." Sometimes it has been people who are teaching, and I've had to say, "That's the end of the line." Inerrancy is an area where you cannot compromise. You don't do it personally, and don't associate with those who do. I'll guarantee you that the big churches who themselves believe (and whose preachers believe) that the Bible is without error will not do that. We have them in our area. They will tolerate all kinds of things within their congregation, including teachers who will convey this idea, because they're after the power; they're after the money; and, they're after the numbers. You better face up realistically to what exists out here in the so-called realm of the servants of God – the dedicated preachers. The reason why anybody rejects the inerrancy of the Bible produced by a perfect God is to justify human viewpoint concepts, and to place fallen man's reason in judgment upon the message of God.

**Secular Humanism**

The rejection of the Bible as the absolutely true voice of God is very dangerous because it always leads to what we call secular humanism. Secular humanism is the religion of the public school system. It is the religion of liberalism. Liberalism is the political expression. Secular humanism is the religious expression. What the humanists believe has been declared in two manifestos. One is called Manifesto I, and the other is called Manifesto II. Sometimes we use these terms, but you don't really know, unless you've read these manifestos, what secular humanism really believes. So, I'm going to give you a quick little briefing here, and all I'm going to do is read their statements of belief. This is the result, inevitably, of denying the inerrancy of Scripture, and thus to deny everything that the Word of God teaches. It is a serious matter when you deny the inerrancy of Scripture.

**The Humanist Manifesto II**

One paragraph in Manifesto II says this: "We believe that traditional, dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. Any account of nature should pass the test of scientific evidence. In our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religion do not do so. We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural. It is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and the fulfillment of the human race."

A second statement says, "Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from the present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. We continue to exist in our progeny, and in the way that our lives have influenced others in our culture."

Another statement: "Ethics stems from human need and interests (that is, what is right and what is wrong). To deny this distorts the whole basis of life. Human life has meaning because we create and develop our futures. We strive for the good life here and now. The goal is to pursue life's enrichment, despite debasing forces of vulgarization, commercialization, bureaucratization, and dehumanization."

Another quote: "In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitive denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults." And you know what that means.

One more: "The problem of economic growth and development can no longer be resolved by one nation alone. They are worldwide in scope. It is the moral obligation of the developed nations to provide, through an international authority that safeguards human rights, massive technical, agricultural, medical, and economic assistance, including birth control techniques, to the developing portions of the globe. World poverty must cease. Hence, extreme proportions in wealth, income, and economic growth should be reduced on a worldwide basis."

I'm sure you're smart enough to catch all the implications of all those statements. When you deny the inerrancy of Scripture, you come inevitably to secular humanism, and you come to liberalism. They go hand in hand. What I have just read to you is the finest epitome declaration of liberalism. But the liberals in Congress will never say this is what they believe. Some of them do. Some of them are that forthright. But all of them ultimately are pursuing this goal. It's a goal of totalitarian domination. It's a one-world goal. That's the point of the Trilateral Commission. That's the point of the Council on Foreign Relations. Isn't it interesting that where a ray of hope seemed to burst upon the nation last November, we find ourselves with a president who is now surrounded with more trilateralists and more members of the Council on Foreign Relations than did his predecessor in office.

Where are we going? That's an interesting question. Hold your hats, folks. It's the year of destiny for believers, and strange and interesting things are taking place in our country. We have listened to a speech the other day of a president hopeful of turning around the economy. You're hearing a lot of talk about cutting the fat out of the spending of the nation and the budget. But unfortunately, that's not where the problem lies. The problem in our country lies in the lean that's in the budget. A nation that has gone so far economically from God's principles for the governing of a nation in terms of economics and in terms of personal responsibility, that now you are already seeing the shrill voices that are crying in indignation that they are going to be denied the free money to which they've become addicted.

This government will, in all likelihood, never be able to deny the free money to the people who have become addicted. Some 60% of Americans get something from the government handed to them in one of those little green/blue checks that has come through the mail, and they are not about to give it up. Violence in the streets – that's what you can expect if the country should try to survive and to salvage itself.

So, I tell you that now so that you don't get your hopes too high, and so that you understand that the impact of denying the Word of God is long-range, and even when you get to the place where you want to turn it around, you may have gone beyond the point of no return. Did you ever hear of a guy named Esau? For a little bowl of food, he sold his honored position of being the one through whom the Messiah line of Jesus Christ would come down. He sold his place in history, so that instead of it being Abraham, Isaac, and Esau (the honored names of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant), it became Abraham, Isaac, and his younger brother Jacob. Why? Because he was willing to be indifferent to the Word of God; toward the promise of the Word of God; and, to compromise truth. He very soon (immediately) realized his mistake. You read that terrible, terrible passage in the Bible that said, "He wept with bitter tears," but he could not recover what he lost.

That is, in all likelihood, where we have come as a nation, because we have let the prostitutes known as liberals in our country deal with the Word of God in such contemptuous ways with their supposedly superior intelligence, and create the secular humanist manifesto concepts, and impose them upon Christians who stood around like dumb, stupid sheep. But we are fighting back. As long as the story of Jonah is true in the Bible, who knows what can happen when a nation finally wakes up, and if there are enough people who are going to wake up.

**Guarding the Word of God**

Guarding the Word of God – that's what it's all about. God says, "I love you for it." The Lord Jesus honors those who honor His Word. But we would be remiss if we did not point out that honoring the Word of God means more than the fact that you stand for right principles of doctrine, and that you stand for right concepts of what the Bible teaches. It's not just standard doctrine. I'm sure that what was included here that pleased the Lord about these Philadelphia believers is that they guarded the Word in their Christian living. They guarded the Word in their living.

I have noticed that a lot of people make the mistake of thinking that their approval of biblical principles makes them godly people. I'm amazed at how many people will sit in church, and they will listen to godly principles explained, and they will say, "I approve that. I'm for that. That's for me. Yes, I believe that," and then go right out and violate them. We've got this kind of blind spot among believers everywhere, including among us, who think that because they subscribe to biblical principles, that they are now godly people. They will listen to the teaching of Bible doctrine on Christian conduct, and they'll profess full agreement with what the Bible teaches. Then in practice, they'll violate biblical morality when it serves their purpose, for example. These same people who are all for what the Ten Commandments, don't mind violating biblical morality when it serves their purpose. It's the old story that you may profess shock over somebody's evil ways, while you yourself may be shot-through with other evils, particularly of a mental attitude type.

For this reason, the Bible says, "Be careful that you are not just a hearer of the word, but that you are a doer. Be careful that you're not walking around trying to get a little speck out of some other believer's eye when you have a beam in your own eye, obstructing your own vision. That's what we have happening all the time. There are believers who think that because they give verbal approval to principles of biblical morality, that they are now godly Christians.

So, it's very sad when a Christian rejects the Word of God in practice. He is not guarding it then. For example, we have Christians who gossip and slander other believers and other people, often with some sanctimonious justification. The same believer who is so dedicated to the Word of God in the principles of godly living does not mind using his tongue to slander and to gossip about other people. If he knew enough about the principle of the privacy of the priesthood of the believer and the omnipotence and the power of God, he would know enough to keep his business to himself and let God deal with his business relative to other believers. There's that snotty, little, sniping tongue that believers exercise toward one another, and they don't realize that when they do it, they are not guarding the Word of God. They are turning against it.

**Entertainment**

We have Christians who attend places of entertainment which dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ. In our day, you have more places you can go that will debase you and that will cheapen you, and that are degrading to you as a human being, and that are degrading and dishonoring to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of looking at those and saying, "Those are vile; they're bad; and, I'm sorry for the people who are caught up in them," we have Christians poking their noses into places like that and looking them over because they have the attitude: "It can't hurt me." This is a danger for people who are steeped in doctrine and who have some very strong spiritual stability. They think that they can play around with entertainment. They can take it into their soul and not get hurt by it. When you do that, you're not guarding the Word of God.

**Language**

We have Christians who use language which honors Satan and which grieves the Holy Spirit in order to prove themselves manly, or to gain acceptance with the world. What kind of language is befitting a Christian? How often Christians use language which indicates they're not guarding the Word of God. If you're guarding the Word of God, there is certain language which is compatible. Don't give me that nonsense about the fact that you were just all upset; you were just put out; and, it was just the spur of the moment. That's the spur of the moment that shows what you really are – not when all the nice front is put on. Most of the time, we are dealing with each other with a facade of reserve. It is only when that facade is suddenly removed from us, in an unguarded moment, that we come through with what our real attitude is toward the Word of God.

**Publications**

The reading of certain publications debase one's personal character and one's personal mental purity. It's very interesting to see how many believers will play that ball. I used to have a man who was a member of this church who told me that for a long time he subscribed to Playboy magazine because he enjoyed the articles. He thought they were so informative. I suspect there was something else that was informing too, along the line. But unfortunately, when he discovered his kids getting informed, he thought maybe he ought to discontinue his publication. He was not regarding the Word of God. And as I followed his career, he seems to have inherited some of the consequences of that failure to guard the Word of God relative to what he was willing to look at and what he was willing to read.

**Attitude**

We have believers who are not guarding the Word of God in terms of their attitude toward other believers. A kindly spirit is often lacking toward believers in their weaknesses. Instead of trying to help believers in their weaknesses, we are so often prone to want to bloody them. And believers do have weaknesses. Believers have all of these little games they play; all of these little weaknesses; all these little ups and downs; all these little maneuvers; and, all these little internal ambitions of one kind and another. Yet, we fail to look at that person, and say, "That person's worth everything in the world because Jesus Christ died for that believer. That person is worth everything because that person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. He has great gifts and potential – and weaknesses are to be helped to overcome, not to be bloodied. There are weaknesses. Don't kid yourself.

**Cheating, Lying, and Stealing**

We don't often guard the Word of God when it comes to the little cheating; the lying; or, the stealing, when it serves our purpose – just little violations of Scripture. So often the Christian will lie; the Christian will cheat; and the Christian will steal. Oh, but he is so firm for the Ten Commandments. He thinks it's a wonderful code. He just loves it. But he does not guard the Word of God in these ways.

**Authority**

We have the rebel against biblical lines of authority in family; in church; and, in society. How much human grief is brought to people because they will not obey the biblical lines of authority in family; in the church; and, in the institutions of our society? The very Christians who sing the loudest in church, in their devotion and their praise of the Lord, are the ones who are often the most guilty of being rebels against authority in its constituted biblically-appointed lines.

**Prayer**

We have Christians who believe so firmly in prayer, but who seldom practice it, until they get in a bind or they need a little magic to help them out in some ambition they are pursuing. That's so cheap and so degrading: "Yes, I believe in prayer. Yes, the Bible teaches prayer. Yes, that's the tactic with which we fight in the angelic conflict. Yes, it's our lifeline. It's our survival line." But we don't do it. When that happens, just put yourself down, friend, that you are not guarding the Word of God. In that respect, you have not kept the Word of God in terms of the Philadelphia church.

**Christian Service**

We have the Christian who is all for Christian service, but he leaves it for others to do – promises never fulfilled. I suppose every Sunday morning I really ought to read about the parable of the two sons: the father who asks for the help, and the one son said, "I'll go," and then he didn't go; and, the other son said, "I won't go," but then he changed his mind and went. And the Lord says, "Now which of them did the will of his father?" How many times have we got Christians who pretend they are engaged in service? They pretend they are because someday they're going to get around to it, and that salves their conscience. But their lives are totally preoccupied with all the trivia that is not going to mean a thing, once they have closed their eyes in death and moved over to the other side. Christian Service is one of the primary ways in which we do not guard the Word of God, but we deny its principles.

We often object to welfare put out by the government. We object to the principle of government confiscation to take from producers, and to give to non-producers who often do not deserve it. But at the same time, we deny the Word of God when we are not sensitive enough to the struggles and to the desperations of the genuinely poor, such that, with our own money, we try to help. We do not bother seeking with our own money to help those who have genuine, desperate needs.

If you perhaps noticed in the reading of the Humanist Manifesto II of secular humanism, one of the ludicrous statements they made is that they are going to remove poverty from the world. Jesus Christ says that poverty is always going to be in the world. You're always going to have the poor. But these poor intellectual ignoramuses think that they have a way to resolve it.

**Evangelism**

Many believers approve the work of evangelism, but then they go out and they live their whole lives all week long without ever being conscious of seeking an opportunity, or to watching for an opportunity to explain the gospel to the unsaved: "Let some preacher do it. Let some other zealous Christian do it." We often deny the Word of God when we do not move through our week with the openness to opportunities to evangelize. It is not possible that there is not someone here who has never opened his mouth or her mouth once, when opportunity presented itself, to tell a person how they can go to heaven. It's possible that there are some people here who aren't even sure, if they had to explain it to themselves right now, what they would say, and how they would come to the issue. In other churches, and with Christians in general, this is horribly contaminated. If you were faced with a person who's got a couple minutes to live, what would you say to them? Most Christians would say, "I want to see hymn number 34 to you. I'm going to sing 'Just as I am.' As I sing it, I want you to raise your hand feebly, and I want you to try to get up. I'm going to stand here, and I want you to walk over here." And they have it all worked out – everything except what the person needs to make it.

And you may laugh, but, boy, there are a lot of people who wouldn't know how to do anything more than that. There's no reason that you should not know. If you don't, you better get the introductory tape, and start listening to the first side. If you don't do the work of evangelism, and deny it, you deny the Word of God in that respect.

**Money**

You think that your local church ministry is just wonderful, but you spend most of your money on your personal desires, and once in a while you throw some scraps to God. Christians are very careful not to keep records about their giving, because if they kept records about their giving, they might find how little they give. They prefer just, once in a while, to walk up to the box and drop something in. They don't like to look at a little book that they kept, and say, "Week number one, I gave this much; and, week number two, I gave this much. In the month of February, I gave this: $4.50." If you don't keep records, you're going to deny the Word of God. If you don't keep some organized tap on the thing, you're going to deny the Word of God every time, in spite of your zeal for your wonderful local church ministry.

**Preoccupation**

We are so occupied with ourselves so often that we can only bemoan about how others treat us and our circumstances in life. That's one of the saddest things. When a person is preoccupied with Christ, your eyes are in the right place. How often somebody says, "I don't come to church because the ladies always treat me so badly. Nobody talks to me. Nobody invites me to their house." Well, somebody did once, and that's why they don't do it again. They are big, self-pity, bemoaning creatures. You really have to be spiritually ignorant to even make remarks like that, because it tells so much about you. You are denying the Word of God. You need occupation with Christ. Your eyes are on the Lord. The battle is the Lord's. Focus on all of those great and famous and wonderful statements of the saints of old. Then we deny them by bemoaning ourselves. We go against everything that we have been taught with the Word of God when it interferes, at some point, with what we personally want to do.

**Consequences**

To tie this up, here are the consequences of guarding one's attitude toward the Word of God.

**Negative Consequences**

Romans 1:21: here are the consequences of negative volition response toward the Word of God, in the ways we have mentioned, and in many, many more: "Because when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, (they became ignorant intellectuals). Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things (they'd blaspheme God by reducing Him to an animal). Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. They practiced immorality and perversion; who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever. Amen."

They rejected divine viewpoint, and they accepted human viewpoint. They turned to false objects of worship. Negative volition toward the Word of God is very, very expensive. We are not guarding the Word of God – violating the Word of God. This is done in such a widespread way, even by Christians, because our society so condones it and so dignifies it. Do you think you're going to get away with it? "Whatsoever man sows, that shall he reap."

**Positive Consequences**

But there's a happy side and the positive side. We will have the results of keeping the Word of God, not only externally, but in these mental attitude ways as well. Luke 11:28 says, "But he said, 'Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.'" The Word of God kept is a source of personal blessing.

Proverbs 4:4 says, "He taught me also, and said unto me, 'Let your heart retain my words. Keep my commandments and live.'" Verse 7: "Wisdom is the principal thing. Therefore, get wisdom, and with all your getting, get understanding." Do you know how you get wisdom? Through the intake of doctrine into the soul. When we want our young people to know that sexual immorality, while completely condoned by our society, is a severe violation of the principles of God, and is, of course, of great personal self-destruction, there is no greater place to get that wisdom than the book of Proverbs. That's why it was written, in part.

Proverbs 7:1-5, for example: "My son, keep My words, and lay up My commandments with Me. Keep My commandments and live in My law as the apple of My eye. Bind them upon My fingers. Write them upon the table of your heart (the mentality). Say unto wisdom, 'You are my sister,' and call understanding your kinswoman, that they may keep you from the strange woman, and from the foreigner who flatterers with her words" – the loose woman.

Then we have that great statement in Joshua 1:8 where we have the consequences of functioning on the Word of God and keeping the Word of God: "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate therein, day or night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success." You will have personal blessings of all kind, and possession of divine viewpoint wisdom. You will enjoy prosperity and success, and store treasures in Heaven. We will have all of this because we keep the Word of God.

I hope, perhaps, that we have been able to signify in your understanding the great, great promise of the Word of God when we guard its precepts, and the great, great tragedy and losses when we turn against it. You're going to have to fight your negative volition on this, because when you take this kind of a stand for the Word of God, then it closes many doors that you want to pursue. It closes the doors to many things that you want to rationalize; that you want to justify; and, that you want to dignify that this book condemns. You're trying to put a good connotation on something that is only evil. How great to be in the character and in the tradition of the Philadelphia church, and for the Lord Jesus Christ someday to be able to meet you and say, "Well done, good and faithful Berean. You have kept My Word. You have guarded the truth."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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