***Functioning in the Will of God  
  
RV69-02***

We are studying the letter to Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-22. This is segment number 23. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His humanity, was able to say that He always obeyed the will of God the Father for Him. This was a tremendous thing for a person to be able to say – that He was always obedient to the will of God. In John 6:38, therefore, the Lord Jesus says, "For I came down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." The primary mission of Jesus Christ was to do what the Father had planned for Him.

In John 8:29, we read, "And He that sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him." The Lord Jesus constantly walked in fellowship with God, His Heavenly Father.

In John 5:30, Jesus said: "I can of My own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge. And My judgment is just because I seek not My own will, but the will of the Father who has sent Me." The Lord Jesus Christ, the unique God-man, knew that He could accomplish nothing of value outside of the will of God for Him."

John 4:34: "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.'" The thing that motivated the Lord Jesus day-by-day was executing the Father's will for Him. There was no doubt in the testimony of Jesus Christ that He was concerned with doing the Father's will for Him, and that that is what He did precisely.

Therefore, in Luke 11:2, when He was teaching His disciples how to pray, He included the statement: "And He said unto them, 'When you pray, say, 'Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come (and then He included this statement:), Thy will be done: as in heaven, so on earth.''" So it was a matter of great concern to the Lord Jesus Christ that the earthly experience that He had as a human being should be identical to the experience that He had in heaven. When He was with the Father in heaven, He always did that which was the Father's will. That's the way it is in heaven. Nobody does anything in heaven except that which is in keeping with the Father's will. The Lord Jesus says, "That's the way it should be on earth." That's the way we as human beings should walk, so that constantly we are in the center of God's will.

The Lord Jesus knew, and He fulfilled, the Father's will for Him simply because He was under the control of God the Holy Spirit. That was the key to exercising and to executing that desire of fulfilling God's will for Him. In John 1:32-33, we read, "And John bore witness saying, 'I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him (that is, upon Jesus). And I knew Him not, but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, 'Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining, on Him, the same is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.''"

So, the Scriptures are clear that God the Holy Spirit was in control of the God-man Jesus Christ. We have this indicated to us also in Luke 4:1: "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."

Luke 4:14: "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. There went out a fame of Him through the region round about." So, He functioned under the power of God the Holy Spirit. For that reason, He was able to constantly do that which was the Father's will for Him.

So the spiritual believer today, in like manner, possesses spiritual eyesight to see the will of God for him. These Laodicean Christians, who we have been studying, were lukewarm in their spiritual status of carnality, so they were blind to the will of God for them. They were not being led by God the Holy Spirit. They did not possess the eye salve of spirituality which would give them vision for the will of God for them. So, the Lord said that they were blind.

We have seen that to have eyes to see the will of God means being in the status of fellowship with God the Father through confession of sins. Temporal fellowship is the eye salve of spirituality. This includes the directive will of God; the permissive will of God; and, the overruling will of God. We have looked at those facets. It includes knowing the operational, the viewpoint, and the geographical elements that are involved in the will of God for every believer. It includes specific guidance into the will of God through prayer; objective thinking; Bible study; circumstances; the Spirit of God; and, the frame of reference in Scripture which is memorized.

**Functioning in the Will of God**

There are three more factors that I want to call to your attention concerning functioning in the will of God. The people of Laodicea needed the eye salve of spirituality so that they could see spiritual things. The most important spiritual thing to see is the will of God. That's why spirituality is so important. That's why it's important to be able to be sensitive to what God the Holy Spirit is saying to you, and thus to be able to lead you in terms of His will. Here are the primary factors, then, to sum this up, relating to the will of God:

1. **The Knowledge of the Recorded Will of God**

First of all, there is the factor of the knowledge of the recorded will of God. In Romans 12:2, the apostle Paul says, "And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." There is a perfect will of God for each of us. If we are going to live in the will of God, we have to have a knowledge of that will. Part of that is the knowledge of the recorded will of God. There are many things that are stated directly in the Bible as being God's will. These are things that we know apply automatically to all of us.

**Accepting Christ as Savior**

For example, the Bible says that it is the will of God that every human being should be born again. We have this taught in 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." It is the directive will of God that every human being should come to a knowledge of the Savior, and should come into the possession of eternal life.

This is also taught in 1 John 2:17: "And the world passes away, and the lusts of it, but he that does the will of God abides forever." We compare that with 1 John 3:23 which says, "And this is His commandment: that we should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave commandment." This is doing the will of God. The commandment of the will of God is to receive His Son. So, one of the things that we know is the will of God for every human being is to come to repentance, and to accept Jesus Christ as Savior.

**Sanctification**

Another thing that is the will of God is that all believers are to be sanctified. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." As we have seen, this refers to being set apart unto God in our daily experience, and separated from evil acts. This is to be in fellowship with God so as to be under His direction.

**Filled with the Holy Spirit**

Another thing that is the will of God for all believers is that every Christian should be filled with the Holy Spirit; that is, under the control of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18: "Be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." That's a command – that we be under control of the Spirit of God; that is, that we be spiritual believers.

So, here are several things already. This is the will of God for your life: first of all, to be seen. Secondly, to be sanctified in your experience (experiential sanctification). It is the will of God that we live in a way that is separated to a godly lifestyle, and that we be filled with the Spirit of God.

**Give Thanks**

Another thing that is the will of God is that Christians should give thanks. 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." It's a clear statement that it is the will of God for us to give thanks in all circumstances. That is the will of God for us. Compare Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called ones according to His purpose." So, giving of thanks is part of God's plan for us. Giving of thanks is a thing that human beings don't like to do.

If you listen carefully, you will hear, particularly as news commentators speak about the coming Thanksgiving holiday, how they will reflect an attitude of our society of gratitude. They won't call it Thanksgiving Day. They call it Turkey Day. Immediately, you know something about that person. Immediately, you know something reflective about the attitude of American society. Can you imagine the pilgrims, as they had struggled, and those who had survived that first terrible winter, and now they were prospering with food, and things were moving along, to say, "We're going to have Turkey Day?" That shows how degraded the concept of gratitude is, and how inherent it is in the human heart to be an ingrate. Only a turkey would call it Turkey Day.

If God is guiding His children, then we must have the attitude of thankfulness, because He doesn't make any mistakes. Even suffering is designed for our blessing. So, we can thank God for the suffering. Discipline guides us to use 1 John 1:9 so that we can return to the place of blessing. As we shall see, the whole point that the Lord is going to make now to these Laodicean Christians is: "OK, now I've informed you about your condition. I've told you what you're really like – not the way you think you are. And now I'm going to tell you to shape up, or I'm going to start pouring on the discipline. You shape up or I will discipline." That discipline, in itself, is to bring us around to suffering in such a way as to put us in the position of blessing.

So, it is something for us to be thankful for – whatever the problems that you have in your life. It would be very unlikely that, to some degree, everybody here isn't being rubbed with some degree of some area of discipline; some area of friction; some area of pain; or, some area of distress. Why do you have that? Look upon it not with the attitude of, "Why me?" But look upon it as, "What is it that you're telling me? What is it that you're trying to direct me to, and to shake me up in order that I can be open to your blessing?"

**Suffering for Well-Doing**

Another thing that is the will of God is that believers should suffer for well-doing only. In 1 Peter 3:17, this is taught: "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that you suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." 1 Peter 4:19: "Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing as unto a Faithful Creator." It is not the will of God for you to suffer for your evil-doing, because it is not His will for you to do evil. It is the will of God for you to suffer only for well-doing. Suffering brings blessings from God. Suffering brings spiritual maturity. Suffering focuses our attention on the things that are really important in life. When we come under suffering, that's when we start thinking of what's really important.

It's like the person who has just been told that he has a short time to live. Suddenly, everything in life comes into a different perspective for him. Everything comes into a different focus. All the trivial things in life are very evident, and he doesn't care about those things anymore. He suddenly realizes that he's about to be transferred into God's presence. Then the things that are important come into focus. Suddenly, the Word of God becomes very important. Have you noticed how people who are on their way out of this life suddenly become wonderful students of the Bible? It's a pity that they didn't do that sooner. The benefits they could have acquired would have accrued to them from their capacity to receive blessings. Their blessings are going to be considerably diminished, and they're going to go poorer into heaven.

Using our spiritual gifts suddenly becomes important. I've had that painful experience of standing by the deathbed (and I mean "deathbed"), more than once, of people who are there and they're struggling through. I've seen them slip through to the other side. And I'm surprised how often on their lips are sometimes even foolish promises to God that if He would preserve their life, what they would be doing for Him, and the gifts that they would exercise. That has been kind of sad because there have been times when these people have had those gifts. And while I'm standing there seeing the life ebb of their bodies, they're telling God how they're going to use the capacity that He already gave them that they didn't think were important to use before, when they had opportunity to do so. I've never seen any of them make it.

So, if you're counting on that deal, your chances of surviving under those conditions are very small. Now is the accepted day. Now is the time to invest your gift to get out of the rat hole to which you have chosen to put yourself like these Laodiceans. It is when we are under suffering that we get into perspective the value of eternal rewards. It is when we are under a distress with what we are doing, and when we're under a dissatisfaction with our lifestyle, and that with which we are using up the moments of our life.

Don't forget, that that's what you're doing. Every day, you begin with that box of so much energy; so much mental capacity; so much physical energy; so much youth; and, so much spiritual ability. Before that day is out, you have used it, and it's gone forever. The investment is never to be changed for that particular day's capacity.

So, there is a great value in suffering. It is the will of God that we suffer for well-doing. That kind of suffering gives us a perspective on the things that are real.

**Trust in the Lord**

Another thing that is the will of God for us is the knowledge that we have for certain that we should trust in the Lord. The book of Proverbs states that for us in a very effective way. Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." "Trust in the Lord with all your heart (all your mentality), and lean not unto your own human viewpoint thinking." It is the will of God that we trust in the Lord for our guidance, and we trust His thinking.

**Produce Divine Good Works**

Then it is the will of God that all of us should be productive of divine good works. One place that this is taught is in 1 Peter 2:15: "For so is the will of God, that with well-doing, you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." From the filling of the Holy Spirit; from the use of doctrine which is stored in our human spirit; and, from our spiritual maturity structure, we become productive of divine good works. Don't forget that that is the three-fold source of our divine good works: the filling of the Holy Spirit; doctrine in the human spirit; and, spiritual maturity structure in the soul. As you move up the ladder through those, you increase your capacity to be able to store treasures in heaven. You increase your capacity of divine good works.

There are some things that are not directly stated in the Scriptures which are still the will of God for you. These have to be determined on known doctrinal principles. There are certain things that you can't look in the Bible and say, "Should I do this or should I not do this?" Then you have to look for an overriding principle of the will of God under which you may find guidance for that particular action. If you know enough about the Bible, you will be surprised how often God the Holy Spirit will bring to your mind a general principle on which God operates, and you will see the answer to your particular question – of the particular action that you should take. There is no guidance for the Christian apart from a knowledge of the recorded Word of God and the filling of the Holy Spirit – the status of spirituality.

1. **Yieldedness**

Then there is a second factor that is important in executing the will of God, and that is the quality of yieldedness. A lot of Christians do not execute the will of God because of their attitude of yieldedness toward the will of God. That simply is not the attitude of their lives. They don't begin with the attitude that they are yielded to what the Lord wants them to do. We have this concept expressed in Romans 6:13: "Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

Also in Romans 12:1, we have this same concept of yielding (an attitude of yieldedness): "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

The idea of yielding is not a one-shot experience. Sometimes Christians are told that yieldedness is something that they come to at a climactic point in their lives. Yieldedness, as we have told you before, is being in that inner circle of temporal fellowship. The Christian who is in the inner circle because 1 John 1:9 has been capitalized upon, and has been incorporated in his experience, and known since are confessed – that Christian is in the inner circle, and therefore, he is in a position of yieldedness. Yielding, here in Romans 12:1: "I therefore beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you *present* your bodies" – that word "present" is in the aorist tense. That means that, at every point (aorist is a point action), when you are out of fellowship, you confess, and thus you yield. So, yielding is not a one-shot thing. It's a principle of being in the inner circle, and the action is often repeated.

Therefore, the principle of yieldedness is stated in Romans 6:13. That's the concept. The means is in 1 John 1:9. Romans 6:13 tells us to be yielded. 1 John 1:9 tells us how it's being done. An attitude of yieldedness is willing to do the will of God before you know what it is. Some Christians, because they do not have spiritual eyesight, do not have the attitude of yieldedness. Some people do not deal with God on the basis of: "I'm going to do what You want me to do."

The Lord comes to them, and first they want to know what He has in mind for them before they decide whether they're going to be yielded or not. But the attitude of yieldedness is very critical for personal guidance into the will of God.

1. **Growth in Spiritual Maturity**

Then there's a third element that is important in executing the will of God, and that is growth in spiritual maturity. This principle is stated for us in 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." "Grow in grace" is the sum total of God's plan in the church age: "And in the knowledge" (positive volition to sound Bible doctrine). The result is building spiritual maturity in the soul. Divine guidance is one-step-at-a-time. That's why it's a growth process. He says, "Grow in this." And you don't know what is way down the line. The will of God is one-step-at-a-time. That's why we say that the Christian life is one-day-at-a-time. The result is a gradual moving into the will of God.

So, these are the factors which affect the will of God in your life. Knowledge of the recorded will of God is crucial. If you don't know what's in the Bible, it will affect the will of God in your life. The attitude of yieldedness to the will of God is also crucial. If yours is not an attitude of subjection, it will affect you. And you and I can think of many times when perhaps somebody who knew something about the Scripture, and somebody a little more mature came along and said, "Hey, the course of action you're going to take is fraught with danger. Don't do it. You will come to a point further on down the line when you'll regret it. It's going to come apart. It's going to cause you grief." And a principle of Scripture was laid out. If there was an attitude of yieldedness, there would have been response. If there is not an attitude of yieldedness, the person will go right on and ignore the warning. That's what we mean by an attitude of yieldedness. That'll keep you from enjoying the will of God. And then, if you do not grow spiritually; if you're not developing a knowledge of the Word; and, if you're not responding to it, then there won't be any progress in the will of God for you.

So, hindrances to doing the will of God are: One – ignorance of Bible doctrine principles; two – lack of spiritual maturity in the soul; and, three – carnality (unconfessed sins). So, there is no filling of the Spirit, and no spiritual capacity.

**The Laodiceans**

That's the whole picture for the people of Laodicea. The Lord Jesus looked at them, and in His evaluation, He said that they were poor. His solution for that was that they should secure from Him, by faith, the gold of Bible doctrine truth. He said that they were naked. The solution for that was that they should cover themselves with the garment of experientially sanctification – godly living to cover that nakedness. This is the outer garment to cover their inner garments of positional sanctification. Then he said to them, "You are blind." He indicated that they were to secure from Him the eye salve of spirituality so that they had the insight of God the Holy Spirit working for them.

He has identified their problem. It is a totally different evaluation than what they had of themselves. He has told them that He can solve their problem. They know what to do. Now the question is the response. Just like after any church service, there was always this question of personal response. That is the climax of the meeting.

**Response**

So, in Revelation 3:19, we come to the issue of response. Jesus sums it up by saying, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent." "As many as" is the Greek word "hosos." This is a relative adjective, and it refers here to a number of people. It indicates a certain group of humanity that are viewed by Jesus Christ with a certain attitude. Not everyone in the human race is so viewed, but a certain element in the human race is viewed in a certain way by Jesus Christ, and that word "hosos" tells us that it's limited to that group. In the Greek language, you don't always have to use the word "I" – the word "ego," this personal pronoun. However, when we see it used in the Greek language, then it is emphatic. Just the endings of the verb will tell you whether it's I; you; he; she; it; we; they; and, so on. But when the special word "I" is use, it is to emphasize the individual who is speaking. In this case, in the Greek language, the word "I" for "I love" is there. It is used separately to emphasize that we're talking about a personal attitude of Jesus Christ – not just a general attitude, but one that He uniquely and personally holds toward this specialized group of humanity; and, that is love.

**Love**

The word "love" here is "phileo." That is kind of a surprise. Most of you know that one of the chief words for love in the Bible is "agapao." But that isn't the word which is used here. It's "phileo." "Agapao" is a mental attitude. The word "agapao" has no emotional connotation. When the Bible speaks about "love" in terms of the word "agapao" or "agape" love, it is non-emotional. It has only a mental attitude; that is, mental attitude love. It is an attitude free from bitterness and ill will. It is a mental attitude of good will. But when you come to "phileo," this is the word of the emotion. This is the word of personal rapport with a person. This is where feelings come into the picture.

That's why the Lord Jesus Christ could not say to us, "Love your enemies" in terms of, "'Phileo' your enemies." A person who is, in truth, your enemy, for example, on the field of battle in a military combat situation, is not a person toward whom you will have an emotional attachment. The emotion that you will have will be of this attachment. And that's why, when that particular verse says, "Love your enemies," it says, "'Agapao' your enemies," because even in that kind of a crisis, life-and-death situation on the field of battle, you can be meeting with somebody who is your enemy, because of a certain circumstance, toward whom you do not personally bear a grudge or bitterness or ill will. It is a mental attitude. The Bible is very careful in distinguishing the two.

Now, here we come along, and this is an unusual word in terms of use, talking about God's love for man. It's unusual to talk about God's love for man in an emotional context, as "phileo." There's really only one other place that this is done, and that is in John 16:27. This verse also uses this word "phileo," the emotional word: "For the Father Himself loves you because you have loved Me and believe that I came from God." Jesus says, "God the Father has an emotional attachment to you, because you have an emotional attachment to Me." Other than this, the New Testament doesn't talk about God having "phileo" toward human beings. However, here, Jesus Christ, the God-man, is declared to have an emotional affection for the reversionistic Laodicean believers.

This is in the present tense, which states to us that this is a constant feeling toward this group of people. There are no ups and downs. This is understandable if we stop and think of what is the relationship of Jesus Christ to these Laodicean Christians. Remember that they are believers; they are going to heaven; and, they form part of His body. And most people have an emotional attachment to their body. Most people have a strong emotional attachment toward having part of their body removed. Most people don't like to have an arm chopped off. They get very emotional about that. They have an emotional attachment to their own body. Here, you have even more of an attachment because these people not only form the body of Christ, but they are destined to be His bride. Most people, I think you will agree, get very emotional about their brides. Therefore, it is a very fitting word that He speaks in an emotional way about these who are His bride. But the bride stinks. The Lord Jesus Christ has had nothing good to say about this girl. All that He has described about these people is bad, bad, bad. This is a lousy bride, and unless she changes, she's going to be a pumpkin-poor wife.

Fortunately, we know that the body of Christ is going to make a perfect bride. The book of Ephesians already tells us that she is going to be perfect (without blemish) when she's the bride. But right now, that destined bride is not always very good. It is a great tragedy when a bride, in human relationships, proves to be something less than she should be; when she degrades her position of being a bride and a wife; and, when she degrades her honored relationship to her husband in some way. There are strong emotions when this happens. If the bride is someone that the husband can take pride in, and that he can be pleased with, that's emotional. If he's ashamed of her, and if he's distressed with what she's doing, that's highly emotional.

So, the Lord Jesus is dealing here with a group of people who are destined to form part of His bride, who are way out of line with the relationship that they should bear to Him, who is the future Bridegroom. And He is emotional about it. Therefore, He says to them, "I want you to know that I love you, in spite of everything I've said to you. And you know what He has said. I mean, how does it feel when the bridegroom looks at his bride and says, "You make me want to throw up?" I mean, that certainly gets a future bride very emotional. That's exactly what He's saying. She's going to be His bride, and He has already told us that right now He wants to just throw up over her, because that's the response that He, as the holy and righteous One, has to the way she has been conducting herself.

But after having said something as drastic as that, He says, "I want you to know that I not only have mental goodwill ('agapao') love toward you (and I have demonstrated that by going to the cross for you), but I have a deep emotional attachment toward you. I have a 'phileo' love as well." This particular verb is in the active voice, which indicates to us that this is the personal feeling of Jesus Christ. It is His personal attitude toward them. It's indicative mood – a statement of a definite reality.

So, the reversionistic believers are the object here of the Lord's love. Why are they still the object of His love, even though they nauseate Him? It is for the simple fact that there is something in these believers that God loves because it is His Own Holiness? These reversionistic believers, by God's grace, have had something tremendously done for them. The Lord does not love them because they are trying so hard to be good Christians. The Lord does not love them because of any kindnesses they may perform to one another. He does not love them because of any sincerity they may demonstrate, or any efforts that they may put out in His service. The Lord loves them in spite of what they are, and in spite of their doing. He loves them because of something in Himself that He loves. God loves His absolute righteousness. God loves His perfect justice. Those constitute His Holiness. What God loves in a human being is one thing: holiness. And the only place that comes from is from God Himself.

So, to these Laodicean believers, as to all of us, has been imputed the holiness of God, and therefore, *God loves them for what He has done for them*. That's very important for us to remember. When you and I fall into carnality, and when you and I persist in that carnality, and then we slip off into reversionism with all the downhill disastrous consequences, that in no way changes our positional sanctification. That in no way changes the fact that we have the garment of positional sanctification on us, and, therefore, there is something in us for God to love.

The Laodiceans were special with the Lord not because they were so fine in their ways, but because of what He had given to them that made them potentially such fine people when they would be transformed into the image of Christ. I think that's rather comforting. No matter how debased we Christians may become, the Lord Jesus Christ still has a deep emotional attachment for us. That is one of the first things that the devil wants you to forget when you've gotten way off the path of the will of God for your life; when you have so blinded yourself with your carnality that you don't know where you are; and, when you're wandering around out there bruising yourself to pieces. The first thing the devil wants you to believe is that God doesn't love you. We must learn from this principle here that the very people that nauseated the living God are the very people to whom He says that He has not only a mental attitude goodwill, but He has an emotional attachment. He has a deep feeling for them, and He is distressed because of the way His potential bride is acting.

There's always a way back. It isn't God's problem. It is yours. It isn't that He isn't standing there just eager and waiting to receive you with all the emotion that He can. It is you who are unwilling to turn around. That's what this verse 19 is all about: "As many as I love: that segment of the human race to whom I have imputed My Holiness; and, that segment of the human race who has My positional sanctification now and forever – that segment I love. The rest of the human race does not fall under My love. They fall under My wrath and under my judgment. But that group to whom I've imputed My own holiness – that group is a special group with Me. I love them, and I love them with an emotional sense because they have wandered so far away from Me, and because they have wandered so far away from where I could bless them."

Don't you grieve over people in your family who wander off into sin and into a self-destructive course? And you may grieve for them with a lot more emotion than those who are not close to you. That's the case here. The Lord feels very deeply about wanting them to return.

Furthermore, He says that He does something else. He not only has this emotional attachment: "As many as I love." He does something for them. He says that He rebukes them because He loves them. The word rebuke is "elegcho." "Elegcho" means "to reprove," but to reprove in such a way as to bring under conviction of error. It is more than simple censure. It is not simply that He's condemning. It is that He is bringing them under a sense of personal conviction: "I'm wrong. I am out of line." It connotes influencing with words and influencing with thoughts.

Notice a couple of places where the Bible uses this word. 2 Timothy 4:2 is one place that illustrates this idea of bringing under conviction: "Preach the Word. Be diligent in season and out of season. Reprove (there it is), rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Here are the ideas to use words – the words of doctrine, to bring them under conviction: to bring them under the awareness of being out of line with God's purposes.

In John 3:20, this word is used: "For everyone that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." There it is again. The light of divine viewpoint on evil conduct brings conviction. This is reproof in terms of conviction.

Then John 8:46 uses this word: "Which of you convicted ('elegcho') Me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do you not believe Me?" The Lord Jesus says, "I am sinless," and because He was sinless, He could not be brought under conviction by rebuke from anybody. Who could rebuke Him, and bring him under conviction? Nobody could. That's what this word means: to rebuke Him in such a way as to bring Him under the conviction of evil.

John 16:8 also uses it. This is in describing what God the Holy Spirit does for unsaved people: "And when He (God the Holy Spirit) is come, He will reprove (there it is) the world of sin and righteousness and of judgment." The Holy Spirit brings believers under conviction relative to their sin.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ, with the Word of God, brings carnal reversionistic believers under personal awareness of their evil ways. The Holy Spirit does not let Christians get away with evil. The Holy Spirit makes believers aware of their negative volition to divine viewpoint. The question is: what response do we give when the conviction comes? One of the things that the Lord has the Holy Spirit do for us constantly is to bring us under the sense of conviction. That is when we start kicking like a bunch of stupid mules, and resisting the conviction that He has brought upon us.

This word "elegcho" is in the present tense. It is the Lord's constant pressure upon us. It is active. The Lord Jesus applies this conviction. It is indicative of statement of fact. As if that isn't enough, He, who loves us with an emotional attachment, comes to us and puts us under the conviction. We are aware of where we are out of line. He has used the words of Scripture to alert us. He has used the words of people who know Scripture to alert us. He has brought us under the sense of burden that the Spirit of God is saying, "You're wrong. You're out of line. You need to change your direction.

But He doesn't stop there. That, it seems, would be enough. He says, "And I chasten." And now we come to a major word and a major doctrine. We will pick that up in detail next time: the chastening of the living God. There are certain major factors that come into play in the divine guidance for bondslaves. These factors are very critical for you to be able to move forward in the will of the Lord for you. These are the elements that we will conclude this study with at our next session.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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