



50 Days of Wisdom

Volume 15: Days 701-750

Introduction:

The following words by Charles Spurgeon serve to test your claim of salvation. Are you able to personally identify with them? If not, work is required. Not yours, but Christ's.

Salvation radically changes the whole man!

Genuine salvation is always transformative. It radically changes the whole man! He was once at enmity with God and hated Him. Now he is a friend of God and loves Him. His condition before God, his moral tone, his nature, and his state of mind are made radically different from what they were before salvation!

Genuine salvation changes the PRINCIPLE UPON WHICH HE LIVES. He once lived for self—he now lives to please God.

His OBJECTS IN LIFE are changed. He once lived for money, or the flesh, or the world. Now he lives for the glory of God.

His COMFORTS are changed. The pleasures of the world and sin are now nothing to him. He finds comfort in the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit.

His DESIRES are changed. That which he once panted and pined for, he is now content to do without. That which he once despised, he now longs after as the deer pants after the water brooks.

His FEARS are different. He fears man no more but fears his God.

His HOPES are also altered. His expectations fly beyond the stars. He now confidently looks forward to a city with eternal foundations— a city designed and built by God!

The saved man has begun a new life!

A convert once said, *"Either the world is altered—or else I am!"*

The saved man feels that the things which are seen are shadows, and the things which he hears are but voices out of dreamland. He now knows that unseen spiritual realities are substantial. He lives by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

[By Charles Spurgeon](#)

Let's pray.

Lord, no matter how much we study your word, we will always find that our transformation is a mystery that must be taken by faith. And yet it is our experience—we who know and love You—that we long to love You more, that we love Your word, that we are drawn to Your truth, that we hunger for holiness and righteousness, that we want desperately to draw near to You, not to run from You in fear and dread, because there is new life in us, and we are not the people we used to be.

You have made us new. You have not only declared us righteous, but You have also made us righteous in the sense that You have transformed our inner person to love and pursue holiness. This is who we really are, and what a wondrous miracle it is when we think of who we were and who You've made us. We praise You and thank You, in Your Son's name, amen.

[By John MacArthur](#)

The Truth in Love,

Mark Paul—(Servant of God)

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How to Use This eBook:

Simply read one message each morning. *(For a further understanding of the message content and context, click on the provided web link at the end of each message.)*

Starting each morning in this way is how you *“walk and talk with God in the cool of the day”* (Genesis 3:8), just like Adam and Eve did in the garden.

This process yields many benefits:

1. The early morning Bible study will be your spiritual breakfast (manna), which will nourish your soul throughout the day.
2. The early morning Bible study will fill your Holy Spirit's sails and propel your spiritual ship in the right direction throughout the day.
3. The early morning Bible study is the method that God uses to speak to you personally as the Word comes down through the Bible study.
4. Since prayer is the method that man uses to communicate with God by sending up his thoughts and concerns, the early morning Bible study sermon will put you in prayer mode throughout the entire day.
5. The early morning Bible study will produce many questions but will also provide all the answers. *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.” Matthew 7:7.*
6. The early morning Bible study is a demonstration of honoring and worshiping God.
7. Each Bible study guarantees your transformation into a more spiritually mature Christian through the renewal of your mind. *Romans 12:2.*
8. By following this process each morning, you will not only hear God speak directly to your heart through these messages, but you will soon become a mature, cast-iron soldier, saint, servant, and son or daughter of the Most High God.

Additional Notes:

1. It is recommended to share one message each day with your family, perhaps during mealtime.
2. To maximize concentration while listening to the audio files, it is helpful to read along with the audio transcript.
3. It is also beneficial to cut and paste transcript texts that are important to you while listening and then re-read those texts in the evening.
4. Please share this eBook with others; however, altering this content in any way is not permitted.

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Day 701

New Men Live New Lives

Ephesians 4:30 says, *“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed to the day of redemption.”* The Spirit of God can grieve, but what causes Him to grieve? What makes Him grieve is when you, as a believer, don’t exchange the old for the new. The Holy Spirit is grieved when He sees lying instead of the truth, when He sees anger instead of forgiveness, when He sees stealing instead of sharing, and when He hears corruption instead of graciousness. And the point that Paul is making in verse 30 is how could you possibly grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed till the day of redemption? The idea is that when you were saved, the Spirit of God put a stamp on you that said, *“This is God’s, this is genuine, this is authentic, and this is forever.”* And listen, if the Spirit of God has been so gracious as to give you an eternal salvation, seal you forever, and hold you in the palm of His hand till the day of redemption, how could you willfully grieve such a gracious Spirit? That’s what he is saying. How could you grieve the Holy Spirit, the one who sealed you? You know your salvation is forever; you know what He has done for you can’t be changed; you know He’s given you an eternal gift; now would you abuse it by grieving Him? How could you do that? How could you grieve the very one who has made your body the sanctuary of His own holy presence? How could you do that? He is the one who has done the magnificent work of setting you apart eternally for God; how could you grieve Him? Therefore, according to Paul, the new man should exchange lying for truth, unrighteous anger for holy wrath, stealing for sharing, and useless, vile speech for edifying, gracious words. He should also avoid giving place to the devil and grieving the Holy Spirit. Finally, Paul instructs us to swap natural vices for supernatural graces. Verse 31 sums it up: *“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all evil.”* Clamor refers to a violent outburst, such as yelling in public. Paul says, *“Get rid of that—put it away.”* If we could be a community in the midst of this world, who never lie but always speak the truth, and who never get angry so that it’s sinful anger, but always act in love. If we could be a people who never steal but only share, who never speak filthy communication, but always minister grace to people who are listening. If we could be those who have no bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, or evil speaking but are characterized by incessant kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness, do you think the world might take note of our message? I think they would. That’s how new men are expected to behave, because new men live new lives. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(1930\)](http://GTY.org) – **Principles of New Life – TOC**

Day 702

Scripture Alone

Christ believed in Scripture alone, didn’t He? He said in Matthew 4:4, *“Man shall live not by bread alone, but by”* – what? – *“every word that comes out of the mouth of God.”* Then in 5:18, He says, *“There’s not going to be one jot or one tittle that will ever be removed from the Law until it’s all*

fulfilled,” down to the little vowel points. He believed in faith-based justification before Paul did. Remember Luke 18, the Pharisee, and the publican? The Pharisee is saying, *“I thank God that I’m not like other men like this terrible publican over here. I fast, and I tithe.”* He’s offering God his commendable life. And the publican is on the ground, won’t look up, pounds on his chest, and says, *“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”* He is pleading for mercy and righteousness that he is aware he lacks. And Jesus said, *“The publican went home justified.”* That was justification by faith, not by works. That man went home justified rather than the other. Jesus affirmed justification by faith. Jesus, of course, affirmed His own nature, God's nature, and the Holy Spirit's nature. So, just follow Christ and His pattern. He’s our model and example. True doctrine is absolutely everything. It not only serves as your entry into the kingdom and defines your life within it, but it also serves as your protection. This is because a well-understood doctrine builds your convictions, which, in turn, serve as your shield of protection. If you have very few convictions, you are very vulnerable. The more sound doctrine you know—which is to say, the more you know and understand about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Scripture—the more you embrace those things, take ownership of those things, and make them your own; the stronger your convictions become; the more you move from being a spiritual child to being a spiritual young man who has overcome the Wicked One (1 John 2:12–14). John says, *“I write unto you, little children, because you know the Father.”* Which means spiritual da-da. That’s a spiritual baby. *“You know God.”* Simple. Paul continues, *“But spiritual children can be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.”* So, he says, *“I then write unto you, young men, because the Word of God abides in you, and you’re strong, and you’ve overcome the Wicked One.”* So the victory in your spiritual life and your Christian life is through the Word of God and knowledge of the Word. Scripture alone saves and protects. Repent and believe! GTY.org (TMU272) – **Delivered by Doctrine** – [TOC](#)

Day 703

The Work of the Holy Spirit

How are Christians set free from sin and death? By the dominating power of the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of Life—the one who gives us life. That's the work of the Spirit of Life, who removes us from the union with sin and Satan, which produces death and gives us life. This is the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. What did Jesus say to Nicodemus? Do you want to enter the kingdom of God? You must then be born of water and the Spirit. You must be born from above. The Spirit is the source of life. He is the one who gives life. He is the regenerator. In Titus 3:3, there’s a wonderful statement about salvation. *“At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice—that’s evil—and envy, being hated and hating one another.”* That’s a description of every human being. Not a lovely picture. Verse 4: *“But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,”* here you have the kindness of God; everything starts from the love of God, works through the grace of Christ, and ends up with the fellowship of the Spirit. *“But when the kindness of God, our Savior, and His love for mankind appeared (verse 5), He saved us.”* How did He save us from the condition of corruption and cursing, from Satan's domain, and from sin's tyranny? How did He do

it? *"He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness."* Okay, it wasn't by the law or by our goodness. *"But according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing"*—by whom?—*"by the Holy Spirit (verse 6), whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior."* How did this washing, renewal, and regeneration come? It was by whom we have been made alive. He is none other than the Spirit of Life. How does He do it? John 16 says, *"He convicts us of sin and righteousness and judgment."* This is the work of the Holy Spirit: convicting the sinner. Then he brought us the gospel. The Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture. All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God. Peter says that God breathed, and the Holy Spirit moved holy men, inspiring them to write the Scripture. Therefore, the Spirit is the one who convicts; the Spirit is the author of the gospel, and the Spirit becomes our teacher, opening our minds through His regenerating power, leading us to believe the gospel and turn away from sin. That's all the work of the Holy Spirit. And now your condition in life is a condition not only of being spiritually alive but having been clothed with the very righteousness of Christ, and you are beyond the possibility of condemnation, forever. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-416\)](http://GTY.org) – **Giving Thanks to the Spirit** – [TOC](#)

Day 704

Clues of the Deceived

How does a deceived person know he's deceived about their salvation? How can we spot such an individual? Let me give you some clues. Now, not everybody with these clues is really deceived, but these are good indicators that someone might be deceived. If you want to detect deception, look first for someone who is seeking feelings, blessings, experiences, healings, angels, and miracles. Why? Chances are they're more interested in the byproducts of the faith than they are in the faith itself. They're more interested in what they can get than the glory God can get. They're more interested in themselves than in the exaltation of Christ. Secondly, to identify potential deceivers, seek out individuals who demonstrate a stronger commitment to their denomination, church, or organization than to the Word of God. Their version of Christianity may be purely social. *"I'm a Presbyterian."* *"Well, I've been a Baptist all my life."* *"I identify as a Lutheran; I am a member of..."* whatever. They are more devoted to the organization than they are to the Lord and His Word. Third, look for people with an academic interest in theology. And you'll find them all over the colleges and seminaries of our land. They engage in the study and composition of theological literature, yet they utterly lack the righteousness of Christ. For them, theology is an intellectual activity. Fourth, look for people who always seem to be stuck on one overemphasized theological point. This is the individual who passionately advocates for a specific area of theology, often due to a peculiar quirk. Typically, this is not a profound revelation from God. They'd like you to think that they are so close to God that they have a great divine insight that no one else has. The truth is that they're looking for a platform to feed their egos. So watch for people with a lack of balance. Also, be watchful of someone who is constantly trying to convince you that they are a Christian. It's possible that they are attempting to convince themselves that they are a Christian. And one other thought: If you suspect deception, look for someone who is overindulgent in the name of

grace. They exhibit a lack of penitence and a genuine contrite heart, among other traits. Now, they all may be deceived and on the broad road to destruction, thinking all the while they're going to heaven. But our Lord warns these people in Matthew 7:21–22. In this passage, the Lord says that these people are the deceived. These people think they are on the right road, but they are not. First, in verses 21–23, is the folly of empty words. Take note of the phrases "*Not every one that says*" in verse 21 and "*Many will say*" in verse 22. Their claims are amazing and their assertions are beautiful. But they don't do what they claim. The church is filled with individuals who speak empty words. They say, but they don't do God's will. Confessing Christ is necessary, but confession without obedience is a sham. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(2255\)](http://GTY.org) – **Empty Words** – [TOC](#)

Day 705

He is Everything

The next time somebody asks you, "*What does the gospel offer me? What does the Bible offer?*" You say this: "*Jesus Christ.*" That's the person that Christianity offers. And in Him, complete salvation; and in Him, complete forgiveness; and in Him, complete victory; and in Him, complete sufficiency. To have Him is to have everything. To not have him is to have nothing. John 1:16 says, "*Of His fullness have all we received.*" Is that not a wonderful statement? All that He is becomes ours. Ephesians 3:8 puts it this way: "*In Him we have unsearchable riches.*" First Corinthians 3, "*All things belong to you, whether the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, because you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.*" Pursue Him and Him alone. It was Jeremiah Burroughs, the powerful Puritan, who wrote in 1656, "*God the Father is infinitely satisfied in Christ. He is all in all to God. Surely if Christ is an object sufficient for the satisfaction of the Father, much more then is He an object sufficient for the satisfaction of every soul.*" If God can find His satisfaction in Christ, surely you can find yours there as well. Everything that is abundant in Christ is ours. And so, we go back to where it all started. Colossians 1:19 says, "*It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him.*" Colossians 2:3: "*In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*" Colossians 2:9 says, "*In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.*" Ephesians 3:12: "*We are, by faith, in Him.*" He is sufficient. Learn Christ, and you will have all you will ever need. Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your Word. There could be no greater subject than this, and we have offered a meager attempt to grasp the wonder of what it means to have Christ. Our lives should be characterized by our love for Christ, our knowledge of Him, our service to Him, our worship of Him, and our desire for Him to manifest His glory through us. May it be that for us to live is Christ. And when we are called Christians, may it be true that we are, as it were, little Christs. May we, in gazing into His glory, be transformed into His image. We ask for nothing more than Christ, because He is everything. Amen. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-329\)](http://GTY.org) – **Jesus Plus Nothing Equals Everything** – [TOC](#)

Day 706

The Litmus Test of Your Character

Jesus told the Pharisees in Luke 16:15, *“You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts. And that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.”* And you know something? What’s going on in your heart is the litmus test of your character. Proverbs 23:7 says, *“As he thinks within himself, so is he.”* Proverbs 6:12 says, *“A worthless person, a wicked man, is the one who, with perversity in his heart, devises evil continually.”* You want to know who you really are. Take a look at your heart. Take a look at the inside. External behavior is not an accurate gauge of your character; the thoughts of your heart reveal the truth. And the thoughts of your heart are only known to God and your conscience. And, beloved, it is so crucial that we cultivate a pure life so that we can enjoy the testimony of a clear conscience. And you know, the longer you learn the Word, the more you’re exposed to the Word, and the more your heart is filled with its truth, the greater will be your love and your worship toward God. This cleansing process will lead to a clear conscience. I honestly don’t know how men can possibly feed their thought life, filth, and foul things, obscenities, and wicked things, and things that displease God, and stand and minister without literally being assaulted by their conscience. In Job 20 verses 12 and 13, Job’s friend said, *“Evil is sweet in his mouth, and he hides it under his tongue. Though he desires it and will not let it go, he holds it in his mouth.”* In other words, he’s really wicked on the inside. You don’t see it, you don’t hear it, but he’s filthy from the inside out. The picture he painted of the evil thinker is vividly true. To them, evil thoughts are like a sweet treat. The evil thinker derives great satisfaction from their imaginary iniquities. They savor their evil fantasies. They relish them like a choice morsel of sweetness under their tongue. They roll them around in their imagination. They return to the same wicked musings, from which they can glean illicit pleasure over and over again. They ponder over these thoughts, much like an animal chewing its cud, repeatedly bringing up their favorite evil thoughts to trigger fresh reactions in their minds. They falsely accused Job of this, but they have misjudged him. Job had carefully guarded himself against that. In fact, the Lord said there’s no one like him on the earth. He’s a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil. So, this whole matter of sins of thought has to be dealt with if we’re going to deal with the conscience, if we’re going to liberate our conscience and enjoy peace, joy, happiness, and bliss in the Christian experience. If you want to quiet your noisy conscience, you’ve got to deal with your thought life. So let that be the litmus test of your character. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-129\)](http://GTY.org) – **Keeping a Pure Mind** – [TOC](#)

Day 707

Walk as Children of Light

There is a contrast of darkness and light in Ephesians 5:8: *“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”* And now that you are light in the world that lights the darkness of

corruption, it follows with a command: *“Walk as children of light.”* So there is a contrast and a command. Then, we receive the attributes of *“walking as children of Light.”* Verse 9: *“The fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.”* So those are the things that are characteristic of the Light: goodness, righteousness, and truth. What is goodness? It means morally good from the divine perspective. So how do you know when a person is a believer? Because they are people of Light, and the Light manifests itself in their goodness. It’s general goodness. The opposite is *“malice,”* that’s general evil. Therefore, as a child of the Light, you bear the mark of goodness. Secondly, by righteousness; that is, you walk a path that doesn’t deviate from purity. You’re also marked by truth. No longer are you deceived. No longer are you marked by all the expressions of depravity. You walk in integrity, honesty, reliability, and trustworthiness in contrast to the shallow hypocrisy and falseness of those in the dark. So, it’s all goodness, righteousness, and truth; that’s the fruit of the Light. A Christian walks as a child of Light, producing the fruit of Light, which is goodness, righteousness, and truth. He is a living example of someone who is learning what is pleasing to the Lord. That’s what it means to walk in Light. This answers the question, *“How do I know if I’m a child of God?”* Don’t speculate. Don’t look into the past and say, *“Well, I once prayed a prayer.”* Look at your life now. Is it characterized by all goodness, all righteousness, and all truth? And are you always learning what is pleasing to the Lord so you can do it? That is how we are to walk in the Light. Then regarding the Light, we have not only the contrast, command, and characteristics, but we also have a second command in verse 11: *“Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness.”* This command is to refrain from participating in or fellowshiping with *“the unfruitful deeds of darkness.”* We don’t associate with people who profess Christ but are immoral. We obviously reach the people in the world who are immoral, but we don’t associate with those who profess salvation and who are immoral. Next, we have a commission. If you’re a child of Light, instead of participating in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, you expose them. You don’t ignore the deeds of darkness; you expose them. That’s your responsibility, to expose them and warn of the consequences. And then in verse 14, we are to call others to the Light: *“Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you!”* This is a call to become a Child of Light. This is a call to awaken those who are sound asleep in darkness. And this is our prayer: that God would be so gracious as to awaken and shine His glorious Light upon everyone. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49-30\)](http://GTY.org) – **From Darkness to Light – TOC**

Day 708

How to Destroy a Society

The conscience is the first restraint against evil that God has designed into human life. The second is the family. And a third restraint is government. We understand personal authority in the conscience and parental authority in the family, but it’s important to recognize that government represents the social authority. God ordained every authority, regardless of its imperfections. No family, father, or mother is necessarily perfect, but God has ordained them. No one’s knowledge of the law of God or conscience is necessarily perfect, but they are designed by God even with a

measure of imperfection to restrain evil. And according to Romans 13:2, *"Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God."* What you're witnessing in the streets today are people who actively oppose God. They are actively resisting the authority that God has established. By the way, those who have resisted will face condemnation. You don't get away with it; God keeps accounts. Verse 4 says, *"For government,"* that means police, and even in some cases, soldiers—*"they are a minister of God to you for good."* The New Testament refers to only two types of ministers: pastors and policemen. They serve as God's representatives for your benefit. Look, we live in a society where people's consciences are often misinformed. We've got a society where people have quieted their own conscience by deciding that they're better than their conscience says they are. We've got a society of people raised without the discipline, love, and stability of a home. Now, they're running across this nation in every direction, leaving the police to attempt to restore order amidst the chaos. These are people who have evil hearts to the core. We all do. But the gospel, Christ's transforming power, has not restrained them. So we understand that God has ordained government to restrain evil. And resistance to authority is rebellion against God, not just government. Resistance should and must be punished. And when they punish resistance, they are carrying out God's will. This is why there's a justice system. This is why it's so horrendous when we don't trust the FBI, the Justice Department, or the leaders who have that power. If a society undermines the divine law by eliminating the Bible, mocking it, and outlawing its use in schools. If a society does all it can to silence the conscience. If a society does everything it can to destroy real marriage, family, and children, make spanking children some kind of abuse. Then the next step for society would be to defund the police and undermine respect for authority. Defunding follows the destruction of respect. And then there is unrestrained evil. What we are witnessing today is the potential outcome if this rebellion persists in undermining those who uphold law and order. So how do you destroy a society? Simply undermine God's authorities that are designed to restrain evil. Pollute the conscience, shred the family, and undermine those who protect us. Surprisingly, that is the platform of one of our political parties. Repent and believe! GTY.org (81-80) – **Who's to Blame for the Riots?** – [TOC](#)

Day 709

Jesus is Coming!

Peter presents a historical argument about Jesus' second coming in judgment. When false teachers maintain this crazy idea that Christ isn't coming because everything continues just as it was from the beginning of creation, Peter says, *"It escapes their notice,"* and by the way, that actually means they shut their eyes on purpose—*"it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water."* Did they forget about the creation account? *"It escapes their notice"*—they shut their eyes to the facts, are willingly ignorant, and have no interest in the truth. They show no interest in the fact that there has been a significant amount of activity since God initiated creation. In the first three days of creation, God takes the formless mass of water in the darkness and creates the earth, the seas, and the waters in the heavens. The waters in the heavens formed a vast expanse of water, akin to

a canopy, enveloping the earth. The earth's canopy filtered out ultraviolet lights, resulting in a lifespan of over 900 years, as evidenced by the genealogies. Adam lived over 900 years; Methuselah lived 969 years; and so on. The earth was benign compared to what it's like now. That earth possessed the qualities of divine creation. And before sin came, that earth would have sustained itself under the power of God's creation. However, Peter wants you to understand that God made it out of water. The point is, according to Genesis 6:5, God used the very material that He created the earth from to destroy the earth during the universal flood. So if you think everything has continued the way it has since creation, you are wrong. That's why you can find mastodon remains in the northernmost part of Canada, near the Arctic Circle, and when scientists cut them open, they discover tropical food preserved in the tundra. This is because, once upon a time, the entire earth was sheltered by the water surrounding it. That's why people lived so long. However, God used the very agency—water—by which He created to destroy the creation due to sin. So back to 2 Peter 3. You're willingly blind because fish fossils are found all over the earth, far from oceans and seas, because at one time the whole earth was covered with this flood. The flood destroyed the first heaven and earth, leaving behind the second one in which we live. But according to the book of Revelation, this second one will be destroyed by fire. That's why God gave us a rainbow—to remind us that He'll never destroy the world again with water. But God has a date stamped on this earth for the destruction and judgment of ungodly men. That Day of Judgment is coming. So Peter answers back by saying, *"If you think everything has continued the same way, you're wrong; it hasn't, and there's evidence all over the planet of that flood."* So you better prepare; Jesus is coming! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-125\)](http://GTY.org) – **Reserved for Fire** – [TOC](#)

Day 710

Why Expository Preaching?

Preaching today needs a major overhaul, and if we are to preserve the legacy of the Puritans into this generation and beyond, it has to start with preaching, because that is the most defining aspect of the Puritan influence. So, why were the Puritans committed to expository preaching?

1. A life of expositing Scripture connects the preacher personally to the regular, sanctifying grace of Scripture. How can a preacher survive seventy years without bringing dishonor on the Lord, without some crushing, disqualifying, destructive sin? How is that possible? You continually immerse yourself in the Word of God. And I can best serve my people by teaching the Bible in its entirety. However, as Paul stated, this must be accompanied by a lifestyle that sets an example for the believers.
2. A driving motivation for expository preaching is that it provides the spiritual depth and transcendence that define worship. So much is called worship these days; it's just a name that essentially is connected to music. Worship is not music; music is an expression of worship. So how do you know when you're Spirit-filled? It's not because you fell over in the isle, had an out-of-body experience, or heard a voice from heaven. When you're filled with the Holy Spirit, you speak to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart. That's because that's where your affections are. In joyful worship. The Word cleanses your heart, overthrows all remaining sin in your heart, and takes it captive to the music

of redemption. 3. Expository preaching allows the preacher to fully speak for Christ, whom he serves. Non-expositors can speak for Christ on some issues, but only true expositors can fully represent Christ. If you approach ministry by deciding what you're going to allow God to say, you're putting yourself in danger. You don't want to be God's editor. If you're an expositor, you can't pick and choose. When you get to the next verse, you can't escape. We may want to soften certain points, and if you're just a topical preacher, you can easily do that by bouncing around the Bible. But if you go book by book, verse by verse, and word by word, you're speaking fully for Christ, regardless of how offensive, difficult, or challenging that truth might be. In any case, there is nothing you should avoid. If you want the people you're ministering to mature, you have to give God's full counsel. So why are we committed to expositional preaching? 1. A life of expositing Scripture connects the preacher personally to the regular, sanctifying grace of Scripture. 2. A driving motivation for expository preaching is that it provides the spiritual depth and transcendence that define worship. 3. Expository preaching allows the preacher to fully speak for Christ, whom he serves. Repent and believe! GTY.org (PC22-2) – **The Enduring Legacy of the Puritans** – [TOC](#)

Day 711

The Inspired Truth

Can God send forth His Holy Spirit among different writers of His saints and cause them to write His very words? Of course He can. Think of the complexity of creation. The incomprehensible complexity of creation is immense, as God utilizes all elements to achieve His creative objectives. And then let's delve even deeper into the complexity of providence—the way God orchestrates the development of all His plans and purposes through the unexpected convergence of a billion acts of human will, which are alternately intelligent and ignorant and yielding and rebellious. So, of course, God can send forth His Holy Spirit into any of His saints, causing them to write His very words. This explains why there is a consistent pattern throughout the Bible regardless of whoever holds the pen. It might be a shepherd, king, farmer, prophet, scribe, fisherman, priest, or tax collector. You continue to receive the same message over and over. Hundreds of years go by and these writers are isolated from each other. However, the same God underlies it all, as descriptions of men, nations, and history are consistent. It's the same angels, the same past, the same present, the same future, the same heaven, the same hell, and the same judgment. The poet and historian are consistent, as are the plains, the desert, the mountains, and the eras of Pharaoh and Caesar. The same God speaks about the same ruin, the same sin, the same fall, the same human impotency, the same innocence, the same guilt, the same praise, the same purity, the same happiness, the same truth, the same mercy, the same righteousness, the same grace, and the same salvation. Scripture's abundance of humanity does not contradict inspiration; rather, it affirms God's authorship. And this is what Scripture claims. For instance, in Exodus 4:10, Moses, daunted by his calling, said to the Lord, *"Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past. Nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."* The Lord said to him, *"Who made man's mouth? Now you go, and I will be with you"*

mouth and teach you what you are to say.” That's how it works. I'll be with your mouth. Not just your mind, but your mouth. Therefore, the Holy Spirit guided the writers of the Old and New Testaments. Every word was God breathed. The promise is this: you hold in your hand, dear one, the inspired truth. So what are you doing with it? Are you studying to show yourself approved unto God, a workman needing not to be ashamed? Are you letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, which informs your worship? Are you speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs and making melody in your heart to the Lord? If so, it's because your theology, which stems from your understanding of inspired Scripture, connects your praise. This is a promise. Repent and believe! GTY.org (43-76) – **The Illuminating Role of the Holy Spirit** – [TOC](#)

Day 712

A Fathers Responsibility

What is the wise father doing? He's saying to his son, *“Fear your God, guard your mind, obey your parents, select your companions, and control your body.”* He is also teaching his son to enjoy his wife. How does a father do that? Your son learns from your treatment of your wife, your words, and your complete fulfillment in your own marriage. Teach him what Proverbs says: that a wife is a gift from God, more precious than jewels. Teach him that a wife is given to be his best friend and companion; that a wife is to serve his needs and that of the children, and she is to be rewarded for her efforts and praised, as Proverbs 31 says. Teach him the beauty, the wonder, and the blessedness of a gift of a wife, and teach him to enjoy his wife—and you will teach him best if you enjoy yours. A father must also teach his children to watch their words. Teach your children to be careful how they speak. Make sure they don't speak lies, speak hypocritically, speak perversely, or speak deceitfully. Teach them to speak pure, true words. They must be taught to always tell the truth. Fathers must also teach them not to always talk. That's a major matter of wisdom. The mouths of fools pour out endless speech, crooked speech, foolish speech, violent speech, hateful speech, malicious speech, strife, ruin, slander, belittlement, gossip, disgrace, scorching fire, mischief, perversity—on and on, it says in Proverbs. So fathers, teach your children to watch their words. Fathers must also teach their boys how to work. They must understand that if they don't learn how to work, they will become impoverished. Teach them to pursue work. A sluggard is a lazy man with too many excuses, too many refusals, and too many postponements. According to Proverbs, the lazy man will suffer hunger, poverty, and failure. Why? Because he sleeps through the harvest. A father must also teach his children to manage their money. The first lesson is to give from the top—from the first fruits—to the Lord. All of their money is to honor the Lord. If you want your children to know the fullness of the blessing of God and all of it poured out on them, then teach your children how to give to God generously. One final lesson: love your neighbor. If you've got the money, give it. If you've got the goods, give them to the person in need. Generosity to the poor and meeting the needs of people around you when you have the resources is a part of honoring God. You're to be generous in showing sacrificial love to your neighbor. So, a father must teach his children to fear God, guard their mind, obey their parents, select their companions, control their bodies, enjoy their spouse, watch their words, learn how

to work, manage their money, and love their neighbor. Fathers have a tremendous responsibility to this generation and the next. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-71\)](http://GTY.org) – **Crucial Lessons for a Wise Father** – [TOC](#)

Day 713

What to Expect in Heaven

What will we be like in heaven? Well, perfect—perfect in spirit, soul, and body. It'll be nice to be perfect. First and foremost, we will be the spirits of perfected men, as stated in Hebrews 12. You'll be perfect. We'll need to reacquaint ourselves, as we won't recognize each other when we're flawless. We're also going to be surprised who's not there. Do you know what I believe to be the true surprise of heaven? It isn't who's not there. The real surprise of heaven is that you're there; I'm there. We'll say, *"What am I doing there? What kind of transformation has taken place in my life that suits me for this? Why is God spending eternity pouring out His love on me, giving me a joyous existence?"* And it will be a joyous existence that has no sense of time. It's one eternal moment. There's nothing to plan for because there's no future; it's just an eternal, glorious, blissful, joyful moment. You'll be free from sin, suffering, sorrow, pain, doubts, fear of God's displeasure, temptation, persecution, abuse, division, hatred, quarrels, disappointment, anger, effort, and classes, as you'll possess all knowledge. No need for teachers so I'm going to have to learn to play a harp. But just maybe there's golf in heaven. There will be no need for prayer, fasting, repentance, confession of sin, weeping, watchfulness, preaching, learning, evangelism, or witnessing. There will be perfect pleasure, knowledge, comfort, love, and perfect joy all existing in one eternal moment without any concept of time. I think joy is, in my mind, the dominant word to describe heaven. That's why, at the end of the story in Matthew 25, Jesus said to the servant, *"Enter into the joy of your Lord."* Unmixed joy. An eternal life of satisfaction. Think about it. You didn't earn it; Christ gave it to you as a gift because you struggled to enter the narrow door in His power. And what will be our relationship to others? We'll fellowship with angels, share joy with them, and worship alongside them. Moreover, they will serve us. First Corinthians 6 says, *"We'll reign over the angels."* What about family? There won't be any marriage there. Jesus said, *"There's no marrying or giving in marriage in heaven."* But when I go to heaven, will I know my wife? Yeah. I'll be able to say, *"Nice to see you, Patricia."* But she'll be like every other believer to me, with the exception that I will love her more perfectly there than I have ever been able to love her here. I'll love everybody that way. Marriage is unnecessary because there will be no incompleteness. In heaven, we're just one big family. We are all in the Father's house. There doesn't need to be any physical aspect to our relationships. Jesus said we'll be like the angels. That doesn't mean we're going to be eternal mules. It simply means that procreation and incompleteness that's completed in marriage for the sake of replenishing life on the earth and passing righteousness from generation to generation so God can fulfill His redemptive plan is over. That's what to expect in heaven. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(RE1505\)](http://GTY.org) – **Desiring Heaven Above All Else** – [TOC](#)

Day 714

Why it's So Hard

We are told by our Lord to enter the narrow gate because the broad gate is easy to find, has a huge opening, and furthermore, there are lots of false prophets selling tickets. That's what false prophets do. They dress in sheep's clothing. What is sheep's clothing? What comes off sheep? Wool. Why is it stated that way? Because, traditionally, prophets wore a wool garment. This does not imply that they arrive looking like sheep. They come looking like prophets. They say they represent God, but they're ravenous wolves, and they want to tear you to shreds. So the broad road is very easy to go on. You can go on with a group, throw a little religion into your life, talk about Jesus a little bit, feel a little bit moral, and clean up your act. And there are plenty of hawkers selling tickets to the broad road. On the other hand, Jesus says in Luke 13:24, *"Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."* Therefore, you enter: you enter this gate, you enter alone, and you enter with difficulty because it's hard to find the truth. I can't count how many times we've heard baptismal testimonies at Grace Church from people who have said, *"I tried this religion, that religion, and the other religion. Finally, I met someone who brought me here, and I heard the truth."* And when you find it, Matthew 11:12 says, *"The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."* When you're looking for that gate—and that very small gate is hard to find—when you find it, you storm it with violence. You seize that opportunity. Luke 16:16 puts it this way: *"Every man presses into it."* Yes, you believe in Jesus, you believe in the cross, and you believe in the resurrection—all absolutely critical components. But what we're talking about is the real, full definition of what repentance means—turning from sin, turning from the world, turning from everybody who holds you back, and finding that door. You seize it with violence, and you crash through. Why is it so hard? Because you have to turn your back on your sin, turn your back on your wickedness, and turn your back on the past. That's part of hating yourself. Luke 9:23 says, *"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself."* That means *"I'm sick of my sin. I'm tired of fear. I'm tired of doubt. I'm tired of unrighteousness. I'm tired of displeasing God. I'm tired of a guilty conscience. I'm tired of hopelessness. I'm tired of the fear of death. I'm tired of being dominated by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life."* That's taking a violent approach to the small door. And it's hard because we're proud and because we love our sin. The love of sin is what dominates us. That's why it's so hard. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(RE1506\)](http://GTY.org) – **Heaven: The Future of Christians** – [TOC](#)

Day 715

The Reality of Salvation

In Second Peter, chapter 1, Peter says in verse 12, *"I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them and are established in the present truth."* He is saying, *"I want you to remember these things. You are already familiar with these concepts,*

but I want you to solidify your understanding of them.” What things? Such as, to remember the reality of your salvation. He says we have obtained, and that’s the word for obtaining by allotment. We have received this as a gift. It’s not as if we purchased it; it’s allotted to us. We have obtained precious faith, and that has to do with saving faith, not the body of truth but the saving faith, the active believing. And it is precious; it is highly valuable, and it is like all other saving faith. Everybody comes on the same terms: equal in value and equal in honor with others. We have equal saving faith in a Savior who is equally saving all of us, and so there is equal saving faith, there is equal standing, and there is no distinction. The same Savior has saved us all with the same kind of saving faith, entering into the same righteousness, giving us the same standing, and with the same eternal promise. It’s a precious faith; that is, it’s like everybody else’s precious faith. Therefore, we all share the same foundation, thanks to the righteousness of God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. God has granted to us His righteousness, His holiness, and the essence of His nature. And it came through the deep, profound knowledge of God and Jesus, our Lord. So when a person comes to this knowledge, not superficial knowledge, not just something on the outside, but the deep knowledge of God through Jesus Christ, he then receives the righteousness of God and Christ; thus, he has entered into a like precious faith as one who’s identified with Jesus Christ. So all salvation is based on equal saving faith, equal standing with God, and equal righteousness granted in Christ. Now, that means that we all stand on the same foundation. Therefore, any issues we may encounter regarding the assurance of our own salvation, knowing that we are saved, are not due to varying levels of salvation, as all salvations are equal. To put it another way, some salvations are not more or less secure than others. All salvation is secure. That is the reality of salvation. But some individuals do have more assurance of their salvation than others. Why is that? That is due to their understanding of the pure doctrine of God’s Word and their commitment to living a pure life, demonstrating a pattern of holiness. Those are the essential and genuine evidences of salvation that produce assurance. Repent and believe!

[GTU.org \(DOC-13\)](#) – **The Doctrine of Salvation: Assurance** – [TOC](#)

Day 716

Mocking the Holy Spirit

In 1657, the Puritan writer, John Owen, wrote an analysis of communion with God. It’s a treasure because it discusses Trinitarian communion. Owen shows how our communion is with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and how we receive from and respond to each individual person in the Trinity. Therefore, each member of the Trinity ties our covenant relationship together. The Father initiates our relationship, the Son ratifies it, and the Holy Spirit communicates it. The Father expresses divine sovereign love, the Son expresses divine sovereign grace, and the Holy Spirit dispenses divine sovereign life. So we should be engaged in full worship of the Holy Spirit, celebrating everything that God has done in the initiation, everything that the Son has done in the validation, and everything that the Spirit has done in the consecration, the actual act of saving us and sanctifying us. And what is the work of the Holy Spirit? He convicts. He regenerates. He justifies. He illuminates. He cleanses. He converts. He sanctifies. He adopts. He baptizes. He

indwells. He endows. He empowers. He guides. He delivers. He produces fruit and He secures us. This is what Scripture says. But the charismatic movement says that the Holy Spirit knocks us down, makes us laugh in a silly way, amps up our body heat, gives us the hiccups, gives us convulsions, puts us in a stupor, makes us look drunk, causes us to fall down, makes us speak gibberish with primal sounds, causes us to jump up and down, and roll around on the floor. That is ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous. John Owen writes, *“The Spirit’s ministry consists in His bringing the promises of Christ to remembrance, in His glorifying Him in our hearts, in His shedding abroad the love of God in us, in His witnessing with us as to our spiritual state and condition, in His sealing us to the day of redemption, being the earnest of our inheritance, in His anointing us with consolation, in His confirming our adoption, in His being present with us in our supplication. Here is the wisdom of faith: to find out and to meet with the Comforter and all these things. Not to lose their sweetness by lying in the dark as to their author, nor coming short of the returns which are required of us. We can’t let the wondrous work of the Holy Spirit lie dormant in the dark; we must acknowledge it and commune with Him in gratitude for it.”* Owen also says, *“The pattern of regular communion as a believer is with the three persons of the Godhead in meditation, prayer, and a duly ordered life. We should dwell on the special mercy and ministry of each person toward us and make our proper response of love and submission distinctly to each.”* This is full-orbed communion with God. And the charismatic movement's mockery of the Holy Spirit greatly displeases God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TM13-1\)](http://GTY.org) – **Strange Fire** – [TOC](#)

Day 717

Don't Provoke Your Children

In regards to biblical parenting, let's take a practical look at Ephesians 6:4: *“Don't provoke your children to anger.”* Don't make them mad. There is a parallel statement in Colossians 3:21: *“Don't exasperate your children so that they will not lose heart.”* Don't exasperate them; provoke them. This refers to provoking them in a way that irritates them. Now, you have a delicate balance here, because you have to exercise authority, exercise discipline, establish standards, and hold them to those standards. Discipline has to be corporeal—you spare the rod, you spoil the child—so, you're disciplining in a physical way. How can parents discipline their children without going too far and frustrating them? How can a parent avoid provoking their children, causing them to become angry, which in turn creates bitterness, animosity, conflict, and hostility in the home, leading to the children fleeing and destroying the relationship they desire with their parents? There are numerous ways in which you can irritate your children. Number one: by overprotection. Fence them in, never trust them, never give them the opportunity to develop independence, and mock their decisions. They will read that as abusive. They are people who God has created in His image. They are in the special care of God and God has a plan for their lives. And while you are responsible for educating them about the gospel, Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, you don't have to be God in their lives. Encourage them to think for themselves; encourage them to make decisions; allow them to feel some of the pain of a wrong decision. Don't overprotect them, or you'll strangle them, and they'll become bitter. Another way that you can provoke your

children to anger is by favoritism. Favoritism is an awful thing in a family. If a child receives unequal treatment compared to others, it can lead to anger and bitterness. You can also provoke your children to wrath by pushing achievement. There are many parents who literally crush their children with pressure to excel. Whether it's in school, academics, activities, sports, or any other area, the pressure is so intense that it crushes the child. Children will become bitter as they strive to meet the unrealistic and foolish expectations of their parents. They won't be happy, and they won't be joyful. Let them be what they're capable of being; encourage them. Don't force them for the sake of your own pride to be high achievers; that will provoke them to anger. Another way that parents provoke their children to anger is by discouragement. When parents deprive their children of rewards, approval, honor, and affection, that's very hard on them. Children yearn desperately for approval, and guess who they want it most from? From Mom and Dad. They need to hear, *"That's wonderful; that's great. You've done a terrific job at that."* You cannot gain any ground by tearing down others. Therefore, always look for genuine ways to reward, honor, and elevate your children. Scripture is very clear, *"Don't provoke your children to anger."* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-385\)](http://GTY.org) – **Parents, Do Not Provoke Your Children** – [TOC](#)

Day 718

The Power of the Gospel Message

When the Apostles preached, they always had one simple message. And it all started in Acts 2:41. Peter preached the gospel, which was offensive to the Jews, but they received the Word that day and were baptized and numbered three thousand souls. The message never changes in the book of Acts. Everywhere the preachers go, they preach Christ crucified, buried, and risen from the dead. By the way, the people initially rejected the crucified Jew, but later accepted Him. He came out of the grave, and He is their only hope and their only Savior. Did the message reach its recipients? Yes, soon after they numbered five thousand men plus women. What's the number? It's twenty thousand in a matter of days. With one simple message, God will call whom He will through the preaching of the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit—and that's all the Apostles needed to know. The current push today for contextualization is really tragic. The letters sent to all the churches by the Apostles were never adapted at all to cultural expectations. In fact, the letters sent to the churches by Paul, Peter, John, James, and Jude are as relevant to you today, two thousand years later in America, as they were to the people who read them when they were first written. That's the transcendent nature of the message. This idea that you have to somehow contextualize the gospel for every zip code is shameful. The message of Christ's church is a transcendent message. Even today, the message of Christ's church reaches all corners of the globe. Even as I speak, this pulpit at Grace Community Church is reaching out across this planet. We don't do anything to change our style. The message is the same. I ask preachers all the time when I speak to them, *"Can your message go to every person? Can it go outside your zip code, outside your town, outside your state, outside your country? Can your message go anywhere in the world? If it can't, then you need to take something out of it and put something in to make sure that it can. Does your message ignore all that is trendy, all that is faddish, and all that is pop*

culture? Does your message just bring heaven down in its full beauty and truth? Can you take your sermons anywhere in the world and preach them? Or should there be a warning label on your messages, 'This message self-destructs five miles from where it was given? Or within three months after it was given?'" That's so basic. That's one of the things that has defined the ministry of this church. We understand the transcendent power of the message of the gospel to cross the globe. That's why our congregation looks the way it does. And thanks to the internet, the world is here every Sunday morning, and the only context ever needed is a biblical context. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-455\)](http://GTY.org) – **Marks of Real Church Growth** – [TOC](#)

Day 719

Where Everything Must Start

When evaluating a church, the first thing to look for is whether there is evidently and manifestly a lofty view of God. If it's all about health, wealth, prosperity, and success, and it's all about tweaking your life and feeling better about yourself and solving your problems and fixing you, et cetera, that's selling short the priority of the church. If you don't consistently practice, repeat, and elevate your understanding of God—not just in songs and choruses, but a deep, theological, biblical understanding of God—then you lack the most powerful inspiration for living a godly life. People don't lead godly lives because someone stood up and preached to them about the importance of living a godly life. People don't live godly lives because someone stood up and warned them about the numerous negative consequences and the possibility of failure if they don't behave in this manner. It's people's view of God that primarily motivates them to live godly lives. It's possible to walk into any church and determine the depth of their understanding of God solely based on their worship style. But first and foremost, the preacher's responsibility is to lower people to raise them. That's how I view my role. And what do I mean by that? I mean, if you expect people to rise in praise, you must immerse them in the depths of Scripture and the deep things of God. And if you have a congregation that doesn't understand the deep things of God—that doesn't understand the height, breadth, length, and depth of the glory of His majesty and His person—then what they call "*worship*" is just a form of manipulation. What motivates them is the style and lilt of the tune, not the content of the words. However, when you gather people who comprehend the profound aspects of God, and they start singing and praising Him, they become engrossed in awe, love, and gratitude, not due to the musical style but rather to the captivating depth of Scripture that's theology set to music. Shallow worship is the byproduct of shallow theology. Jesus and Paul confronted the entire Jewish religion, which was apostate and headed toward eternal hell. Despite their sophisticated religious system, they all perished because they had a low view of God. Today, we face a terrifying battle against a man-centered theology that sells psychological comfort to people instead of exalting God. I read an article that said most people have never been to any formal event. It's a casual world. And for the most part, there is a cavalier and casual attitude toward serious things. There is an obvious decline in sophistication and refinement in the world. As a result, the dumbing down of a whole culture permeates the current church environment, and it appears that there is minimal desire to

overcome this and to conceive of our God in a way that is great, grand, glorious, profound, compelling, and inquiring. But that's where everything must start. Repent and believe!

[GTU.org \(91-4\)](#) – **Fundamental Priorities of a Good Church** – [TOC](#)

Day 720

The Wisdom of God

Many people, who arrogantly claim to possess wisdom, are lying because they lack true wisdom. I think about this often when I look at our world. Our world is utterly obsessed with the belief that education is the key to everything. People believe that attaining sufficient education will enable them to possess true wisdom. You frequently hear people say, *"Well, the problem in our world is that people aren't educated. If they just had more worldly wisdom..."* Alfred Whitney Griswold, a former president of Yale University, said this: *"The source of better ideas is wisdom, and the surest path to wisdom is a liberal education."* That's the illusion of our society, that people can pursue this secular world's information and therefore attain true wisdom. Listen to what I told the young people at the Master's College on Monday: *"You are sitting in a place where the goal of everything we do is to teach you spiritual wisdom. There is not a secular college or university in the world that dispenses spiritual wisdom. Not one. They give you information. They do not aim to impart spiritual wisdom that can shape your life. The wisdom that is not of God arises from rivalries, arrogance, boastfulness, pride, self-aggrandizement, the desire to succeed, the desire to excel, and feelings of jealousy and rivalry. All of that is what catapults people into the pursuit of wisdom—to ascend and fulfill their own ambitions. And when they get there, they think they're wise, and they arrogantly parade their wisdom, but the fact is they are lying against the truth because they are not wise—not in the truest sense. They claim arrogantly to possess wisdom, but they don't have it. Not God's wisdom, not the true wisdom."* Three characteristics of false wisdom are identified in James 3:15: *"This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic."* Here is a specific definition of the wisdom of man: *"This wisdom descends, not from above."* What does that mean? It doesn't come from God. It doesn't qualify to be called divine or spiritual wisdom. It does have some functions in this life on a natural level—and he says that: *"It's earthly."* And it does help contribute to earthly life. But would you please notice those three things? It's earthly, sensual, and demonic. When he says it's earthly, he means that its extent is limited to time and space. It comes from and is limited to the fallenness of the cursed Earth. It's limited to the finite system of unregenerate men who do not know God. It's wisdom without spiritual illumination. It never rises above the ground. And it goes no higher than the mind of man. It has those limitations. So, as man continues to expand his earthly wisdom, he never gets above ground level. And therefore, he never learns the life-transforming, eternal, divine, and spiritual truths of the wisdom of God. Repent and believe!

[GTU.org \(80-79\)](#) – **Spiritual Wisdom** – [TOC](#)

Day 721

The Noahic Covenant

After the global flood, God made a covenant or promise with Noah and his family, the eight people that constitute the entire population of the earth, humanly speaking. And what God says is essentially God's message to all humanity because all humanity is constituted in those eight people. So, let's look at this covenant in Genesis 9:9. He says, *"Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you."* This covenant is unilateral. That means it's a covenant made by one. A bilateral covenant would be made by two. That is, the promise is singularly on the part of God. He is doing it without any consideration of man and His will; He's doing it without any consultation with man. He's doing it without any negotiation with man. This is not a mutual agreement. This covenant is unilateral. Secondly, it is unconditional. There are no conditions on the part of man to validate it or invalidate it. Nothing man does can cause God to make it or break it. There are no conditions in man that make him deserve the covenant, no conditions in man that make him sustain the covenant, and no conditions in man that can cause the termination of the covenant. It's a covenant that is unilateral and unconditional. God says, *"I'm doing it, and that's it, and it has nothing to do with what you do or don't do."* Thirdly, it is inviolable. That means it's secure and fixed. It's inviolable because it's a covenant made by the eternal God who cannot change and cannot lie. People in the Old Testament time, in Noah's time, and throughout biblical times understood what a covenant was. It was a binding promise. So here's God making a unilateral, unconditional, inviolable covenant with man. This is the best possible kind of covenant from the standpoint of the beneficiary because when God makes covenants, God keeps His covenants. So the first Old Testament covenant from God was a binding, unilateral, unconditional, inviolable promise to humanity that God made and will keep. By the way, the Old Testament records that God made six such covenants: the Noahic Covenant, the covenant He made here with Noah; the covenant He made with Abraham; the Priestly Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, and the New Covenant. Six covenants, six promises. And by the way, of the six, only one has been nullified; that's the Mosaic, or Sinaitic, covenant. And the reason the Mosaic covenant was nullified was because it was a conditional covenant, and no man can meet the condition of fulfilling the law. That's why Jesus came. However, in all the covenants that are permanent, God is faithful. So the Noahic promise, not to destroy the earth again with water, was given to all humanity. And it's unilateral, unconditional, and inviolable because it comes from the eternal God, who is Holy and cannot lie. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-263\)](http://GTY.org) – [God's Rainbow Covenant](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 722

Examine Yourself

When a Christian has been converted, it means they've taken a dramatic turn in the direction of their life. And the first turn is from error to truth—darkness to light. Colossians 1:12-13 says,

“Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.” We have an inheritance in light! Light represents the life that comes from the truth. In fact, Acts 26:18 says that Paul’s ministry was *“to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light.”* Psalm 119:130: *“The entrance of Your Word gives light.”* Psalm 119:105: *“Your Word is a lamp to my path, a light to my feet.”* The truth is synonymous with salvation, the kingdom, Christ, and His gospel. So the first thing that happens to one who is regenerate is they immediately are exposed to the truth, which they wholeheartedly embrace. There is an immediate turning from believing Satan’s lies and from living in the darkness to the light—an immediate embracing of the glorious truth of the gospel. In fact, they’re synonymous. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:3-4: *“God our Savior wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* That’s one and the same thing. To be saved is to come to the knowledge of the truth. To be saved necessarily involves believing a message. And that’s to say believing truth and doctrine, not just having warm and fuzzy feelings about Jesus. In fact, the first mark of the infant church in Acts 2:42 was that *“they continued in the apostle’s doctrine.”* There was a hunger; there was an attraction for the truth. So what does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be converted? It means to stop being deceived and living in darkness and to turn and go exactly in the opposite direction into the full light of truth. Jesus said in John chapter 3: *“I am the light of the world; whoever believes in Me will not walk in darkness.”* God sent His Son into the world as light. So conversion is a dramatic transformation. The unconverted person plunges deeper and deeper into the comfort zone of his darkness, but when converted, there’s a total transformation out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son, and you come rushing toward the flooding light of the incarnate truth, Jesus, and the truth revealed in Scripture. The first step in conversion is turning from darkness to light, from deception to truth, and from sin, corruption, and evil desire to righteousness, holiness, and worship. Conversion does capture the soul, but it also captures the mind, and what comes into the mind is this hunger for the light. Scripture repeatedly expresses this turning. And without this turning (repenting), there is no conversion. Therefore, do as 2 Corinthians 5:13 says: *“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?”* Repent (turn) and believe! [GTY.org \(90-299\)](http://GTY.org) – **Spiritual Transformation** – [TOC](#)

Day 723

The Sin of Self-Worship

All sin is the product of idol worship, and you’re the idol. Here’s the progression: The root of your sin is self-worship. That develops into covetousness because our innate, evil desire gives rise to it, which then ignites a passion that fuels evil thoughts and culminates into immoral behavior. Therefore, sin always starts with idolatry and ends up in immoral behavior. So how are we to deal with sin? Well, the easiest point to deal with it is at the level where it begins, right? You deal with it on the basis of what it is. It’s idolatry. And anything you desire that you have no right to is a test of who you worship. If you worship God, you say no at that point. If you worship yourself, you say

yes at that point, and that's what James says lust wants, because then lust conceives and brings forth sin. And ultimately, sin brings forth death. That's why it's so important for you to know that the ability to live the Christian life is not related to somebody giving you a motivational pep talk; it's directly related to what you think about God and what you think about yourself. And if you have a superficial view of God and an elevated view of yourself, you're set up to worship yourself and not God. That's what's wrong with all man-centered preaching. It does not help; it provides no strength against sin, because your strength against sin does not come from feeling good about yourself; it comes from feeling terrible about yourself. It comes from a broken and contrite heart, according to Psalm 51. In Isaiah 66, God says, *"Who am I seeking? Whoever has a broken and a contrite heart and trembles at My word."* No one can give you anything more powerful than a deep, wide, and high understanding of God. Because if you are consumed with the glory of God, if you are consumed with the truth of Christ, if the word concerning Christ dwells in you richly, if your theology of God is deep and true, you are a true worshiper, and sin is dealt with at the very foundation level; you are not going to be an idol worshiper who puts yourself in the place of God. When you hear people preaching and trying to make others feel better, this is absolutely antithetical to true sanctification. So every Christian needs to be killing the corrupting things, and at the base of those corrupting things is idolatry. The modern attitude of condoning any kind of sin finds no support from God at all, because you are to live out heavenly virtues. And you are to be killing sin all the way down at its core, which is idolatry, because these are the very things that God pours out eternal wrath on, and these are the very things that you were saved from. That was your former life. Listen to First Corinthians 6:11: *"Such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-51\)](http://GTY.org) – **Killing the Sin in Your Life** – [TOC](#)

Day 724

Just Know This

Does Roman Catholicism ever change? No. Rome morphs. Rome is a chameleon; whatever it needs to be in any nation, at any time, it will become—whatever it takes. That's how the Devil always works; he moves and changes to become whatever wins people over. But today we have Protestant evangelicalism abandoning sound doctrine, shaming the name of Christ, and embracing Catholics as brothers and sisters of Christ. Make no mistake, Catholics are the mission field. As the world watches the death of another Pope in an unrivaled spectacle of worship given to a man, people ask me, *"Is the Pope in heaven?"* And my answer is, *"Is the Pope Catholic?"* Does he believe Catholic theology? Yes. He's the guardian of Catholic theology. And, do you get to heaven by works? By Mary? By penance? By baptism? By confession? By rosary? No. This is another gospel; this is not the true gospel. Scripture is clear that salvation is by faith alone. But not in Catholicism; it's by a combination of grace, faith, and works. But we know what the New Testament teaches. It teaches that the righteous will live by faith alone. Ephesians 2:8-9: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."* And many verses say the very same thing. Salvation is

by faith alone in Christ alone through God's grace alone. When you put your trust in Jesus Christ, God declares you righteous—not because you are, but because God imputes the righteousness of Christ to you, and because God imputes your sin to Jesus. Christ bears your sin, and you receive His righteousness. This is the glory of the great doctrine of justification. But Roman Catholicism doesn't believe that. Eternal life in the Catholic system is something you earn by your works; you merit it, and you receive it because of your merit. That is an absolute and total contradiction of Scripture. That's completely another gospel. According to Catholic dogma—the *Council of Trent* (1545 to 1563)—they are to pronounce damnation on anybody who said salvation was by faith alone. That was directed at the Reformers who understood the Bible, as all true believers do, that works are the result of justification, not the cause. But Roman Catholicism curses you if you say that. Their idea is that if you keep doing more works, you increase grace. So God increases grace, you increase works, and together you achieve a higher and higher rate of sanctification, which they call justification, until **you** finally have attained eternal life. And if you don't believe that you attain your eternal life by your works, you're cursed. Do all Popes believe that? Of course. Why? The Roman Catholic Church says that Popes are infallible, and therefore Catholic theology can never be amended because it too is infallible, and the Pope is the faithful guardian of that invented system. Just know this: Catholicism is not just another denomination; it's another religion. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-291\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Pope and the Papacy** – [TOC](#)

Day 725

A Rewarding Privilege

What are the qualities of an excellent wife according to Scripture? First, this rare woman is trustworthy; she does her husband good all the days of her life, seeing to it that her life is spent so that he can be everything God would want him to be. That's an excellent woman. The underlying virtue there is selflessness. She is consumed with him and offers herself in loving service to fulfill that desire. Secondly, not only her character as a wife makes her excellent, but also her devotion as a homemaker. Being a homemaker is not a popular thing today. But in God's economy, being a homemaker is an exalted role. The sphere of the woman's duty is the home. She's the ruler of the house. And here's the key. She loves the family, and she loves her husband; it's the love of her heart that puts delight in her work. If she believed that her purpose in life was to satisfy herself, she would despise everything she had to do for others. But because she knows her reason to be is to give herself for the joy of those she loves, the delight of her heart becomes the delight of her hands. Self-denial is clearly behind the scenes. She's not concerned about her own pleasure; she's concerned about the joy and delight of her family, which gives her joy and delight because she is consumed with sacrificial love for them. She does everything with joy. You see, she is much more concerned with the blessing and joy of the people she loved than with her own indulgence. Obviously, she engages in good planning and good management. She is a faithful steward of her husband's gain, and she would go as far as she needed to go to get what she needed for her family. Not just to provide food, but to provide the variety and the quality of food that would truly express the love and delight of her heart. She wasn't just slapping whatever she

had down and throwing it in front of them. She was involved in the process of going as far as she had to go to get what she thought they would enjoy. So to depreciate the role of a homemaker is pretty foolish. The breadth of the role of homemaker is amazing. To be able to be an economist, a steward of funds and resources, to be able to analyze all the products available, to be strong enough and well-planned enough to make the right moves at the right time to acquire the right things, to be fully a wife to your husband and a tender and loving mother to all of your children, that takes some woman. Being a homemaker can be the fullest and most wonderful expression of womanhood. That's why I'm excited at the Master's College about the degree in home economics, because to produce this kind of woman is a major task. And by God's grace, to be a homemaker is a rewarding, fulfilling, and tremendous privilege. Repent and believe!

[GTU.org \(80-50\)](#) – [An Excellent Wife](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 726

Limited and Unlimited

Scripture is very clear that the atonement, provided by the death of Christ on the cross, does not apply to everyone. It's limited. How is it limited? Well, simply because not all believe, so not all are saved. The only remaining question is: Who limits it? The popular idea is that sinners limit the atonement because it's a universally available atonement, limited only by the sinner's choice to be saved or not. But there's a sense in which God limits it because God limits it to only those who believe, and nobody can believe unless He gives them faith. So what the New Testament really teaches is that God has limited the atonement by His sovereign election and sovereign grace. The atonement is an actual one for those who believe and must not be understood as some general potential atonement for everyone, or Jesus would have said "*It is begun*" or "*I hope this works for you,*" instead of "*It is finished.*" Those who say the atonement is unlimited don't mean that—they can't mean that. They know the atonement is limited; they know that God limited it to those who believed, and sinners further limit it by not believing. But when you say you believe in an unlimited atonement, you even limit it in another way. This is a huge limitation. You say that the actual work of Christ on the cross in itself was not enough to actually save people. That is a very serious limitation to put on it. In other words, the atonement is limited in its power, in its nature, in its effectiveness, in its actual achievement, and in its actual accomplishment. It's less than a true and actual atonement. It's only a potential one. That means Christ did not make a full and complete payment to God for the sins of anyone in particular, only potentially for everyone in general. You have to say that because if you say Christ died on the cross for the whole world and most of the whole world goes to hell, then whatever that atonement was, it was very limited in its power and its effectiveness. So those who limit the atonement most are those who believe in an unlimited atonement because they have now redefined the atonement to make it some kind of limited potential thing rather than a real atonement. And then hell is full of people whose sins were sort of paid for. It's not at all biblical to think along these lines. We must agree that the atonement is limited. Yes, it's limited to those who believe. Those who believe are limited by the sovereign electing purpose of God. In that sense, the atonement is limited. It's limited to those

who believe, and that limitation is established by God and not by man since man can't believe on his own. But the atonement is unlimited in the sense of its actual power and its actual effectiveness. On the cross, Jesus actually did accomplish atonement for those who are His own. Therefore, the death of Christ is not a potential, general atonement—it's an actual, particular, specific atonement. It is limited by whom God chooses, but its power to save is unlimited. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-363\)](http://GTY.org) – **For Whom Did Christ Die?** – [TOC](#)

Day 727

The Mental Victory

Secret sins of the past, present, and future need to be dealt with on the inside. That's where the battle begins. So how can you be triumphant over sins of the mind? Let me give you some steps: First, confess and forsake any sin that is a secret one. I'm talking practical, on your face, on your knees, and explicit; say the words to the Lord. If nobody's around, say them out loud, and confess and forsake any sin or pattern of sin that is inside that nobody knows about. Isaiah 55:7 says, *"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts."* Forsake those thoughts, and you start by confessing. Second: Do not expose yourself to evil attractions. How did Job do it? He said in Job 31:1, *"I made a covenant with my eyes."* And he said, *"You know what? I kept my covenant."* Guard what you see. I'm not talking about a glimpse or a glance; I'm talking about guarding what you look at and absorb. Another element is feed on the Word of God. David said, *"Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not"*—what?—"sin". You know, it's amazing when you're saturated with the Word of God how fast that puts the brakes on things. That's what the Bible means when it says, *"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly,"* which is the same as being filled with the Spirit. You're filled and controlled with the Holy Spirit when the Word of God dominates your thinking. So feed on the Word because the output of your life is in direct proportion to the intake of Scripture truth, and I'm talking about the honest, heartfelt intake. One other practical thing: Cultivate loving the Lord. I would say, just from my human viewpoint, the single greatest influence on my life through the years has been my study of Jesus Christ. And the most controlling feature of my life is the love that I have for Jesus Christ. And it's not some sentimental thing. It's not some schmaltzy, weepy thing induced by some emotion. It's this reality of who He is, and the glory and the wonder of His person, and what He's done, and how He loved me enough to give His life for me, and how I was chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, that I might be made into His image to dwell in His presence forever and ever and reflect that image. And everything that goes in between, all of the characteristics of Christ—the wonder of His meekness and gentleness, and yet His strength—and the perfect combination of grace, glory, justice, and tenderness. And you see it unfold on every page of the Scriptures. But the single greatest factor contributing to my mental victory is not wanting the Lord Jesus Christ to be disappointed with me. He knows my heart, so in the end, that's where the battle must be won. So, get to know your Savior. Christian people sit in churches all over the world all their lives and have only a superficial knowledge of Christ, which takes away, from my standpoint, the most

powerful motive for holiness. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TMU207\)](http://GTY.org) – **Dealing with Private Sins**
– [TOC](#)

Day 728

The Purpose of the Law

God's law has a purpose, but it cannot save you. In Galatians 3:19: *"Why the Law?"* Not to save, *"It was added because of transgressions."* There are four reasons for the law. Reason number one: to define sin at its broadest level. Obviously, there is a law written in the heart of everybody, and we all have a conscience. So everybody knows what is right and what is wrong, and they know it because the law of God is written in the heart. But that is not a complete law, and so God revealed His law to Moses in all of its completeness to define sin at the broadest possible level. Secondly, He revealed His law to demonstrate to us that sin is not just something wrong with us—something that's out of whack with us that affects our relationships with other people and brings bad consequences on us sort of naturally, but the violation of the law of God is in fact an open rebellion against God. It is high crime. The law then says that sin is more than a defect; it's an act of rebellion against God. The third reason that Paul tells us we have received the law is so that we will understand that having violated the law and having rebelled against God, we are under the sentence of death. Death comes to all men. The wages of sin is death. We ask, *"Why is there death?"* Because everyone is a lawbreaker and the wages of sin is death. And the fourth reason God sent the law—the law that was in place from Moses to Jesus for all those hundreds of years—was to demonstrate that the law could not save. There it was in the hands of the Jewish people who had the best opportunity to fulfill the law, to obey the law. They swore they would. They took a blood oath, back in Exodus 24, that they would obey the law. But they did not obey the law. In fact, they violated the very first of the commandments, which was to have no other gods. They went wholesale into idolatry; they violated the law of God at every point; ultimately, judgment fell on their heads; they were taken into captivity and they were taken out of their land. There's a little bit of a trickle-back, and even a few there now. But Israel still exists in disobedience and apostasy and rebellion against God in a collective sense. So, the law of God has a purpose. Its purpose is to define sin, declare it as rebellion, pronounce a death sentence, and prove historically by the illustration of Israel that the law doesn't save anyone. That's the law. The law was never intended to save; its purpose is to accomplish those four tasks. The only thing that saves is faith—faith in God and faith in Jesus Christ. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(48-19\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Adoption of the Believer** – [TOC](#)

Day 729

An Uncompromising Character

Many people think that philosophy is the most corrupting influence in a society, but it's not; it's lifestyle. A lifestyle of any society is the most corrupting thing. It isn't that we fall to the level of the philosophizing. It's that we fall to the level of the living. Isn't it? Many of us have suffered through secular education to one degree or another. It has informed us about our society's thinking. It has perhaps helped us to see truth more clearly against the backdrop of error by contrast. We maybe have learned how to confront it. We have learned its weaknesses and how to answer it. But what will really tear up your life is to begin to adjust to the culture's lifestyle. That's when the brainwashing has succeeded. That's why Proverbs 4:23 says, *"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."* People who have an uncompromising character have an unabashed boldness. It just goes with it. They don't equivocate; they don't waffle; they don't try to give some secondary reasons. They're willing to take a stand on exactly what the issue is. They have an unashamed boldness. Another characteristic of an uncompromising individual is their exceptional standards. They are the pace setters; they set the pattern for others; they live on the highest plain. Uncompromising people like to go past the crowd; they go past the minimum. They set standards for themselves that exceed the norm. They live at the highest level. They stand above the crowd. They don't choose the good; they choose the best. Their ministries stand out from the rest due to their unwavering commitment, more faithful prayer life, and deeper study of the Word. A really uncompromising life doesn't play on the edge of what is right but chooses the highest, noblest standard. The point is that there are always going to be people who choose the highest, the best, the noblest, who rise to the highest standard. Of course, if you live like that, you're going to be under a lot of heat from men. But from God, you'll be under a lot of protection. Personally, I would rather take the uncompromising stand, have the whole society against me, and have God on my side. And that's the point. If people disagree with your convictions, they will at least admire you when you stick by them. But more than that, God is on your side. It's not that your integrity becomes a valued premium and they're going to be nice to you because you have integrity. No. The issue is you're obedient to God; you take the highest ground, and that pleases God, and God will grant favor. You say, *"Boy, if I take a strong stand, what's going to happen to me at work?"* Try it and see. Put yourself in God's hands. You don't have to compromise to save yourself. God always takes up the defense of one who stands uncompromisingly for His truth. And when you do that, you just bring yourself under divine protection. So don't ever compromise to gain something with men and lose something with God. Be true to God, because He controls men. Repent and believe! GTY.org (80-136) – **The Uncompromising Life** – [TOC](#)

Day 730

A Component of Glorification

Future grace, or final grace, is just as much grace as your justification, conversion, redemption and regeneration were acts of God's grace. And it's just as much grace as our sanctification, as God continues to shape us through the Spirit of God into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ, even though we're sinful. It is His grace that does that, and your future glorification is the greatest and

consummate act of all grace. It's in the process of coming about. Jesus said that He left this world to get the place ready for you to come. God is in the process of getting heaven ready for every individual believer. God is working that plan out even now, preparing you for your final grace and preparing heaven for that final grace when you arrive. This grace is our promised glorification. We must understand that salvation is really broken down into three parts: justification, the time when you have believed and were saved from the penalty of sin; sanctification, the ongoing process by which God delivers you from the power of sin; and glorification, the final element of salvation, when you are delivered forever from the presence of sin. And Paul in the book of Romans says, *"Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed."* When you believed, you didn't receive your full salvation; you received the first part, deliverance from the penalty of sin, because the righteousness of God was imputed to you. You are now being systematically delivered from sin's dominion in sanctification. The power of sin has been broken, and one day its very presence will be forever eliminated in heaven. Now let's then look at this future glorification. What component brings this about? Death. You have to die to get this. That's why the apostle Paul says, *"Oh death, where is your sting? Oh grave, or death, where is your victory?"* That means the sting of death and the victory of death have been removed, like a bee that stings and loses its stinger and goes away to die; death has lost its sting. It has been stripped. It buried its sting in Jesus Christ, and He conquered death both for Himself and for all who believe in Him. Therefore, Jesus removes the sting of death, which is sin. And so we do not fear death; we anticipate death. We may have a reasonable fear of the way in which we might die because none of us wants an excruciating or painful approach to death. That's quite normal to resist such an approach to death. However, for God's wonderful purposes, those times of great difficulty—people dying that way—are often the times of the most marvelous dispensation of God's grace. Nonetheless, you enter into this glorification through death because the wages of sin is death, and all who bear sin die physically. According to Hebrews 9:27: *"It is appointed unto man once to die."* Death is not only the penalty for sin in the sense that it's a divine act, but it's also the effect of sin in the fact that sin creates corruption which continues to spiral down until we all finally die. But it is then, at our lowest, that we reach our highest in glorification. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-311\)](http://GTY.org) – **What Happens When a Christian Dies? – [TOC](#)**

Day 731

The Glorious Saving Call

On the road to Damascus, Paul understood that he had been grabbed by the neck by God and awakened to the glory of Christ and saved and made an apostle. It was not a request. It was a demand. And it's a calling that demands that you live your life a certain way. Therefore, it's a transforming, justifying, sanctifying calling. In fact, Paul says in Ephesians 4:1, *"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, plead with you"—or entreat you—"walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called."* This is a calling to salvation and nothing else. This is a calling into the one body, the one Spirit, the one hope, the one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism, the one God, and one Father of us all. It is a calling then that assumes a response of a life that is

walked in a worthy manner. Whenever you see the idea of a call to salvation in the New Testament epistles, it is always this efficacious, effectual, determinative, operative, saving call. Listen to Colossians 3:15: *“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.”* Here again you were called into the body of Christ. You were called to peace through Christ, who now rules in your heart. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 says the same thing, *“So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God”—listen to this—“who calls you into His own Kingdom and glory.”* This is a call to fellowship. This is a call into a relationship with Jesus Christ. This is a call to holiness. This is a call into the body of Christ, to join with the one Spirit, the one Lord, the one faith, the one God, and Father of us all. And this is a call into His Kingdom and glory. This is a saving call. This is a divine summons. I like to call it the unyielding summons of God. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:13: *“We should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation.”* That’s the great doctrine of election. God has chosen you from the beginning, before time began in the counsels of eternity; inside the Trinity, God chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. Verse 14. *“And it was for this He called you.”* You were called because you were chosen from the beginning for salvation. You were chosen to be sanctified by the Spirit; you were chosen to put faith in the truth; and *He called you to that through our gospel* in order that you might gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. There you have it again. Election led to a calling, which led to salvation, justification, sanctification, and final glorification. Putting it all together, whoever it is that the Lord calls, He calls into His Kingdom, He calls to salvation, He calls to faith in the truth, He calls to sanctification by the Spirit, and He calls to eternal glory. This is the glorious saving call. Repent and believe! GTY.org (90-296) – **The Doctrine of God’s Effectual Call** – [TOC](#)

Day 732

Be Merciful

Since mercy is exalted to the same degree as truth, we must always temper the truth with mercy. Why? So that we don’t crush people with the hard truth. Mercy is also beneficial. Do you want to do well for your own soul? Do you want to have a happy heart? Do you want to live with peace and joy and a sense of calm? Then be merciful. Mercy is also godlike. Never are you more like God than when you're merciful. Luke 6:36 says, *“Be merciful just as your Father also is merciful.”* As the children of God, you are to manifest the life of God, the characteristics of God. And one of them is mercy. Ephesians 2:4 says, God is rich in mercy. So don't be stingy in mercy; be rich in mercy. Of course, it's wonderful to have someone say that you’re strong in the truth. But it's equally necessary that someone say, *“And you carry that truth with a heart of mercy.”* Truth can be harsh and brutal, and sometimes the more refined and precise the understanding of the truth is, the less mercy is available to those who are ignorant of the truth. But even God, who is perfect truth and perfect justice, is also perfect mercy. Therefore, being merciful is a God-like quality. Mercy is also required. Colossians 3:12 says, *“Therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies.”* This is a command. Put on tender mercies. We are commanded to be merciful. That means to be kind, humble, meek, and patient. Another thing to think about when

you think about mercy: Mercy is reciprocal. Matthew 5:7 says, "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*" You want mercy, give it, and you'll get it back. So mercy is exalted in Scripture. It's beneficial to the soul. It's godlike. It's commanded. And it's reciprocal. Furthermore, mercy is essential to prevent judgment. If you want God to move into your life and chasten you, then lack mercy. Listen to James 2:13: "*For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy.*" That can't be any more direct. God will show no mercy to a merciless person. So if you want to avoid chastening, be merciful because mercy trumps judgment. This is mercy and it's a magnificent reality. Since we have received this massive mercy of forgiveness, we are to be known as a people of mercy. Through all the years of ministry, it's always been in my heart that there would be an attitude and a heart of tender mercy, patience, and long-suffering toward people while at the same time maintaining an unwavering commitment to proclaim the truth. Just to sum up, here's the definition of mercy. Mercy is the act of condescending love that reaches out to meet someone's need without considering their merit or demerit. That's mercy. It has in it pity and compassion. It's the idea of compassionate grace that does good to someone even when they don't deserve it. Don't we all need that? Be merciful. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-132\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Mission of Mercy – [TOC](#)**

Day 733

Sin in Peace

Can science explain everything? Would science be able to explain how Lazarus came out of the grave after being dead for at least 72 hours? Would science be able to explain how Jesus fed all those people by creating bread and fish out of nothing? Would science be able to explain the creation of the universe? No, because science is a study of natural law, and miracles are supernatural. Therefore, you can believe what the Bible says from the Creator who always speaks the truth, or you can take another option: you can believe Charles Darwin. He's pretty convincing. 99 percent of the universities in America are Darwinian. 93 percent of the National Science Academy members believe in evolution. 98.7 percent of evolutionary biologists are atheists. From a corrupted view of creation, they backed into atheism. How scientific is that? Just to be clear, from a biblical perspective, moving from God to Charles Darwin is a form of apostasy. It's a form of defection from the Christian faith. Darwin came along after other philosophers had done everything they could to shred Christianity, and Darwin came with the answer that everybody had been waiting for, a way to explain the universe without God. It supposedly took him 28 years to come up with his plan. An apostate scientist looking for pseudo-reasons to reject Christianity found their justification. If God could be separated from origins, then we can be separated from God. And if we can be separated from God, we don't have to worry about sin, guilt, or judgment; we're free to do whatever we want. It really doesn't make sense to be an evolutionist intellectually, because their formula that nobody times nothing equals everything doesn't make any scientific sense. You back into it morally because you want to get rid of God. It's a form of Christian apostasy historically and individually. You can believe God as He revealed Himself in His Word, or you can believe Charles Darwin, who also supported eugenics and even genocide. By his

own admission, he was a sadist, and he took immense enjoyment in torturing and killing animals. Entire books have been written on the subject of Darwin's psychological problems. One biography said, "He suffered from depression, agoraphobia—fear of crowds—insomnia, vision alterations, hallucinations, malaise, vertigo, shaking, tachycardia, fainting spells, shortness of breath, trembling, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, muscle twitches, spasms, tremors, cramps, colic, bloating, headaches, nervous exhaustion, dyspnea, skin blisters, tinnitus, and sensations of loss of consciousness and impending death." Do you think he had a little guilt for assaulting God? Listen, creation cannot be understood any other way than by believing the revelation of the Creator. He's the only One who was there. He's the only One who knows. Creation is unrelated to science because natural law did not play a role. Nothing in those six days can be explained by science, nothing. All that is left for the reader then is trust: either you are going to believe the Scripture and be faithful to the Scripture, or you are not. But don't try to impose Charles Darwin on God's holy Word just so you can sin in peace. Repent and believe! GTY.org (GTY148) – **Straight Answers About Creation – [TOC](#)**

Day 734

The Childlikeness of Believers

To enter the kingdom, we must enter as children. Therefore, greatness in the kingdom belongs to all of us who have been saved because greatness is a function of humility. That's when you come to the end of yourself and you realize your poverty of spirit, your unrighteousness, your moral bankruptcy, and your sin, and you cast yourself on the mercy and grace of God alone. Therein lies your childlike dependence. So we all enter the kingdom as children with no credentials, no power, no resources, no achievement, and no ability to help ourselves. We come in as dependent, helpless, hopeless children. Secondly, those who are in the kingdom have to be cared for as children. Because the truth of the matter is, we really never get beyond our childhood. As long as we are in this life, we are still like children, and we need to be cared for as a child. Notice Matthew 18:5, "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me." He's talking about a specific child. What child? The one He just mentioned. The one who humbles himself in order to enter the kingdom. It's a spiritual child here. He's talking about the birth of a spiritual child, not a physical child. It refers to believers in the spiritual realm. What He is saying is that in the community of believers, in the family of God, where all the children of God exist together, in the church, we are to receive each other as if we were receiving Jesus Christ. The word "receive" implies to open your arms and enfold, embrace, and take in. It implies meeting needs, caring for, nurturing, cherishing, strengthening, and instructing another Christian, just as you would a child. When that happens, you nurture them in the sanctifying process toward spiritual maturity until the day when they're made like Christ in the glory to come. Our Lord is saying, "When a little one is born into the family of God, you need to throw your arms open and embrace that little child with the intent to nurture and strengthen and build up." What this is talking about is Christian love, Christian fellowship, Christian communion, and Christian intimacy. So how you treat another Christian is exactly how you treat Christ, and God takes account of that. In the family of God, we

are all children, and we need to receive each other as children and open our arms and embrace one another for righteous purposes. But in verse 6 Jesus gives a warning: *“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea.”* These are precious children to Him— children for whom He died. And it was planned for them from the foundation of the world that these children would be made into the image of Jesus Christ; children, then, for whom the Father planned holiness and Christ-likeness; children whom the Father loves with a perfect love. Therefore, you better be careful how you treat other Christians. So, we must enter the kingdom as children, care for one another as children, and protect each other as children. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-90\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Childlikeness of the Believer** – [TOC](#)

Day 735

Where it All Begins

Desiring to do God’s will is the distinguishing mark of a believer. And assuming believers want to do God's will, can they know what it is? Some people believe the will of God is a very elusive thing and that you can live your Christian life without it. But I believe we can know God’s will. Let me tell you why. I don’t think God wills things for us that He doesn’t make known to us. To me, that’s a very basic thought. If God has a will for my life, then He will reveal it to me if I’m in the right place to receive it. God does not purposely frustrate Himself trying to get me to do His will. So how do you know what God’s will is? If He has a will that He wants you to know, He’ll make it available to you. I truly believe that God is in the business of openly, overtly, and clearly manifesting His desires for us so that we can know His will. You see, God has always revealed Himself in very clear ways. In the Old Testament, He commonly did it through very visible, outward, physical phenomena. For example, there was the miracle of the sign of the covenant with Abraham, the birth of Isaac, a very outward, tangible indication that God was going to keep His promise. A pillar of fire and a cloud guided the children of Israel through the wilderness. And when you come to the New Testament, you see this as well. The gospel of John is a series of 8 great miracle signs. But since the miracle ages have passed, how do we know God’s will today? Well, we have in our hands the Word of God. And the whole purpose of the miracles or signs, was to point to the prophet of God as he spoke the Word of God. Once the compilation of the divine revelation in Scripture was finished, it then became the source of God’s will. So, today we don’t look for miracles. We go to the Word of God. And we find the will of God in the Scriptures. Let me suggest to you something that is the will of God in Scripture. And this is where it all begins. God’s will is for you to be saved. Listen, if you’re looking for the will of God without being saved, you have no basis on which to look for it. Why? Because the natural man cannot understand the things of God. So salvation is foundational to understanding God’s will. And the first revelation of God's will occurs when you enter His family and acknowledge the lordship of Christ. In fact, God’s will for you to be saved is so strong that He sent His Son into the world to die. We also have a will for things, don't we? But we don’t will them to the extent that we would die for them. But God did. The incarnation and the crucifixion of Jesus revealed the commitment of God and were

expressions of His will. Therefore, the Word of God is clear, God's will is to save men. That's where it all begins. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(1276\)](http://GTY.org) – **God's Will Is Not Secret** – [TOC](#)

Day 736

A Divine Purpose

We are Grace Community Church, but our distinction does not lie in the word “*grace*,” although we believe that theologically it’s a marvelously distinct word. And our distinction does not lie in the word “*community*,” although we believe Christian community defines a theological and spiritual reality. The key to understanding our church is to understand the word “*church*.” The names “*grace*” and “*community*” are not mandated. But what is mandated for us is the word “*church*” because that’s what we are, and the name church immediately defines us. So, by definition, we are a church. And if you understand that word and what it means, then you understand what this church is. Our church is not like any other institution in the world; we are absolutely and utterly unique. And when you understand church, then you have a definition of what we are and what we are to be in the world. Now, when you say church to most people, they think of a place; they think of a building. So we need to define it a little more than that because it's not just some old building with old people and an out-of-date, antiquated approach to religion. At best, people might perceive a church as pleasant architecture and a group of well-intentioned individuals. They may think of hierarchy. They may recall a hierarchical church, such as a Catholic church or another church they may have attended as a child, and they may associate it with certain sacramental or sacerdotal functions. But that doesn’t really get to the issue of what a church really is. It doesn’t truly encompass the fullness of our identity. The word “*church*” in the New Testament means “*to call*.” According to Romans 8:28, Christians are called according to God’s purpose. So we are “*the called, the called ones, those called together*.” In Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 1, Paul says, “*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called*.” You are “*the called*” because you’ve had a calling. And the church is simply the called ones. We are the assembly of the called because we are a group especially summoned together by God for His purposes. That’s how you define the church. We are not a human organization built by good people or designed by well-intentioned people. And we are not a human organization basically constructed around some tradition. We are a group of people summoned together by God Himself for His purposes. So we can say this: a church is an assembly of people called by God. The real identity of the church then is determined by divine purpose. God is calling us, and God has called us into being. Our destiny has been planned by God. Our members have been chosen by God. Our purposes have been defined by God. And our ministries have been revealed by God. Therefore, we are an organization of people assembled by God for divine purposes. So, it's important to understand that a church is not a building. Christians are the church, “*the assembly of the called ones*.” Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-211\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Church for the New Millennium** – [TOC](#)

Day 737

How Wolves Attack

Jesus said to His disciples, *"I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves."* So, who are the wolves? They are men. But why are they so vicious? Because Satan and his demons despise and hate Jesus Christ. And thus men, as the devil's duped agents of evil, will direct that hate toward anyone who represents Christ. So how do the wolves attack? First of all, they attack through religion. The fact of the matter is that our Lord Jesus Christ was actually sentenced by religionists. It was men of false religion who wanted to get rid of Him. These individuals included Chief priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and elders. The religionists were the ones who wanted Jesus dead. And you will find throughout all of human history that religion has killed true believers, because Satan is behind that false religious system, and he desires to wipe out the Church. And believe me; he'll do it in our time if he can do it. And it may well be coming. So religion is a persecutor, because *"Satan disguises himself,"* 2 Corinthians 11 says, *"as an angel of"—what?—"of light."* Therefore, don't be surprised if his ministers are disguised as angels of light. Watch out for false religion because it masks itself as respectable, but it's a persecutor of the truth. It does everything to destroy the truth, even taking life if it has the authority to do that, because it's run by Satan, who is a liar and a murderer. The second source of attack on Christians is government. Yes, not only is religion going to be a persecutor, but so is government. Governments have always persecuted the saints because Satan is the prince of this world. And we all witnessed a tremendous amount of that during the Obama-Biden-Harris era. The third source of attack is the family. Jesus said that there will be significant conflict in the family. Why? Because in verse 34, He said that He came not to bring peace, but a sword, to set a man against his father. Families become persecutors, and that maybe hurts the most deeply. But that's the way it is. I've known people who came to Jesus Christ, which is the single greatest event in anyone's life, and instead of throwing a parade for them, their family had a funeral service for them. If you're looking in your family for some solace, you might find the worst enemy right in your own house. That's the way it's going to be. Listen, Christ foretold that we will be persecuted. Religion reacts because it's generated by Satan. Government reacts because the prince of the power of the air, the world ruler, controls it. And families react because they cannot tolerate a righteous individual in the midst of their unrighteousness. Beware: The wolves are going to do all they can to slaughter the sheep. So who are the wolves? Men. Why are they so vicious? Because they hate Christ. How do they attack? Through religion, government, and the family. Therefore, stay awake, sober, and alert, and don't be afraid because Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, *"Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* Repent and believe! GTY.org (2280) – [Sheep Among Wolves, Part 2](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 738

The True Church

Nowadays, people tend to treat the church very flippantly. They blithely come in and out of church, never having a thought that they're interacting with the God of truth who hates deception and lies. One writer asks, *"Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke in our prayers? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies' velvet hats to church. We should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should provide life preservers and signal flares. They should lash us to the pews, for the sleeping God we say we worship might wake up and take offense."* Look, the true church is the pillar and ground of the truth. It proclaims the truth, and the people who are there come to hear it. And the truth, of course, is the revealed truth of God. It is Scripture that reveals the only truth that God has revealed to us. Therefore, it's the solemn responsibility, then, of the church to solely, without wavering, without moving, unshakably uphold that truth. The church does not author the message of truth, and it alters it only at its own risk. The church is called to be the foundation and support of the truth. To put it another way, the church has the stewardship of the Scripture. That is our stewardship. We read so much in the paper about this church and that church. We read all of the unbiblical things that are going on in the Roman Catholic Church, particularly with the preoccupation with the pope. The Anglican church is undergoing significant changes, including the appointment of homosexual bishops and the legalization of same-sex marriages. Those really are not churches at all. They have just taken a name they're not entitled to. That's the church of the Antichrist, not the church of Christ. The church of Christ upholds the truth; it doesn't tear the truth down, and it doesn't destroy the truth. It doesn't mock the Scripture, nor does it substitute something else for it. The true church doesn't negotiate divine revelation. The true church has always clung to the truth—always. In the midst of every storm, all persecution, and rejection—whether it is enemies attacking from the inside or the outside— the true church has always clung to the truth. And thousands throughout its history have paid the price of death for the truth rather than compromise it or abandon it. Our challenge is not that we might be killed for the truth. In fact, it would probably be better in terms of holding onto the truth if that were the case. If those who believe in the truth were subjected to outright persecution, all the hypocrites would vanish. And the only people who would be left would be the people who truly are the people of the truth. Persecution would help us to hold onto the truth because the true saints of God would receive the grace to endure the persecution that comes when the truth is attacked. The true church would never compromise or set aside the truth that offends. Repent and believe! GTY.org (63-1) – **The Primacy of Truth** – [TOC](#)

Day 739

The Basis of Separation

Anybody who knows me very well knows that I am driven by the truth, compelled by the truth, burdened with the truth, and obligated to the truth. The whole of my life and ministry is bent in the direction of knowing the truth, guarding the truth, and proclaiming the truth. That really does define me, top to bottom, side to side, in total. And that is essentially the theme of a postcard

epistle—a brief letter in 2 John. The idea here is to call every reader to be faithful to the truth, recognizing that we live in a world of lies and liars. Deceivers and their deceptions are everywhere. The emphasis of 3 John is also on the truth. John writes these two short letters to emphasize the priority of living in truth. These are two personal letters, one addressed to an anonymous woman known as the chosen lady and the other to a man named Gaius. Both of them are clear calls to live in the truth. John wants us to know that the world is divided between those who know the truth and live the truth and those who live in deception. That’s how the world is split: the deceived and those who know the truth. Therefore, John is prompted by the Holy Spirit to write these letters because of the ever-present threat of deceivers and false teachers. The letters are written to instruct believers to make sure that they live in the truth and avoid any connection or association with those who lie and deceive, because nothing threatens the church more than false doctrine—nothing. The main issue behind the letters is discernment to protect the truth, even down to the personal level. It’s an indication that God does not want even one believer or one family exposed to error because the influence of error in that one family can be spread like gangrene, as Paul says in 2 Timothy 2. It’s critical, then, that you protect your mind and your family from the invasion of error right in your home. Of course, you wouldn’t willingly open your home to a false teacher, but you have to be careful even when you turn on TBN. While there are certainly true teachers that broadcast on that network, it’s mostly a bed of false teachers, and you need to make sure you don’t allow them to teach their deceptions in your home. The truth is never served, honored, respected, or aided in any way by those who either deny it, attack it, or misrepresent it. And these letters are essentially saying that sound doctrine is the test of true fellowship. And because sound doctrine, at the core of the Christian gospel, is the test of true fellowship, it is also, therefore, the basis of separation. You join with those who are in the truth, and you separate from those who are not. And all of that is behind these two little letters, as I call them, postcards. Repent and believe! GTY.org (63-2) – **Truth: The Sphere of Existence** – [TOC](#)

Day 740

The Truth that Divides

27 countries were livestreaming our conference on Charismatic Chaos this week. Isn’t this an amazing time to be alive? Not that long ago, it could take hundreds of years to spread truth that far. Thanks to today’s technology, everything we said this week has gone around the world. And this global reach carries significant responsibility. However, when God wanted to communicate, He wrote a book. He didn’t make a video. He wrote a book because that freezes the truth and holds it in place. And you, as experts, are the driving force behind spreading that message to every corner of the globe. Of course, this week can withstand the most intense scrutiny. In fact, I would eagerly invite any who have heard what has been said and find it difficult to believe to take a Bible and measure carefully the arguments against the Word of God. We invite that scrutiny. Now, this conference is first and foremost to help the church. I don’t have any illusions about nonbelievers understanding what we’re talking about. There are many non-believers in the

charismatic movement, and I don't expect them to understand the truth. I don't expect them to have a desire for the truth, a hunger for the truth, or to search out the truth. That's not what unbelievers do unless they're in the midst of being prompted by the Holy Spirit. But we do want to help the church. Therefore, we've been speaking to the people who believe the Bible is the Word of God and who believe that God has revealed Himself clearly and consistently and without contradiction. This conference is for the true church so that they can discern, so that they can be protected from error, and so that they can be a source of truth for others outside the church. We've been talking to God's people, the true church within the mixed kingdom, which is full of wheat and tares. But it's important to answer the criticisms that have come. And I want to do that by just kind of labeling them with a word and then giving you a brief answer. The first thing that became obvious is that we were being accused of being unloving. Unloving. But I would suggest to you that the most loving thing anybody could ever do would be to tell someone the truth. That's how love acts. It's unloving to leave people in darkness and error. We speak the truth in love, and it's not just talking about the attitude or the tone of voice in which we speak it. To speak the truth in itself is an act of love to deliver people from error. Secondly, we have also been accused of being divisive. Divisive. I would agree with that. Truth, by its very nature, is divisive. That's why Jesus said, *"I came to bring a sword—to divide people, to divide families."* Listen, truth by its very nature is separated from error, and it's far more important to be divided by the truth than united by error. Someone said to me, *"You have divided the body of Christ."* And I said, *"Is what I said true?"* That's the only question I have. Of course, the truth divides. It immediately separates error and reality. And we are the guardians of the truth that divides. Repent and believe! GTY.org (TM13-18) – **An Appeal to Charismatic Friends** – [TOC](#)

Day 741

A Mixed Response

We're always on the brink of some massive kind of tragedy within the evangelical church. And if you have been watching any of the news programs, you have heard about the terrible story of Ted Haggard, the pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, which is a very large charismatic church. It has come to light that over the last three years he has been involved with a homosexual prostitute to an extensive degree and, at the same time, involved in drugs. And not only is he the pastor of that church—or was up until a few days ago—but he is also the president of an organization called the National Association of Evangelicals. The media has said that he was president of an organization that involved 30 million evangelicals. The media has blown this up to make it the most widespread scandal of anybody associated with evangelicalism. We can all go back to the Jimmy Swaggart scandal and the Jim Bakker scandal, and there have been others of this level that the media has taken and run with. And we understand that, and that is to be expected when you are a high-profile pastor and leader in the Christian world. Unfortunately, all evangelicals get tainted with that broad brush. And for such an event to happen, I think it calls us to take a look at it and to get a bit of a perspective on this situation. Now, while I am convinced that this event will bring dishonor and reproach to the name of Jesus Christ in the short term, I

am also convinced that, in the long term, Christ is purging His own church. And while I'm always grieved to find out that some trusted pastor is a full-blown hypocrite, at the same time I am grateful that his hypocrisy has been discovered, because that church needs not to be a victim of that any longer than necessary, nor does anybody else. And certainly the Lord, as we read in Revelation chapter 1, moves through His church with eyes of flaming fire, penetrating to the dark recesses of the church to discover where sin is and stamping it out with feet of bronze. And judgment does begin at the house of God as the Lord purifies His church. And so we look at this event with a mixed response. Short-term, it is tragic; it brings reproach on Christ; short-term, it makes us all fall into question as to our integrity. Long term, the Lord has exposed a terrible cancer in a very high-profile ministry and has rescued the future of the people who have been under that kind of leadership. And so from that standpoint, it's a good thing for the Lord to purge His church. Over the years, I've said many times that time and truth go hand in hand. Given enough time, what you are will show up. And Scripture tells us precisely that when this happens in the life of one who is a pastor or a minister, his role of pastor is permanently forfeited. He is not above reproach. He has brought upon himself a reproach that never goes away. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TMU238\)](http://GTY.org) – [Lessons from a Modern-Day Moral Shipwreck](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 742

The Beginning of Wisdom

We are all aware of the numerous dangers that pose a threat to our lives, including diseases, pollution, toxins, terrorists, and criminals, all of whom have the potential to inflict harm on us and regularly do so around the globe. We worry about all kinds of things because death can come in so many ways. And it's normal to have a fear of death. So let me ask you a question: *“What do you fear most?”* Or more importantly, *“What should you fear most? What is the greatest threat to your life? And what are you doing to secure yourself from that greatest of all threats?”* Maybe your greatest threat is not a what, but a who. So, *“Who is your greatest threat?”* Or, *“Who is your greatest enemy? Who is the most dangerous person you will ever encounter?”* Now, the greatest enemy you will ever encounter is not human. So that narrows down the possibilities. And some of you, no doubt, are thinking, *“Well, he must be talking about Satan.”* No. Satan is not your greatest enemy, not at all. Are you surprised to hear that? It's true. Your greatest, deadliest, and most destructive enemy is actually God. Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew 10:28: *“Do not fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”* Therefore, fear the One who can send you to hell, and that is God Himself. God is the greatest threat to your life— the life of any human being. You shouldn't fear anything in an ultimate sense that is limited to physical harm or even physical death, because those things that can harm your body are not the things that bring about final destruction of your soul. Be terrified of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. And that is not Satan. Satan is not hell's ruler; he is eternally punished in the lake of fire by God, the true ruler of hell. In our country, we believe that God is our friend, not our enemy. We constantly call on God, and we say very frequently, *“God bless this country.”* Irving Berlin wrote a song called *“God Bless*

America.” He called on God to bless our country. And when we sing that song, we sort of think we deserve it. We think God likes America. We think we’re worthy of blessing because we love freedom and justice. But let me rain on that parade a little bit and bring some truth into the sentimental imagination of such thinking. The truth is this: God is our worst enemy, our ever-present, deadly danger, our eternal Judge and Executioner, who will destroy both body and soul in hell. If you’re going to fear anything, fear God. Don’t fear what can only destroy your body; fear the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. And that’s what the Bible teaches. He’s exactly the One the world would tell you not to fear. And many preachers would tell you not to fear Him: *“He’s your friend.”* He is not your friend; He is your enemy. You have the most to fear from God. And that’s why Proverbs 9:10 says, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(82-14\)](http://GTY.org) – **Enemies of God** – [TOC](#)

Day 743

Understanding Redemption

There are many places in the Old and New Testament that refer to God as our redeemer. And the doctrine of redemption is at the heart of what salvation really is. It is not peripheral; it is core. Now, our study of doctrines started with the perseverance of the saints; that is, if you’re saved, it’s forever. We then saw that our eternal salvation is predicated upon eternal election, the sovereign choice of God in eternity past. We saw that sovereign election and irresistible grace are necessary for salvation because of man’s total depravity or absolute inability to save himself or make any contribution to his own salvation. We saw, then, that God had predetermined who He would save—that God had chosen to awaken certain sinners to salvation—and it was for them that He provided an actual atonement so that Jesus really died to pay in full the price for the sins of those who would believe. Then, we saw the doctrine of divine love. Because behind it all, God so loved. And it’s that divine love that led to that divine election that led to that drawing out and understanding of our absolute inability to save ourselves. And that divine election also led to providing an actual atonement, which is to be understood as a redemption of sinners. We have been redeemed. Ephesians chapter 1 tells us that *“God in love,”* verse 4, *“predestined us to adoption as His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the kind intention of His will to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the beloved; and in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us.”* You basically find elements of all those doctrines in just those few words – *“in love, He predestined.”* And it was through His will that He bestowed on us, by grace, the forgiveness of sin through the sacrifice of Christ in His blood, which for us was the redemption price paid. Paul wrote, *“We have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s beloved Son, in whom we have redemption.”* This is a critical element of doctrine to understand, and it takes us to the very heart of the gospel. If we’re going to talk about what it is to know God, what it is to be saved from sin, what it is to be rescued from judgment, what it is to become a true believer, and what it is to know and experience the love of God, we have to talk about redemption. And when you talk about redemption, it’s all predicated on

understanding the human condition. It's predicated on understanding man as guilty before God, under condemnation, under just judgment, because he has incurred a debt to God by violating His law, which he has no capacity on his own to pay. Therefore, he is sitting, as it were, in prison waiting for final damnation. And his only hope for being freed from eternal punishment is to be redeemed, which means someone else must pay the price that he owes God for his sins. And that's why God sent His Son. To redeem those who repent and believe! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-285\)](#) – Redeemed from the Curse of the Law – [TOC](#)

Day 744

What I Would Like to See

I want to share with you some of my own personal desires for this New Year. First of all, I would like to see the world be the way God intended it to be. Second, I would like to see perfect human life. I would like to see man as man was meant to be. Third, I would like to see the salvation of millions of people all over the globe. Fourth, I would like to see the full glory of believers. Fifth, I would like to see Satan get what he deserves. Six, I would like to see Jesus worshiped as He deserves to be. Seven, I would like to see Jesus Christ. You say, *"Well, now wait a minute. How can all that happen?"* Well, what I really would like to see happen can be reduced to this: if I want to see the world the way it was created to be, men the way they were made to be, believers fully glorified, Satan getting what he deserves, and Jesus Christ being exalted, and if I want to be with Him, then what I really want to see is—what?—the Rapture of the church, because that's the next event that sets in motion all the rest of those promised realities. So I say with John at the end of the book of Revelation: *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* I'm looking for the day when the last trumpet sounds, when the dead in Christ shall rise first and those that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the air to meet the Lord and to ever be with Him. I'm looking for that day when, in the moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we are transformed, we're changed. I'm looking for the coming of Jesus Christ. I wish the Lord Jesus Christ would come. And it isn't that I don't love what I love here; I do. I just want to love it with a perfect love, and I want to love it in its perfection. So, I trust you can say, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus,"* because nothing greater could happen. I don't know what's going to happen in this crazy world. But I know one thing that is going to happen, and this is it: Jesus Christ is coming for His church. Now I don't know when it's going to happen, but nothing could be more wonderful to me than it happening this year. And I guess the question I would ask you is if indeed it does, are you prepared for that? And if you are prepared for that, are you living in the light of that so that when the Lord does come, He finds you in a place of faithfulness, purity, and loving His appearing? The Bible tells us that when He returns, the world will be the way God created it to be. Paradise will be regained. Men will be as men were meant to be. Believers will enter into full glory. Satan will be cast out. Christ will be glorified, and we will be forever in the Father's house with Jesus Christ. It all happens when He comes. But it only happens for those who have stood at the foot of His cross and embraced Him as Lord and Savior. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(1296\)](#) – What I Would Like to See Happen in 1984 – [TOC](#)

Day 745

The Christian Life

There are two categories of truth recited for us in the epistle of 1 Peter. The first one is a long list of blessings, and those of us who are Christians possess those blessings. Peter says we are blessed with great mercy. We are blessed with the new birth. We are given a living hope. We are given an imperishable, undefiled, unfading inheritance in heaven. We are given a purified soul. We are introduced into a brotherhood of love. We receive constant spiritual nourishment for growth from the Word. We have the honor of being identified as living stones, a spiritual house, a holy and royal priesthood, a chosen race, a holy nation, and a people for God's own possession. Furthermore, Peter says, we have received a spiritual gift by which we can minister with divine power to the body of Christ. He says we have a stewardship of God's manifold grace. We are the recipients of the promise of eternal glory. We have been given hope of God's comfort, God's strength, and God's perfecting work in our lives. And finally, we are the beneficiaries of God's eternal peace in Christ. All of that spiritual privilege is our incredible legacy. It's all based upon our identity in Christ. Now, based upon all of our blessings, you might assume we should be respected, adored, honored, and exalted. However, the reality is that the opposite is true. Therefore, you are faced with a peculiar form of duality because running directly parallel to the list of privileges is the catalog of suffering. Peter, for example, writes about various trials into which we will fall. He speaks about tests of fire, which every believer will endure. He writes about us being alienated. He says we will be abused under unreasonable masters whom we must serve faithfully no matter how they treat us. He says we will receive harsh treatment by hostile Christ rejecters. He says we will suffer for doing what is right. He says we will receive harm, and we will receive evil at the hands of men. We will suffer insults. We will be intimidated. We will be continually troubled. We will have to defend ourselves. He says we will be slandered. We will be abused with speech. We will endure fiery ordeals that come for testing. He says we will share the sufferings of Christ. And Peter reminds us that we will suffer according to the will of God, for God has a purpose in it. He says we will endure anxiety and care. He says we will be under the constant attack of the devil, who goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. And he says we will suffer alongside all other Christians, all of whom are suffering. Frankly, that's not very inviting, but that's the fact. That is the nature of the Christian life: on the one hand, immense privilege; on the other hand, continual suffering. So let me sum it up: The Christian life is a call to glory through the path of suffering. And those are the inevitable two sides of the Christian experience. Therefore, Peter reminds us on the one hand of our privilege, and on the other hand, he tells us to expect suffering. And Christ is our model. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(60-28\)](http://GTY.org) – **Glory Through Suffering – [TOC](#)**

Day 746

The Only Hope for a Child

An old Chinese proverb says: *“One generation plants the trees, and another gets the shade.”* You and I are still living in the shade of some trees that were planted by our parents and grandparents and great-grandparents. We are shaded to some degree by their moral standards, their spiritual commitment, their value system, their sense of right and wrong, and their commitment to duty. We are shaded by what our parents and grandparents planted. The question that faces us today is: What kinds of trees are being planted today to shade the future generation from what may well be the blistering heat of an Antichrist-dominated world? Are we planting anything, or are we leaving our children totally exposed? It is obvious (or should be) to every one of us that our culture is disintegrating in terms of morals, values, ethics, duty, and commitment. The very systems on which we base our lives are convoluted, skewed, and out of sync with God’s divine order. We allow in our country the massacring of millions of unborn children while at the same time sentencing a man this week to six months in jail for killing a hummingbird, which demonstrates to us that we don’t understand that man is made in the image of God, very different than any animal. Are we going to be sentencing people to prison for killing birds and letting them run free who kill children? Where is our culture going? What kind of value system, what kind of morality, what kind of standard are we establishing to shade the next generation? Scripture makes it clear that children are supposed to be a blessing. Children are supposed to be a joy. Children are supposed to be a benediction from the Lord to grace our lives with fulfillment, meaning, happiness, and satisfaction. They are given for our joy, and yet they turn out to be heartbreak upon heartbreak upon heartbreak. Left exposed to this world and unshaded by the proper kind of protection, they will indeed break your heart. How is it that, despite God’s intention for children to bring us joy, happiness, contentment, satisfaction, and love, they instead end up causing us heartbreak? Marriages and families in our time tend to be war zones or disaster areas. Homes aren’t havens. There isn’t peace, joy, contentment, and bliss. Rather, conflict, intimidation, estrangement, and a generation of people being raised today are exposed rather than shaded by any kind of proper God-ordained standard of living. The point is this: God has given us children, and unless we obey God’s standard, we will produce a disaster. Now, sometimes it’s not really the mother’s fault. Some husbands are weak and witless; some husbands are absent. Some fathers have left altogether. But unless you obey the standard that God has laid down, that child that God has given you to be a joy and a blessing and a benediction and a comfort and a consolation all your life long will turn out to break your heart. Listen, children need development in four areas: mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially. And the only hope for a child is that their parents have provided shade for them in a Scripture-based, God-ordained standard of living. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-69\)](http://GTY.org) – [Shade for Our Children](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 747

Problematic People

Henry Ward Beecher once said, *“The church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christians but a school for the education of imperfect ones.”* He’s right. The church is not a place for perfect people. It’s a hospital for people who know they’re ill. We don’t claim for a moment

that the church is perfect. In fact, we would eagerly claim that it is not. Charles Morrison wrote, *"The Christian church is a society of sinners."* In fact, he said, *"It is the only society in the world where membership is based upon the single qualification that the candidate shall be unworthy of membership."* The church is full of problems because it's full of problem people because everybody in it is a sinner, albeit saved by grace but nonetheless with unredeemed human flesh, consequently battling with sin. The church grows in direct proportion, spiritually, to how well it deals with the sin within it. The process of church growth, then, is the process of the elimination of transgression, the elimination of inequity, and the elimination of sin. If the church is to move ahead powerfully and be all that God wants it to be, then it has to be dealing with its own internal sin. The world has yet to see what an absolutely pure, holy church would do. The closest thing to it would be the early church, and from the fire and the heat of the purity of its birth came an energy that perhaps has been unequal in the subsequent history. Church growth, from the spiritual standpoint, which is the only standpoint God has any concern about, is in direct proportion to how well we deal with the failures in our midst. But, if we take a moment to step back and examine the church, we might ask how we can categorize the individuals who are problematic within it. We might identify five categories of individuals whose behavior hinders the growth and power of the church. Group number one, we'll call *"the wayward."* A second group we might call *"the worried."* A third group we could call *"the weak."* A fourth group could be referred to as *"the wearisome."* And finally, group five would be *"the outright wicked."* Now you understand that, as the church endeavors to grow, it's got to deal with these five groups: the wayward, the worried, the weak, the wearisome, and the wicked. And no wonder growing a healthy flock is such a challenging enterprise, because all these folks need healing spiritually. The wayward need to get back in line. The worried need to have stronger courage, faith, boldness, and confidence. The weak must practice more discipline in living a holy life, the worrisome must catch up, and the wicked must act righteously. Therefore, there's a lot of work that needs to be done to bring problematic people in line and make the church all that God meant it to be. Repent and believe! GTY.org (52-26) – **Dealing with Problem People** – [TOC](#)

Day 748

The Only Solution to Man's Problem

The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:31, *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all things for the glory of God."* He points out eating and drinking because those are the most mundane, routine, necessary things of life that occupy us, whether we desire them to or not. That's just the routine of life. And what Paul is saying is that even the most ordinary things in life should be done for God's glory. That's the fundamental principle guiding all our actions, isn't it? So, in whatever you do, glorify God. And since you are redeemed and bought with a price, glorify God. This is the call to Christian living. We are to live to the glory of God. In fact, that's the key to everything that exists. Because everything God ever made, He made with the purpose of giving Him glory. Everything, then, is to be to the glory of God and to bring praise and honor to God. That's why creation was brought into existence, and, for the most part, creation cooperates.

The stars glorify God. They don't rebel. There's never been a rebellion of the stars. They've never sinned against their Creator. The Earth itself doesn't rebel. The flowers don't rebel; they just do what flowers are supposed to do: send out their wonderful fragrance and their beautiful color. The animal world doesn't rebel; it doesn't curse God and deny Him His rightful place. The animal creation and that which is natural in the world do what they were intended to do. It declares the glory of God. And in all of the world of God's creation, the two highest creatures He ever made were angels and men, and they were the only two that rebelled. They were the only two that had a choice, and they made the choice against God. Angels chose to rebel against God and were forever cast out of heaven, becoming the demons, as we know them, who work for the enemy Satan and will spend eternity in hell. There is no redemption for angels; those who fell have fallen, and it is set that they will forever be wicked. Those angels who did not fall are forever secured in righteousness. So, the story of the angels, as it were, begins and ends with that one moment in eternity past when they fell. But then there is man who fell, and by God's wonderful grace, God has sought to recover man and bring him back. There's no salvation for angels, and that's why Scripture says angels desire to look into the things regarding salvation. That's why Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says that God is doing things in the church to show His wisdom before the angels. Because the angels do not understand firsthand the meaning of redemption, salvation, or restoration. But God has set out to recover the rebel man, the man who has set his heart against the God who made him. And what is God asking of man? God is asking that man give Him glory, as he was intended to do. It's just that basic. And that's the problem. Man, on his own, is neither able nor willing to give God glory. Therefore, unless God supernaturally transforms man to give Him glory, he will ultimately end up in hell. So, what's the only solution to man's problem? A supernatural transformation. Salvation! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-9\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Glory of God – TOC**

Day 749

Come All the Way

Churches invariably and inevitably are filled with people who get very close to salvation and make the wrong choice. Hebrews addresses that very issue. Hebrews 2:3 says, *"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"* That would be the question asked by someone who would say, *"I understand salvation, I understand the Gospel, I know it is true, I believe it factually, but I might choose to neglect it. And if I do, what makes me think I can escape judgment?"* All throughout Hebrews, you have that kind of warning: a warning to the person who knows the truth of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Who not only knows it but even believes it or affirms it historically, understands the theology of it but won't let go of sin and come fully to follow Christ, confessing Him as Lord. And that is the ever-present danger of being close to salvation. It's kind of like being vaccinated or inoculated with a small dose so that you never catch the real thing. These are people who were actually involved with a church. Some of whom were Christians and some of whom were not; some were close but unsaved. This passage is directed to those who were close. They had heard the Gospel, they had seen it confirmed by signs and wonders; that is, they had

been exposed to apostolic powers, they even understood it, they affirmed it as truth. They were on the edge, but they would not turn from their sin, their false religion, their self-righteousness, or their works as a means of salvation and come to Christ. These are people who once responded to the message with, at least, an emotional response. Maybe like the seed, you remember, that went into the rocky soil and it spurted up for a little while, that kind of emotional response, and the Lord says, in Matthew 13, *"There was joy there, and then it died away."* There was some kind of initial response. An initial belief that the Gospel was true. But these people, not acting upon that initial belief and not fully yielding to Jesus Christ, had lapsed into a settled state of sluggishness, a settled state of dullness, and were no longer able to bear or understand the rich truth about Jesus Christ. They were still in the flesh; they were still natural, and the natural man does not understand the things of God. These are not Christians. There are people in churches today, even in ours, who, for the time they have been around the teaching, should be teaching themselves but have yet to learn the elementary truths because they have never truly, personally experienced or comprehended the truth about righteousness—being right with God—because they're not saved. So here are unsaved people who once listened, who once understood the basics of the Gospel, who once understood some facts about the path to God, and who have heard it long enough to have been able to teach it if they had truly believed. But by rejection of Christ, by hard-heartedness, by sitting on the fence, by being close but never coming to Christ, they have fallen back, and they have regressed to being babies who need the most elementary teaching all over again. So that's the problem. What's the solution? They need to come all the way to Christ, or they will not escape judgment. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-99\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Danger of Being Close** – [TOC](#)

Day 750

Be Reconciled to God!

Life in the church and ministry can become very diverse and complex. We get ourselves involved in all kinds of endeavors, and occasionally our priorities get a little skewed. So I want to take us back to the main thing that we are to be engaged in as those who serve the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 says, *"Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, and as though God were entreating through us, we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* Notice that the word *"reconciliation"* is used five times in that brief text, and it's used to describe our mission: *"We have been given the ministry of reconciliation."* And this is because *"we are ambassadors for Christ."* As you know, I fly often. And on the plane, when people ask me what I do, I just say this: *"I have a terrific job. I go around and tell people that God will forgive all their sins. Are you interested?"* And that gets right to the issue immediately because that's always the issue. And that's what this passage is all about. It's all about the ministry of reconciliation.

The bottom line is we are in the ministry of reconciliation. We tell sinners that they can be reconciled to God; that's what we do. That's the only reason we're really here on earth; everything else we could do better in heaven. We could have purer fellowship there, purer worship there, purer lives there, purer everything there; and the only reason we're here is because we have this ministry of reconciliation. Listen, the Bible makes it clear that all people are sinners, and by nature they are sinners, and by action they are sinners, and thus they are alienated from Holy God. This alienation, because of sin, prevents every sinner from fellowship with God, who is too perfectly holy to have anything to do with sinners, except to reject them, damn them, and punish them eternally. It's also important to understand that the deadliest virus in the world is not the HIV virus; it's the S-I-N virus. And like the HIV virus, it kills everything it infects; not just in time, but in eternity; not just physically, but spiritually. But while there's no cure for the HIV virus, there is a cure for the S-I-N virus, which is far worse. I can't imagine that somebody would discover a cure for the HIV virus and not shout it from the housetops, and yet Christians are prone to have the cure for the S-I-N virus and say nothing about it. Nonetheless, the good news is that God Himself has made it possible for sinners to be cured and reconciled to Him. The good news is that the hostility with God can end now and forever, and it's all based upon this provision of reconciliation of which we read in 2 Corinthians, chapter 5. So as ministers of reconciliation, we proclaim to you and to the world: Be reconciled to God! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-164\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Mission of the Church** – [TOC](#)

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The Truth in Love,

Mark Paul

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