



50 Days of Wisdom

Volume 9: Days 401-450

Introduction:

Elements of Effective Evangelization

Availability, worship, submission, obedience, and power. Those are the words that lie behind the life of effective evangelization.

Availability: That's where any kind of effective ministry begins; it starts with showing up. It starts with being initially available. Somebody has said that availability is the greatest ability. There is a sense in which that statement holds true, as having other abilities doesn't matter if you're not available.

Worship: To worship is to acknowledge deity, to acknowledge majesty, to acknowledge sovereignty, to acknowledge glory. That is essential in the life of one who would be a disciple maker. I firmly believe that love and adoring praise to Christ are the only things that can truly control you. You don't evangelize in isolation. It comes from a worshipful heart. If I really love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, then His cause is my passion, right?

Submission: That is to understand who is in charge. He is the king and the authority; we submit to His authority and participate in the unfolding of His kingly purpose. He is Lord. He is sovereign authority over heaven and earth, and that means all of us.

Obedience: That means if you're available, if you're worshipful, and if you're submissive, therefore go. And here we come directly into contact with obedience. We are commanded to make disciples. How do you make disciples? By going, baptizing, and teaching. That's the simple structure. Going is very obvious because how can you make disciples of all nations if you yourself are not going? The assumption is: They aren't coming; you're going.

Power: Such a noble responsibility, such an eternal task, demands something beyond our own resources. Jesus tells us that after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power. Jesus is always with you, in the form of His indwelling Holy Spirit. What a wonderful truth. It's not by human might or strength, but by my spirit, says the Lord. Until Jesus comes, He is our power and our resource.

Those are the words, beloved, behind the life of effective evangelization. Availability, worship, submission, obedience, and power. And when these elements become integral parts of your life, you will be effective for God.

Years ago, I read a story by S. D. Gordon, who was describing a group of men who were preparing to climb Mont Blanc in the Swiss Alps. The evening before the climb, a French guide outlined the prerequisites for success. He said, *“You will only reach the top by setting aside all the unnecessary accessories and carrying only the bare essentials.”* However, when they embarked on the climb the following day, a young Englishman held a different opinion. He proceeded to carry not only climbing equipment but also a brightly colored blanket, large pieces of cheese, a bottle of wine, bars of chocolate, and a variety of camera equipment.

The group, under the direction of the guide, set off behind the Englishman. Along the way, the group discovered first his bright blanket, then his cameras, then his cheese, then his wine, and finally, what was most precious to him, his chocolate. At last, they found him at the top, surrounded by nothing.

And S. D. Gordon made the application to the Christian life. There are people who, on the way to the top, drop the nonessentials. There are other people who, when they find they can't make it to the top without their stuff, pitch their tent in the plain and let the top go. And then S. D. Gordon said, the plain is packed full of tents. That's true. Tents fill the plain of the church. Individuals who have chosen to preserve their belongings and park far away from the top.

[Reaching the World](#) - by John MacArthur

Let's pray.

Lord, it would be a great testimony for us if people who were following us found the trail to the top strewn with all the stuff that we had gladly dropped in wanting to fulfill this high calling. Don't allow us to set up camp in the plain, content to live with the clutter and never reach the summit. Please help us drop the stuff. May the people who know us see a trail of it as we pursue the great priority of making disciples. Going to the people we can go to and equipping others to go. Preaching the gospel to the people we can preach it to and equipping others to preach it. Calling to baptism those who believe and calling others to do the same and then teaching them to observe all things that you've commanded. We want to fulfill the reason for our existence here by making disciples.

Lord, give us that opportunity because we're available, because we're here, because we're submissive as well as being worshipful. It isn't just that we're in awe of you, and so we praise; it is that we are in awe of you, and so we submit. And then help us to be obedient to the plan as you've outlined it for proclamation and trust in your power to bring it to pass.

We know that we can only reach the world one person at a time. Bring us one this week that we can reach. For the sake of your dear Son, we pray all these things. 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 401

A Prayer to Choose Wisely

Father, we have learned that death is built in us like a fuse. It burns lower and lower and lower. Like a countdown, it ticks off until zero. Men will die once, and then face condemnation. Adam and the reign of death—we are all there. And into that tragic, ugly, and fearful scene come Christ and the reign of life. O, we thank You, Father. We thank You that You have redeemed those who respond, that we may forever give glory to Your grace and mercy, that we may forever praise Your name and join with the angels. They glorify You for what they understand best; we glorify You for what we understand best, and together throughout all eternity, the universe shall ring with our praise. We pray, Father, that if there is a soul who does not know You and is still in the kingdom of Adam and death, they may be translated into the kingdom of Christ and live. Death is inevitable. It awaits us all. You can fear it, or you can anticipate it. It can be the beginning of a worse death forever without God in hell. Or it can be the beginning of eternal bliss in the presence of the living God and those who live in His presence. The choice is yours. Yes, you were there in Adam, and you sinned, and you'll die. But you can also be there in Christ with the payment of your sins paid in full by His death, and you can rise in His resurrection to the newness of life. Which will you choose? Do Your work in every heart, and we thank You in Christ's name. Amen. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(45-43\)](http://GTY.org) – **Adam and the Reign of Death** – [TOC](#)

Day 402

The Truth in Love

In 1 Kings 14:24 and Deuteronomy 23:17–18, Sodomy appears, and its origins are in a wicked city called Sodom and Gomorrah. A Sodomite was a person who engages in homosexual perversion. The sin of Sodom was homosexuality. Jude, in verses 6 and 7, reiterates this point. It's really the best term for homosexuality, and we should use it. Using the term "*gay*" to describe them is absurd. They're anything but gay. Massive guilt, loneliness, no future, and hopelessness—trying to bury their guilt under some self-justifying campaign—makes them anything but gay. Homosexuality is clinical, whereas sodomite is biblical. This reveals the true nature of homosexuality: uncontrollable passion and lust. For that God destroyed that city. Sodomy was even described in Isaiah's time, "*The expression of their face's bears witness against them, and they display their sin like Sodom. They do not even conceal it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil upon themselves.*" *Isaiah 3:9*. That's how it is. Sodomites display their sin openly and publicly; they don't conceal it, and they bring down greater judgement on themselves. But notice that they were parading their sin like the Sodomites openly paraded their sin. This is a clear and unmistakable act of rebellion against God. It took 150 years, but finally, this sin, coupled with the rest, destroyed Israel in divine judgment. What destroyed Sodom destroyed Israel. Later, it would also destroy Greece, Rome, and possibly even America. It is sin; it is deadly; it is destructive. And God hasn't changed his mind. The American Psychiatric Association declassified sodomy as a

sickness, removing it from its standard diagnostic manual and determining that it's hereditary. All of this has led to today's epidemic. There is no evidence that it's anything other than a deviant, perverted kind of behavior. This sounds like bad news, but there is really good news. Psalm 107:6 says, *"They cried out to the Lord in their trouble; He delivered them out of their distresses. He led them also in a straight way."* If you're living in a homosexual world, the word *"straight"* has significant meaning. So the perverse can rejoice because if they recognize this as sin, see it for what it is, stop trying to defend, sanctify, and justify it, confess it, and cry out to God, He will forgive, wash, sanctify, and justify them. And dear ones, this is the message we have to give to these people; there isn't any other message. The truth in love. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-322\)](http://GTY.org) – **Thinking Biblically About Homosexuality** – [TOC](#)

Day 403

Promise Versus Fulfillment

There are a lot of covenants in the Bible, which means God made a lot of promises. He promised not to drown the world again; that's the Noahic covenant. He gave us the Law, which is the Mosaic covenant. He established a priestly covenant, which governed the behavior of the priests. There was the Abrahamic covenant, which did promise salvation but had no means. There's the Davidic covenant, which promises a kingdom and a king, the Messiah, and the future kingdom. And the new covenant promises forgiveness of sin, salvation, regeneration, and a new life. Ezekiel 36, 37, and Jeremiah 31 specifically lay that out. It is a saving covenant. You get a new heart, a new spirit, and complete forgiveness. It's all regeneration. That's salvation. Jesus Christ's death ratified the salvation that has always been in operation. We could constantly follow the old covenant in animal blood, as it was solely a covenant of promise. However, the new covenant is fully satisfied in the blood of one Lamb, the blood of Christ, because it consisted not of promise but of fulfillment. Christ made the actual purchase of our redemption and paid the price for everyone who came before Him, all the way back to Adam. *"The blood that is shed,"* says Matthew 26:28, *"is the blood that is poured out."* Isaiah 53:12 affirms the same: *"This is My blood, poured out for many."* He did this for many. Matthew adds, *"for the forgiveness of sins."* The final payment was made. Now there's no more need for the symbolic lambs. All we need to do is remember the cross and the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. So, we come together regularly. And giving confident hope, He says in verse 25, *"Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."* So, not only in the kingdom to come will we be rejoined to the Lord, and not only will we be rejoined to Him to come to His table to celebrate the Passover, but we'll also celebrate His Table Communion. That's the kingdom. Folks, there has to be a kingdom. This is the great millennial kingdom promise. The old covenant has ended, and the new covenant has come. Christ's death has ratified the last Passover and the first Communion. We celebrate that communion until He returns. When He returns and sets up His kingdom, we will have a new kind of worship in which we will gather together as He leads us, and we will celebrate a Passover and a Lord's Table that both look at His cross. We suspend the Passover until the kingdom arrives, at which point both will be part of that

momentous day. We need to understand the cross because that's where His lovingkindness, in its everlasting nature, is made available. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(41-73\)](#) – **The New Passover** – [TOC](#)

Day 404

The Worldly Heart

What is the worldly heart? Sensuality, covetousness, and pride drive it. Sensuality is the corruption of the lower part of man's nature and the gratification of bodily desire in forbidden ways. Covetousness is the corruption of a nobler part of man's nature and the unlawful abuse of God's creation. Pride is the corruption of the noblest part of man's being, the self-exaltation of his spirit made in God's image. Sensuality or lust of the flesh—that's just base desire and gratification. Covetousness—that's a little bit higher on the scale. You see something, recognize its attractiveness, and want it for yourself. And so there is envy, covetousness, and jealousy, which sometimes lead to murder. But James says pride is the corruption of the noblest part of man's life—that is, his mind, his rationality. What exalts man above all the rest of creation is that he is made in God's image. Rather than allowing this to humble him, he strives to achieve goals that elevate him above God. In sensuality, he functions lower than an animal. In covetousness, he seeks to have everything that his fellow man has. In pride, he defies God. Sensual; he's like an animal. Covetous, he's like all other men, desiring to have what they have. But in his pride, he defies God, stepping up to take the place of the sovereign God Himself—just like the devil, who also rose to prominence through pride. Therein is the web of sinful impulse, which provides the beachhead for the system's temptations to land and conquer the sinner's heart. This is how the world works. It appeals to both the base level of bodily desires and the nobler level of the vision of beauty. And it comes at the highest of all: the intellectual level, the desire for knowledge and wisdom, and the desire to be significant. This is the temptation matrix. Everything in the world operates under that system. This is the heart of man. The world is nothing more than a system that Satan has accommodated to the corruption and corruptibility of the human heart; they work in perfect harmony. Even if you take the worldly system out, the corrupting influences are still there. But marry the corrupting influences to the system, and you have the maximum impact on iniquity in the world. And it's not going to get better; it's going to get worse. 2 Timothy 3:13 says, *"Evil men will grow worse and worse."* As man gets more sophisticated in his ability to work the system that Satan concocts, he will appeal more to those elements of corruption. However, the world does not drive Christians; the will of the Father drives us. We don't always do it the way we should, but that's always the longing in our hearts. When we become victims, we hate the system and the sin. This way, we distinguish ourselves as true believers. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(62-17\)](#) – **The Cardiology of Worldliness** – [TOC](#)

Day 405

Is He Able?

The question is not about God's willingness to save. It's not about God's purpose to save. We know He is willing, and we know He has purposed to save all the elect. The only question is: Is He able? In 1 Timothy 2, it says He desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; that is, all who are His. We know He desires them all to come to eternal life; the question is, is He able? Jude answers that, *"Now to Him who is able."* He is able. He is the only God, our Savior, and if He doesn't save us, we aren't going to save ourselves. There's no question about His ability; He's able. Living in today's apostate environment is dangerous. Apostasy is on the increase. The media exposes us to more lies and deception than any previous generation in history. And here we are, surrounded by an endless list of heresies and apostasies, called to rescue people out of these systems. I mean, basically, the whole world is religious. If you're going to do any evangelism, you're going to get close to somebody who is in an evil religious system. The question arises: Should we retreat in fear, refraining from evangelizing, out of concern that we might inadvertently burn ourselves while trying to rescue someone from the flames? Or could we potentially contaminate ourselves by attempting to rescue someone from the depths of filth? No. If you're a true believer, you're in no danger of fatal corruption or damnation. Our God is able to keep us safe. In human terms, the path to heaven is dangerous. It's filled with stumbling blocks, temptations, sins, iniquities, transgressions, demons and Satan. But, in another sense, the path to heaven is absolutely safe. Not because I'm able, but because He's able. I'm weak, ignorant, disobedient, selfish, sinful, and rebellious. And believe me, every enemy is waiting to ambush me and you. Yet, I have no fear. I rest not in my own ability to somehow outfox the devil or overpower my own flesh; I rest in His power. Jude 1:24 says, *"Now to Him who is able to keep you."* "Keep" is a military term that means to guard or watch over. He has the ability to protect us; He stands vigilantly over us; and He remains at His post. We are in safe custody while under assault; that's what that word means. He keeps us from apostasy. You cannot fall away from Him because He prevents you from becoming an apostate. How does He do it? He accomplishes this through the gift of a permanent faith, a new heart, and the indwelling Holy Spirit. He hangs onto us. He who started it will finish it. And no one falls through the cracks. In Israel, apostates fell. The apostate angels fell. The apostates in Sodom and Gomorrah fell. Apostates in the church fell. But true believers are kept. Our Lord has the will and the power to save us. He is able! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(65-15\)](http://GTY.org) – [The Saint's Guarantee](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 406

The Results of Thankful Prayer

Contentment calls for reacting to our problems with thankful prayer. The promise in Scripture is that if you'll pray, offering your prayer and supplication—that is, your petitions—with thanksgiving, if you'll just let those things be known to God, you'll have peace. It doesn't say when

He gives you the answer you want you'll have peace, it says, you'll know peace when you just learn to take them to Him. Whatever the answer, prayer strengthens the relationship. Prayer builds confidence. Prayer shifts the burden. It displaces the weight off of me and onto Him. It isn't the answer that brings me peace; it is the communion that does it. And the heart of prayer is gratitude for everything, expressed through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. When you pray, whatever the struggle or the problem of life, you thank God for His purpose in it. We express our gratitude to God for His providential work, for His promise of ultimate perfection and resolution, for the impending arrival of relief, for morning joy, for future glory, for past mercies, and for the realization that everything unfolds according to His plan. Learn to pray thankfully. No prayer should be primarily a petition; all prayers should be primarily thanksgiving. Contentment does not come from getting the answer I want, but rather from taking the burden and giving it to Him. Believe that praying with a heart of gratitude is the cure for anxiety. I can assure you that anxiety fuels the flames of discontentment. If you want to know God's peace—that is, the rest, confidence, and tranquil contentment that only God can give—that protects your mind from anxiety and dissatisfaction, then learn to pray with thanksgiving instead of always begging for what you don't have and always wanting more. Go to God with thanksgiving, and you'll find His peace. Recite to God all the past mercies He has shown you. Whatever the answer, peace comes, shifting the burden in the expression of thanksgiving to the God whose promise you believe. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-21\)](http://GTY.org) – **Seven Keys to Contented Living** – [TOC](#)

Day 407

The Good Soil

In the Parable of the Sower, there is one last kind of soil. The good soil. Matthew 13:23 says, *“But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.”* This is the fruitful hearer who understands the Word. Mark 4 says, *“Accepts the Word.”* Luke 8 says, *“Holds the Word.”* He hears it, he accepts it, he holds it, and he takes the gospel in. There's genuine repentance and the plowing of the Spirit of God in his heart, plowing out those noxious weeds of his former life. And there's some deep soil for the roots to reach down, not a rock bed of selfish resistance, and so it produces fruit. Now, not every Christian produces the same amount of fruit. There are always different conditions in the soil that cause the crop to produce different levels of fruitfulness. And the same thing is true of our spiritual lives. Some bear just some fruit, some bear more, some bear much, but we all bear fruit. That's the distinguishing mark of believers. What is fruit? Paul wrote to the Galatians about the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control. The fruit of the Spirit includes both action and attitude. And your saved life produces all these elements. Of course, it differs from person to person by the fact that there's a different level of devotion and, in some cases, perhaps a different capacity by God's design. But there's fruit. Now remember that there's no discussion here of the sower; anybody will do. There's no discussion here of the seed; the seed is the Word of God, the gospel. The only issue here is the soil. Since soil quality is the issue, the more seed you throw, the

more likely you are to hit good soil. So, if you start throwing seed in every direction, you're more likely to hit good soil. That's what we're here to do. Once we're saved, there's only one reason to leave us here. To throw seed. It's the only thing we can do here that we won't need to do in heaven. Look, I don't know where that good soil is, but it's there. And there's nothing more wonderful than being the sower when it hits the good soil. But you must have the courage to throw seed. Also, when you throw seed, ask God to plow the soil because you can't plow the soil; only God plows. And pray that God will bring you to prepared soil. Beloved, if you're the hard, rocky or weedy soil, ask God to plow your heart so you can receive the transforming saving message of the gospel that Christ died for your sins and rose again that you might have eternal life, and in believing in Him, you can enter into His kingdom. Repent and believe! GTY.org (80-181)
– **The Parable of the Soils** – [TOC](#)

Day 408

Sin is Hard Work

The nature of sin is that it's hard work. Have you noticed? It all causes pain, and yet people go through pain to do it. It's a strange compulsion of our nature. In Jeremiah 9:5, the Bible says, *"They weary themselves, committing iniquity."* Sin is hard work, and people go after it with vengeance. Genesis 19 reminds me of the perverted, twisted homosexuals in the city of Sodom, who came to Lot's house because God had sent two beautiful, angelic creatures there. They saw those magnificent creatures, and they wanted to come and molest them in a vile, perverted way. And they wanted them to come out of the house so that they could do that to them. Of course, the angels would not allow that to happen. And the Bible says that, in divine judgment, God struck those perverse homosexuals blind. And you know what shatters my understanding? When they went blind, they didn't fall on the ground and crawl around; they didn't run and cry out for mercy; they, with greater intensity, tried to beat the door down and get into the house any way they could. Actually, going stone blind on the spot was not enough to overpower the incredible impulses of their lust. They ignored their blindness and went to extreme lengths to reach the goal their lust drove them toward. That is the essence of sin. It is so perverse that, ignoring the pain and the consequences, men go after evil and weary themselves in the process. People go to hell sweating. So what is sin like? It's hard work. What a wretched thing. How many people does sin affect? The answer is in Romans 3: *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. For there is none righteous, no not one."* Sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and from Adam came a whole civilization of sinners. Like produces like. Since Adam, there have only been sinners. Jesus Christ was the only non-sinner. 1 John 3:5 says *"In Him was no sin."* We have not only inherited the guilt of Adam's sin, but also its depravity, corruption, and pollution. We drink from the same poisoned well. We inherit the same fallen genetics. Adam's sin clings to us like leprosy. Adam's original sin contaminated the entire human race. What is the result? Death. You die because of sin. *"The wages of sin is death."* If you want to know whether you're a sinner, ask yourself if you've ever been ill, if you're growing older, and if you will die. The answer is yes, and the reason is sin. And the roots of sin are so deep that even after salvation, it remains a problem

for the Christian. Despite the forgiveness and the Lord's application of Christ's righteousness to atone for our sins, sin persists. Sin affects all of us. Even when we are Christians, sin is still a reality. And if you claim to have no sin, what does that make God? A liar. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-7\)](#) – **The Ugliness of Christmas** – [TOC](#)

Day 409

A Permanent Inheritance

What is the nature of our Christian inheritance? Its source is God; its motive is mercy; its means is regeneration; but what is its nature? 1 Peter 1:4 provides the answer to that question. It's "*an inheritance which is*"—and here is the description of its nature or character – "*imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away.*" This must be something otherworldly, as everything in this world is perishable, defiled, and fades away. Everything! The Fall and sin have impacted everything in the created universe. All things perish, become defiled, diminish, and fade away. But here is an inheritance that, like the Lord who gave us this inheritance, is unchanging, imperishable, and not capable of corruption. No enemy can plunder our heavenly inheritance. It is indestructible. It is impervious to all attacks. It cannot be touched by defects; it remains undefiled, unpolluted, and unstained. It is unfading and will not fade away. Another term that conveys the same idea is permanence. Its nature is permanent. Our inheritance never loses its supernatural glory. This is a fascinating concept to consider, as we often struggle with faithfulness throughout our lives. Right? We're not always as loyal to the Lord as we should be. But grace and mercy operate, and there's an unchanging, glorious eternal life waiting for us in heaven. And that leads to the security of our inheritance. You say, well, wait a minute. It may not tarnish, decay, or wither. But can it be taken away and given to someone else? There are Christians who believe that. Can it be taken away? Can we forfeit it? Can God disinherit us? The answer comes at the end of verse 4 and into verse 5. This inheritance is "*reserved in heaven for you.*" Thank God for reserving this unchanging inheritance in heaven for you, not for anyone else, despite your weakness and life's struggles. It's safe in heaven, in God's holy presence, and not subject to any assault or plunder. Heaven will never be invaded. No one will ever plunder its treasures. Your inheritance is safe there. Why? As stated in verse 5, it's specifically reserved for you, "*you who are protected by the power of God through faith.*" You are personally protected by God. How does He do this? What if we fall away and stop believing? That won't happen, as the scripture asserts that God's power protects you through faith. Whether we believe or not, God does not guard, protect, secure, and keep us apart from faith; rather, He keeps us through faith—the very faith that He bestowed upon us upon salvation. Ephesians 2 states that God saves you through grace and faith, not by your own efforts, it's a gift of God. Therefore, your faith will persevere because the faith He bestowed upon you, which saved you, is an enduring faith. That's its nature. This is what salvation is all about. It's all about what comes in the next life and what is secured for us. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-334\)](#) – **Your Best Life: Now or Later?** – [TOC](#)

Day 410

Marked by Love

A Christian principle is to always render love to others. Have a life marked by love. First Peter 1, verse 22 says, *“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls,”* –to what end?– *“For a sincere love of the brethren.”* One of the products of being saved is that you love other believers. There’s a new level of friendship. Those who share Christ experience a fresh sense of camaraderie and delight, as you share a profound and eternal bond. That doesn’t mean you don’t love everyone. You do. God so loved the world; He loves everyone. We also love everyone. But there’s a unique sense in which we love believers. That’s why He says at the end of verse 22, *“Fervently love one another from the heart, because you’ve been born again of an imperishable seed.”* In other words, you now have an eternal life principle operating within you that produces a fervent love for other believers. *“Fervent”* is a Greek word that means *“stretched.”* The word refers to a muscle that has reached its utmost limit. And what Peter is saying is to love to the maximum of your capacity to stretch. Show love to others. Love should mark our lives. In John 13, Jesus said, *“By this, all men shall know that you’re My disciples, that you have love for one another.”* You know, there’s camaraderie in the outside world. There’s camaraderie in the business world. There’s camaraderie in a family. There’s a certain degree of affection among people who participate in the common enterprise, fight in battles, or play on an athletic team. There’s a certain camaraderie. But that isn’t what it is among those who are in Christ. That takes it to another level. We’re not talking about sentimentality. We’re talking about deep love. And how do you define that love? You define love not as an emotion but rather as a willingness to provide sacrificial service to another person. What that means towards Jesus is, *“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments,”* John 14:15. To everybody else, that means, *“I love you; I want to meet your needs; I want to sacrifice myself for you.”* That’s how we’re to love. Always render love to others. This is powerful testimony that you belong to God because it’s a transcendent sacrificial love. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-403\)](http://GTY.org) – **You Are What You Think** – [TOC](#)

Day 411

The Reprobate Mind

This is what the Scripture says about liars. Psalm 52—62:4: *“They delight in falsehood.”* Why does a man assail someone else with lies? Because he delights in falsehood, *“They bless with their mouth, but inwardly they curse.”* This is just how people are. Why are you boasting in evil? *“Your tongue devises destruction like a sharp razor, O worker of deceit.”* You not only want to mutilate people with your lies, you want to mutilate children in reality because *“you love evil more than good, [you love] falsehood more than speaking what is right. You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.”* Romans 1 says that when God puts people under judgment, he gives them a reprobate mind, so they believe a lie. 2 Thessalonians 2:11 talks about the time in the future when our Lord will come, and it says this: *“God will send them a deluding influence so that they*

will believe what is false.” How difficult would it be for God to deceive the entire population with a deluding influence? They’re already deluded by things that should be obvious. And it’s going to get worse, and lies and liars are going to get worse, and the delusion is going to get worse and worse until our Lord comes to judge it all. It’s important for people to understand how God feels about liars and lying. Listen to Proverbs 12:22, *“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.”* God hates a lying tongue, and He hates the anger that becomes hate, which can go as far as to kill. People are filled with lies, deception, anger, and hate. The only thing that restrains them from murdering is the consequences. Proverbs 26:28 says, *“A lying tongue hates those it crushes.”* When you lie to people, you do so because you hate them. This is particularly true for people in leadership. Proverbs 29:12 says, *“If a ruler pays attention to lies, all his ministers become wicked.”* Why is that so? Because if a ruler is a liar and pays attention to lies, honest people will not associate with him. So then you have a liar in charge of everything, then he just accumulates liars, and then you have a massive deception. A lying president will be surrounded by people—not only people who can tolerate his lies, but people who are themselves liars and are content to lie—and the complex of the deception is dominating. That’s why Proverbs 17:7 says, *“Lying lips are not for a noble person, or a prince.”* In the last few years in our own country, we have been exposed to a level of lying that probably most of us thought would never happen. But most believe the lie. And God will send a deluding influence, and they’ll believe even more lies. They are deceivers, engulfed in falsehoods. Regrettably, there are individuals who identify as Christians and engage in deceitful behavior. But because of their reprobate minds, a corrupt, lying leader attracts corrupt, lying associates. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49-23\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Disastrous Sin of Lying** – [TOC](#)

Day 412

Christ the Ultimate Expositor

The Old Testament provides abundant evidence that the Messiah must fulfill the role of the ultimate sacrifice in order to attain His glory. Jesus’s disciples understood that part. They got all the parts about glory—all the parts about the elevation of the Messiah to the point of exaltation, reigning and ruling in Jerusalem, and extending His kingdom throughout the world and forever. They understood that part. So how were they going to get the suffering and the glory connected? Luke 24:27 says: *“Beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself.”* I would have loved to have been there for that lesson. He went into all the sections of the Old Testament, from Moses to Malachi, thirty-nine books, and He taught the things concerning Himself. He traces His coming, His suffering, His resurrection, and His glory through the whole Old Testament. This is Christ the expositor, expositing the only Bible He ever owned, ever had, or ever read, explaining the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. He grounds His disciples in the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, which then become the foundation on which their faith can stand. The lesson must have been a staggering and sweeping one. And He gave it to those two men on the road to Emmaus. How could they have been so foolish and ignorant when there’s so much in the Old Testament about Him? They were experiencing a profound awakening, as everything began to make sense. Their eyes were opened. For the first

time in their lives, they understood the Old Testament, and it was at that moment that their faith found its inviolable, immovable foundation. The Lord was alive from the dead, and so was the Old Testament. Verse 36 says: *"While they were reporting their story to the other disciples, Jesus appeared and said, 'Peace be to you.'"* They were startled, frightened, and thought they were seeing a spirit. Jesus said to them in verse 38, *"Why are you troubled? Why do these doubts arise in your heart?"* Well, we know the answer to that. They didn't yet understand the Old Testament. So here is a risen Christ from the dead standing in front of them, and they can't believe it because they are so locked down in their understanding of Scripture. Until their understanding of Scripture changes, they're not going to understand the resurrection of the Christ who stands right in front of them, whose hands and feet they're touching. Verse 45 says, *"Then He opened their minds to understand the Scripture."* They then combined all the historical and prophetic elements, leading them to conclude that Jesus was the one. They were finally able to see the complete picture of the majesty and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what all of us meager human teachers try to do: open your mind to understand the Scripture and see the glory of Christ. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-431\)](http://GTY.org) – **Christ the Expositor** – [TOC](#)

Day 413

The Essence of Our Faith

Hebrews 11:1 says, *"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for."* In other words, real faith is a substantial trust in the promises of God. Faith takes that future promise, pulls it into present reality, and gives it weight in our lives. And the second part of verse 1 states, *"Faith is the conviction of things not seen."* This brings it to greater intensity. It is conviction that something is true, not just hope or strong hope. It means *"an absolute conviction."* This implies unwavering confidence. This goes beyond the notion that it carries weight and substance, and we believe in it; it is a steadfast conviction. This unwavering conviction enabled martyrs to endure burning at the stake without faltering. Faith is living on the basis of things not seen and being so sure of them that they become your convictions. And now we've moved from what you believe to how you behave, because you live by your convictions. For example, Moses left Egypt, and he was the adopted son of the princess. He left Egypt to go out into the wilderness. And that is to say, his faith not only had weight and substance in his believing it, but it had enough conviction to move him in the direction that he ought to go. That's what we mean by conviction. Alternatively, consider the example of Noah. Even though Noah had never seen rain before, he was able to visualize it because there was water present. However, Noah had faith in God's promise that rain would fall. Not only did he believe that it would rain, but he also believed that the rain would be so abundant that it would drown the entire earth's population. He believed that the only way he, his wife, his three sons, and their wives could ever escape was by building a boat in the middle of the desert. It's going to rain? It's never rained before. Is it possible for a boat to float in the middle of the desert? This rain is beyond comprehension. However, it's going to drown the entire planet. So what did Noah do? He built a boat for a hundred and twenty years. Can you imagine what his neighbors said? But he didn't stop. He built a boat in the desert because real faith in the Word of

God causes convictions, and convictions control behavior. For those of us who believe, the invisible spiritual and future things revealed in God's Word are real, have weight, and control how we behave. That's the essence of our faith. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(82-10\)](http://GTY.org) – **What Faith Is** – [TOC](#)

Day 414

The Light of Divine Revelation

Paul is committed to ministry. He's committed to the proclamation of the truth. He does not adulterate the word of God; he proclaims it faithfully. And he says this in 2 Corinthians 4:2: *“not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”* That is a stunning statement. When you preach the truth, you are commending yourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. How is that so? God has instilled in every human being a mechanism known as conscience. He has also inscribed His law in the hearts of every human being. That's what Romans 2 says, right? *“The law of God is written in every human heart.”* So when you proclaim the truth, it reaches God's law written in the heart. That is the only beachhead that you have into the unregenerate soul—the law of God written in the heart. That's why it's so important to preach the law. That's why it's so important to preach condemnation. That's why it's crucial to instill a sense of guilt, judgment, and terror in the sinner. That's all you have to appeal to: the law in the heart. When the truth in the Scripture aligns with the law in the heart, the conscience takes action and accuses the unbeliever. Even so, verse 3 says, *“If the gospel is veiled at that point, it's veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so they might not see”* – listen to this – *“the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.”* Now, let me stop there and just say this: The gospel is about Jesus Christ, and the gospel has light in itself. Did you get that? *“The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.”* When you preach the gospel to an unbeliever, first preach the law, then the gospel, and finally strike his conscience with the law, because the gospel possesses its own light. That is to say, there is a glory in Scripture. Of course, there is glory in God; there is glory in Christ. However, there is also glory in Scripture. Scripture has its own glory. The gospel has its own glory. How do people come to salvation? Not because you use some external, rational argument. But because you expose them to the person of Christ in the gospel of Christ in the very light of divine revelation. You don't make excuses for the Bible; you don't avoid the Bible; you don't try another approach. The gospel itself is light. It has its own blazing glory. How do sinners see the light of God's glory in Christ's face? They see it in the light of the gospel, in Scripture. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TMU272\)](http://GTY.org) – **Delivered by Doctrine** – [TOC](#)

Day 415

The Greatest of All Influences

If men are in charge of everything according to God's design, then where does that leave women? 1 Timothy 2:15 states, *"But women will be saved through the bearing of children."* There's the balance, right? You get to have the babies. You get to nurse the babies. You get to hold them in your arms. You get to spend every day with them. You get to nurture them. You get to develop them. That's your marvelous privilege. In fact, at that level, there is a depth of influence that no man will ever have with his children. Now what does it mean, *"She'll be saved through the bearing of children?"* It doesn't mean spiritual salvation. You don't get eternal life by having babies. It has nothing to do with your soul salvation. Listen, when Eve stepped out from under Adam's authority and protection, she was vulnerable, and she fell. And Adam, bound by his heart to her, abandons his own authority, becomes weaker, and plunges the whole human race into corruption. Adam was not deceived; Eve was deceived. But if we stay in the order that God has designed for us, everybody flourishes. Men and women, by the way, are equally sinful as a result of the Fall. Adam needed Eve so much that he sinned willfully. We understand; we need women. The leadership of men, though, was established in the creation and reaffirmed in the Fall. No daughter of Eve should follow her path into forbidden territory of going out from under her authority, her God-given authority, and try to live independently; too much danger abounds. Actually, authority and submission form the foundation of all human relationships. You know that, right? You have a job. You get it. Authority and submission; somebody's in charge. So *"Women are saved"*—going back again—*"by bearing children."* This is the woman's high calling: *"if"*—this is important—*"if those women continue in faith, love, and sanctification with self-restraint."* Here we go again. Women are constantly told, *"Get a grip on yourself, be submissive, subject yourself, and have some self-restraint."* Why? Because the impulse of your fallenness is to overpower your husband. There's a reason for this: your husband isn't flawless, and there are numerous reasons why you may feel compelled to assume control. But a woman's high calling is to save herself from the stigma of the Fall. She led the race into sin by being deceived. How does she reverse that? How does her life count for something good when it was a woman who led the whole race into sin? Here's the answer: A woman reverses that by raising godly children. This is the highest and most influential life possible. As a general principle, this is the high calling of women: have children; pour your soul and your life into those children. Why? Because that is the greatest of all influences. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-56\)](http://GTY.org) – **Does the Bible Permit a Woman to Preach? – TOC**

Day 416

A Warning to Examine Ourselves

In The Sermon on The Mount, there is a right and a wrong response to the invitation of Christ, and our eternal destiny is determined by the choice we make. One is the broad road that leads to

destruction, and the other is the narrow way that leads to eternal life. The Lord is not speaking to irreligious people; He is speaking to people who were literally obsessed with religious activity. They're not apostates, heretics, anti-God, atheists, or agnostics. They are deeply religious individuals, yet their misguided path and self-deception condemn them. Now, maybe their self-delusion is a result of sitting under a false prophet, or maybe they've actually sat under the truth but have deluded themselves. They bear a striking resemblance to Israel, about whom Paul said, *"They had a form of godliness but denied the reality of it."* I firmly believe that we need to convey this message today, as I am convinced that the Church of Jesus Christ is teeming with people who aren't Christians and don't know it. When I hear statistics that indicate half of the world's population is Christian, I wonder who in the world has established these criteria. That isn't what the Bible says. Matthew 7:14 says, *"Only a few find it."* When Gallup says that 52% of the American population are born-again Christians, that doesn't square with the Scripture. And who is going to live under the delusion that because you sign a line on a survey that says you're a born-again Christian, you really are a born-again Christian? Indeed, Jesus is implying that many individuals who believe they are Christians are not, and only a select few truly are. This is the ultimate delusion. It's possible to be deluded about a lot of things, but if you're deceived about whether you're a Christian, you're really getting at your eternal destiny. Therefore, Jesus advises you to thoroughly examine yourself. I'm sure that even here at Grace Community Church, we have all kinds of people who are connected to the right religion, yet they are utterly devoid of the righteousness of God through Christ. There are multitudes of deceived people who are in the church, who are on the Jesus bandwagon, who think everything is well, and for them, judgment is going to be one big surprise. I believe that some of these deceived individuals are false prophets. However, I also believe that some false prophets are not deceived. They know they're phony. But I believe that some of them are likely self-deceived, which is why we would see them in this group. Nevertheless, I do believe that the many who are uttering *"Lord, Lord"* in verse 21 are not merely false prophets but rather individuals who are self-deluded and misled about their genuine redemption. The Bible is literally filled with warnings for people who are deceived. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(2255\)](http://GTY.org) – **Empty Words** – [TOC](#)

Day 417

Let God Do the Work

We have to wait for the hope of righteousness because it's a gift from God. Paul is speaking to believers, including himself, in Galatians 5:5: *"For we, through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness."* It is through the Spirit, by faith, that we eagerly await the hope of righteousness. We're not trying to earn it; we're waiting for it. And in our sanctification, the Lord gives it to us as a grace gift. And one day, in our glorification, He'll give it to us perfectly. *"We, through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting."* I love the fact that he used the verb *"waiting."* This is something God has to do for us and in us, and He is doing it through His Holy Spirit. If you follow the path of any works, you have lost the very thing you hoped for: righteousness. It comes only by waiting, in faith, on the work of the Holy Spirit. Verse 6 says, *"In Christ Jesus, neither*

circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.” That’s all that matters. Faith and love—believing in God and loving God—fulfill the whole law. It’s all gone internal; it’s all gone inside. It’s faith working through love. Our hearts are literally drawn to God in trust; that’s what faith is. We live trusting God, and we live loving God, and as a result, loving those around us as well. It’s a working faith. It’s a living faith. It’s a growing faith. It’s an increasing faith. It’s an increasing love. It’s a multiplying love as we wait, and the Spirit, in grace, does His work in us. I can’t think of any passage in the New Testament that is more terrifying to people who practice some form of hybrid Christianity than this one. If you think your works are part of your salvation, Christ profits you nothing; you’re in debt to the whole law to keep it perfectly. You are severed from Christ; you have fallen from grace; and you are excluded forever from righteousness. I came across a story about an artist who aspired to create his life’s masterpiece. He spent years meticulously crafting it, incorporating natural elements, stones, and various other elements. He brought these elements into his studio, where he continued to construct and embellish until it reached its completion, only to discover it was too large to leave the room. And it occurred to me that this is essentially what happens to those who strive to earn their way to heaven; their creations are unable to leave the confines of their studio. They spend all their lives trying to work their way to heaven, and that’s the one place they’ll never be. Christians wait in faith and love, walk in the Spirit, and let God do the work. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(48-28\)](#) – **The Dangers of a Distorted Gospel – [TOC](#)**

Day 418

Those Without Excuse

We’ve lived in America for a number of centuries under the rubric of a kind of traditional Judeo-Christian morality that has preserved rampant persecution, but it’s escalating pretty fast. And we’re on the outside, and we’re now talking to all these identity groups of collective sinners who are reinforcing their sin, and we’re speaking to them from the outside about the truth of God, and they hate it. Therefore, I believe that Christians who speak the truth will face increasing marginalization. If they cower and don’t speak the truth, they may escape some earthly curse, but they will not escape divine judgment. We are the outsiders. We deviate so far from the norm today that we subscribe to a concept known as the correspondence view of truth. What is the correspondence view of truth? That truth conforms to reality. You’re looking at me. This is a suit. This is a tie. This is a microphone. That’s a correspondence view of reality. There are also non-correspondence views of reality. Fabulism, also known as mystical reality, refers to a perspective where individuals have descended so deeply into lies and deception that they actually start to deny the obvious. This, in essence, explains the entire transgender movement. That is insanity. Here we are, as outsiders, conversing with individuals who hold a unique perspective on moral and spiritual truths. These individuals are rapidly approaching a mystical reality, a form of fabulism that allows them to reinterpret physical reality as something entirely different. That’s not new; it comes from Will James and other philosophers. We say, *“Truth conforms to reality. Truth is reality, and we are merely conveying it to you.”* However, while you’re more likely to

believe reality in the physical world, there's also reality in the spiritual realm. How do we know that? The Author and the Creator reveal it in the pages of Scripture. What happens to a culture when it abandons the truth? Look at Romans 1. This passage is something you have to go back to quite frequently if you're trying to understand culture and the world in which we live. Romans 1:18 says, *"For the wrath of God,"*—notice that *"the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men"*—and here specifically—*"who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."* Underline that; that's critical. People suppress the truth only because it speaks to their unrighteousness. It's not rational to suppress spiritual truth. It's not rational to suppress moral truth. However, the truth—moral truth and spiritual truth—attacks their sin and exposes their categorical deception. They suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Their motivation comes not from reason, but from a deep love for sin. So what happens to those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness? Romans 1:19 says, *"They are without excuse."* And the wrath of God is upon them. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TM19-1\)](http://GTY.org) – **Telling the Truth in a Post-Truth World** – [TOC](#)

Day 419

A Warning to Corrupt Religionists

Jesus warns His disciples about the Jewish religious leaders: *"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and love respectful greetings in the market places and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake, offer long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."* He condemned the Jews, who claimed to worship and represent Him, for their religious hypocrisy. They rejected Him, and in rejecting Him they rejected the Holy Spirit who worked in Him. Remember they said, *"What He does, He does by the power of Satan?"* And He said, *"You have blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and you will not be forgiven for that in this age or the age to come."* Matthew 12. And in rejecting Him, they rejected the Spirit; and in rejecting the Spirit, they had rejected the Father. The Father had said at the baptism of Jesus, *"This is My beloved Son; in whom I am well pleased."* John says, *"If you honor the Son, you honor the Father. If you honor the Father, you honor the Son."* So in rejecting the Son, they rejected the Spirit, who was in the Son doing all the works, and they rejected the Father, who sent the Son and whose will the Son was doing. It was a full-scale Trinitarian rejection. And so Jesus says, *"Beware of these hypocritical false religionists. All their worship is corrupt because they do not know Me."* Then there was this incident. Luke 21:1 says, Jesus was sitting near the temple and, *"He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury."* Rich people would drop their money in these receptacles as a way of supporting the religious system. They would do it with fanfare. Calling attention to themselves. Then He sees this poor widow putting in two small copper coins. Please know that this is not a model of giving. This woman isn't a Christian. This isn't instruction. This is a victim of a corrupt religious system who is so desperate in this legalistic system that she literally gives all she has to purchase what she's missing. This illustrates the corruption of the system, as Jesus stated in verse 47, *"They devour widows' houses."* They rob widows of their money. Corrupt beliefs about God always exploit individuals. This phenomenon is prevalent across all false religions, including scientology, the prosperity gospel, and other forms of religious corruption. This woman is giving more than all

these rich people who are so proud of their giving. Percentage-wise, she's giving everything she has. This system is so rotten and corrupt that it literally devours her last two pennies. When He saw the corruption of that false religious system and saw what it was doing to widows—He pronounced judgment on that system. The massacre of 70 A.D. fulfilled that judgment. True worship is what God requires; false worship is what He judges. The greatest and most sacred thing in our lives is true worship of our triune God. Repent and believe! GTY.org (TMU292) – **The True Character of Christ** – [TOC](#)

Day 420

Can Salvation Extend Beyond the Gospel?

In reality, there are only two possible options for acceptance with God. There is what Jesus called the narrow way and the broad way: they both say heaven, but they both don't go there. The narrow way is the way of the gospel, the way of grace, the way of faith, and it leads to life. The broad road is the way of works and religion, and it says heaven, but it goes directly to hell. There's no salvation apart from belief in the true gospel. All other messages, all other religions, and all other gospels are demonic deceptions, Satanic religions in one form or another. Speaking in that kind of narrow language is not popular. The Roman Catholic Church, not fond of this narrow perspective, has invented a doctrine known as natural theology. And the Roman Catholic Church says people without the Bible, without the gospel, and without any knowledge of Christ will show up in heaven and in the kingdom of God. They will be reconciled to God. God will forgive them and grant them eternal life. On the basis of what? So if you're poor and humble and mourning and suffering without the Bible, without the gospel, and without Christ, you're going to be in the kingdom of God. That's what they call natural theology. In other words, there's a natural way to please God if you behave in a certain moral configuration. In other words, if you behave properly, God can save you across all different religions. Therefore, the natural theology idea in classic Catholicism and the wider mercy theology idea in Protestantism both state that God's salvation extends beyond the gospel. And all who accept these high-sounding words raised up against the true knowledge of God are still in the state of being unreconciled, but without the fear; and if you're without the fear, you're going to hell happily. What amazes me is that people can do it without fear. To propagate a false gospel while denying the true gospel and having absolutely no fear, no angst, no guilt, no dread, no terror, and no torture is to be void of the work of the Holy Spirit, who convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment. What doesn't exist today in the church is that fear. Where are the terrified people? Where are the terrorized sinners? Where is the angst? Where's the dread? To propagate a false gospel and feel nothing but pride is to be in the most dangerous place possible. To have no interest in the true doctrine of justification but to be a happy heretic, and an ambiguous one at that, is to be in a place of the most grave spiritual danger and to make yourself an equally grave danger to those who follow your influence. Repent and believe! GTY.org (48-1) – **Getting the Gospel Right** – [TOC](#)

Day 421

God Gave Us Mercy

There's a reason the Bible calls on us to forgive. Because whoever has offended you has offended God more. And here's the point: If God, who is most offended, has forgiven you, why can't you forgive others? Have you now established yourself as a higher court? Are you above God? Are you going to say, "God may forgive you, but I will not? I have higher standards than God," or "I am more significant than God. You offended God, and He forgave you; you offend me, and I won't"? If God is the most holy and has forgiven the greater offense, can't you, the least holy, forgive the lesser offense? By the way, any wrongdoing against an individual also constitutes an offense against God. In Psalm 41:4, David says, "I've sinned against You." In reality, David had sinned against somebody else, but he saw it for what it really was. Every sin that you ever commit may be a sin against somebody else, but it is far greater a sin against God, who is absolutely holy. If God is the most holy, offended, and forgiving, who are you not to forgive? Are you someone more important than God, with a higher standard than God, someone who deserves more than God deserves? Should we, who really are in some ways incidental to the sinful offense, not forgive? Should we, who are so unholy as to require constant forgiveness, be unwilling to offer it? So we forgive. We forgive because God forbids anger, hatred, and attitudes of vengeance and commands us to forgive. We forgive because He has forgiven; He is the most offended, and we are most like God when we forgive and identify as His children. Furthermore, it's only reasonable that those who have been forgiven the greater sins forgive the lesser ones. God has forgiven us, despite our consistent sins against Him. He is the one most offended and constantly offended. If God forgives us this mass of sin, which is inconceivable in its accumulated debt, which is unpayable and cannot be undone by us, shall we not forgive the small debts of the people in our lives? The point is, you just keep forgiving, and forgiving. It's constant. You can't receive the forgiveness that you receive from God and be unforgiving over the petty things that offend you. God has given you forgiveness for an unpayable debt. We deserve damnation, and yet God gave us mercy. This should teach us to show mercy to our debtors as well. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(82-2\)](http://GTY.org) – **Forgiveness in the Age of Rage – [TOC](#)**

Day 422

The Harvest is Plentiful

Jesus loved, cared for, and ministered to people because of His compassion, their condition, and the coming consummation. Matthew 9:37 says, "Then he said to his disciples, *The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.*" What is the harvest? The harvest is judgment. God calls the nations to judgment. I believe that when the Lord saw the multitudes, He thought of Joel's harvest and judgment. I believe our Lord saw the consummation. He saw the eternal perspective. He saw people beyond their current problems. He saw them as destined for hell. Look at Matthew 13:30: "Let the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the

harvesters: First, collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn." It's judgment, and it's judgment on the multitudes; some will be barned and some will be burned, but it's judgment nonetheless. He perceives a harvest that extends beyond the mission field. That isn't the perspective here. The harvest is the final judgment, the consummation, the end of the ages, and the time of grief. That's what He sees. Listen beloved, Jesus ministered to people because He loved them. He ministered to people because of their terrible condition, and He ministered to people because He could see their ultimate consummation. And if you've lost that vision, you've lost a significant portion of your motivation. It is so easy for us to lose sight of the imminence and inevitability of eternal judgment. There's no way to describe hell. Nothing on earth can compare with it. No living person can really comprehend it. No madman, in the wildest flights of insanity, ever beheld the borders of hell. No man in delirium's ever pictured a place so utterly terrible. No nightmare racing across a fevered mind ever produced a terror equal to that of the mildest hell. The sight of blood-splattered and mutilated bodies in a murder scene could never evoke the disgust that a single glimpse of hell could, and our Lord recognized this, prompting Him to extend His hand to the people. Therefore, our Lord saw the crowds. He taught them. He preached to them, and He healed them because of His compassion, their condition, and the ultimate consummation. I hope that speaks to your heart. It certainly does for me. Repent and believe! GTY.org (2269) – **The Harvest and the Laborers** – [TOC](#)

Day 423

Do You Know God?

Most people think they know God. They say, *"Oh, I believe in God; I'm a spiritual person; I have a place in my life for God. I pray to God."* In spite of all those claims, notice John 15:21: *"All these things will they do to you for My name's sake"*—all this persecution and hatred—*"because they do not know the One who sent Me."* They don't know God—talking about religious people, theologians, priests, pastors, gurus, and religious figures. They don't know God. It's even worse than that. Not only do they not know God, but verse 24 says, *"They have both hated Me and My Father as well."* Here's the condition of an unregenerate human being in the world: he doesn't know God, and he hates God. People don't love God. *"If you loved Me, you'd do"*—what?—*"you'd keep My commandments,"* the first of which is: *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I'm well pleased. Listen to Him."* They reject Christ, and they hate God. *"They don't know the One who sent Me."* It's a shocking statement of reality to the religious: *"You don't know God."* By the way, this was something Jesus said often. In John 8:19, these Jewish people say to Him, *"Where's Your Father?"* He said, *"You know neither Me nor My Father. If you knew Me, you would know My Father also. You don't know Him, and you don't know Me."* That's an indictment of the entire religious establishment of Israel. In verse 41, they say, *"We have one Father: God. God is our Father."* Jesus said, *"If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God."* Verse 44: *"But you're of your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father, who's a murderer. There's no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own*

nature, for he's a liar and the father of lies." However, in verse 55, Jesus says, *"You have not come to know Him, but I know Him. And if I say I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you. But I do know Him."* And the proof? *"I keep His word."* This is the bottom line. If you don't come to Christ for salvation, you don't know God. You are blind, deaf, dumb, and dead. You can't find God on your own. When Christ comes in 2 Thessalonians 1:8, dealing out judgment and retribution, it comes on those who do not know God. I'm not saying they don't know a God exists, because that's obvious. They do know there is a God, but they don't know Him. They don't have a relationship with God. The human race hates God because they don't know Him. Why do they hate Him? They hate Him, the true God, because they love their sin, and He sits in judgment on it. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-86\)](http://GTY.org) – **Why the World Hates Christians, Part 2** – [TOC](#)

Day 424

The Scattered Flock of God

Jesus laid down His life for the sheep. From a natural standpoint, if this happens to the shepherd, that's the end of the sheep. Attacking and killing the shepherd leaves the sheep vulnerable. Both death and scattering are possible outcomes. Whether it's an animal, a robber, or a thief, the death of the shepherd could really spell the end of the sheep. But this shepherd? No. Because He laid down His life, and John 10:18 says *"He had the power to"* – do what? – *"take it up again."* And on the third day, He came out of the grave and regathered his scattered sheep. Were they scattered? Yes, they were. *"Smite the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered,"* is what Zechariah prophesied, and they did. But He came back from the grave and regathered them, and He said this: *"All that the Father gives to me will come to Me, and I have lost none of them."* Therefore, while the shepherd's death typically signified the sheep's demise, this was not the case in this instance. Why did He die? Isaiah 53:8 tells us, *"For the transgression of My people."* Matthew 1:21, *"You shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins,"* His sheep. It's an actual atonement. It's not a potential one that you can sort of turn into a real one by believing. He actually paid in full the penalty for His sheep, whom He knew, and throughout human history, He is calling to Himself. Verse 12 illustrates a stark contrast to a hired hand: *"He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep."* The true shepherd, or owner—and sometimes they are the same—cares about the sheep. It's not a job for him. It's his very life. He has developed relationships with those sheep. They're known to him. They're loved by him. That's not true of hired hands who make no attempt to gather the scattered sheep. False leaders have always plagued the world, attacking the flock of God and fleeing when real trouble arises. But the True Shepherd gives His life for the sheep, and then He takes it back again and gathers them as they have been scattered. So, the church's first priority in leadership is Christ-like shepherding, where you even put your life on the line and risk your life for the sheep. You risk your life to be the one through whom God in Christ can call them out and protect them. When the danger comes, you

don't run, you stand up. All Christians are under-shepherds. We all have to be willing to risk our lives for the sheep. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-53\)](http://GTY.org) – **I Am the Good Shepherd** – [TOC](#)

Day 425

Purchasing Friends for Eternity

The Lord says in Deuteronomy 30:6, *“He will give spiritual life.”* In Ezekiel 36 and Jeremiah 31, He says, *“It’s the Lord’s work to take out the stony heart and give a heart of flesh. It’s the Lord’s work to put the Spirit in the heart.”* So humbly, we sow the seed. Humility is the key. We are humble because we know we are not the power in salvation. However, we are obedient because we know we possess the light. That's the point of the *Parable of the Sower*. You might say, *“Well, if it’s all the power of God, then I don’t have any role to play.”* That's not true, and that's why this parable is here. Listen to verse 21 of the parable in Mark 4: *“A lamp is not brought in to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed?”* You are the lamp. You don't cover up the light. You don't put the lamp under a basket or under a bed; you put it out where everybody can see it. We are humble because we know we do not have the power to change hearts. However, we are obedient because we know we are the means by which the light comes. How will they hear without a preacher? You are told to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Make disciples. Go to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth, because the Spirit of God will come upon you, and you will be empowered for that. We are to be lights in the world, are we not? We are to let our light shine. These are all simple, foundational, basic, and biblical concepts. On the one hand, it's not within our power to change hearts, but it is within our responsibility to be obedient and let the light shine. And so it's not only the message that we preach, which is the pure gospel of the cross and the resurrection, but it's the life that undergirds that personal testimony, a life of light. Jesus is telling us to go to the ends of the earth, scatter the seed, and spread the light. So we go humbly, we go obediently, and we also go diligently. Some people say, *“Well, if you’re going to believe all of this is the work of God, that takes the motivation out of evangelism.”* Look, you are not the cause of anyone's salvation. But you are the means. We are humble about the cause and obedient as the means, and we let the light shine. Just how diligent should we be? Here's the motivation. The usefulness of gospel evangelism is proportionate to the seed sown, which leads directly to eternal reward. Sow sparingly, reap sparingly. Sow bountifully, reap bountifully. So you sow the seed diligently because you know your usefulness is proportional to your sowing. And that leads to divine blessing, which leads to eternal reward. That's how you purchase friends for eternity. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(GTY128\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Theology of Sleep** – [TOC](#)

Day 426

The Personal Miracle

John 6:45 is an affirmation of a very important truth. Jesus is speaking, and He says in verse 45, *"It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God'"*—and He's quoting Jeremiah 31. *"They shall all be taught of God. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me."* By learning the gospel's message, you learn its saving message. 1 John 2 talks about coming to know Him. Therefore, salvation is the point of this passage. On the front side, you have the old self; on the back side, you have the new self; and the point is God's marvelous work in salvation. In Colossians 3:6, there's a parallel: *"The wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived."* That's the way the old life was. But something's changed. Look at verse 10, *"You've have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge"*—again, knowledge, understanding, mind, all those cognitive elements—*"according to the image of the Creator."* So you were supernaturally, sovereignly, and powerfully retrained and reeducated in the truth of the gospel. This transformation is so remarkable that it's akin to a resurrection from the dead. Romans 6:3-4 says, *"Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus"—*immersed into Him, not water baptism—*"were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."* We were dead in sins and trespasses, but then God, in His mercy, placed us into the death of Christ. We were there when He died for us; we died in Him, and we rose in Him. Down in verse 11, *"Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."* I'm just pointing out these passages to make you aware of the fact that salvation is this amazing, complete transformation. He's saying, *"You're no longer a party animal, and the people you once did all those sinful things with now malign you—because they don't know what happened to you."* Peter is emphasizing the power of this transformation. It creates the necessity for new behaviors, new relationships, new friends, and new places. The dramatic nature of this life-saving work prevents you from continuing to live the same way. You can't; you've been transformed. And if you're a true believer, your transformation will be evident in your love for the Lord, your desire to worship Him, your love for those He loves, and your joyful obedience to His law. Have you experienced this transformational miracle? Without it, you can't be a Christian. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49-21\)](http://GTY.org) – **What's Wrong with Everybody?** – [TOC](#)

Day 427

Listen Dependently

We throw the gospel seed, and we shine the light obediently because of the innate obligation and appreciatively because of the individual opportunity. Each of us will personally receive God's blessing for our faithfulness, as well as much more than we deserve. But we must also listen dependently. In this great enterprise of evangelism, we have to understand our limitations as we hear the Word of God, take it in, and proclaim it. The sphere of salvation, the reign of God over the hearts of those who believe, and our role in that, is like a farmer who plants the seed and then goes home and goes to bed. We play no role in the growth of the crop. That's the point. You don't need to live your life in a panic. You don't need to stay awake 24 hours a day. Plant the seeds, shine the light, and go to bed. You're not responsible for what happens. That's the wonder

of it all. It's so paradoxical. The seed goes into the ground and dies. And as it dies, out of it comes life. How does that happen? Nobody knows that. The farmer doesn't know that. A farmer can't make that happen. Nobody can make that happen. The best horticulturalists in the world don't know how that happens. They know it happens, but they can't define how or why it does so. Out of this dying seed comes life—a huge crop. That's the wonder of the gospel; hidden in those simple gospel seeds (truths) is the power of life. It breaks out while we sleep. Look, all I can do is tell the truth. All I can do is speak the truth. I cannot control the outcomes. I can't give life. It's mysterious, just like it is to the farmer. The only human act is to plant the seed and wait. Go to sleep. It's all God's work. First Corinthians 3 says, *"God gives the increase."* Life and growth are a divine operation. No human being contributes to the regeneration, conversion, justification, or salvation process. All we can do is tell the truth. The seed is potent. Listen to this: *"The gospel is the power of God unto salvation."* Romans 1:16. The soil, when prepared by God, will receive the seed, and once God makes it grow, it does not stop until it's harvested. Mark 4:28 says, *"First the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head, and then the harvest."* Philippians 1:6 says, *"Whoever begins a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ."* God completes what he begins. This is a critical lesson to all evangelical manipulators and clever marketers who think they can make people believe. No human being, no matter how persuasive or clever, contributes to regeneration, conversion, or justification. All we can do is give the truth. We can't change hearts, and we can't bring life to dead people. That's something only the Lord does. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(41-20\)](http://GTY.org) – **How to Listen to the Lord** – [TOC](#)

Day 428

The Most Depraved Individuals

Mark 1:31 tells us that Jesus *"Taking her by the hand, raised her up, and the fever left her."* I don't know how long she had been ill, but she had been ill long enough to be prone and flat, and they were fearful. But at that very moment, the fever left her. And it says, at the end of verse 31, *"She waited on them."* She got up and made lunch. The infection was gone. The fever was gone. The symptoms were gone. Now, if you've had a fever for any length of time, you know that even when your temperature starts to drop, you feel weak and don't want to do anything. She had no weakness, no dizziness, no sweating, and no struggling. All the symptoms were gone. She appeared as if she had never been ill. So she served Sabbath dinner. And she did it without a microwave, an oven, a store nearby, or a freezer. Despite this, she prepared meals for four large fishermen, Jesus, and the rest of the family, all of whom would have been present. Now listen, folks, this is an important place for me to say some things about healing. I'm saying this because I care, because it's true, and because it's necessary. There have always been individuals who falsely claimed to be healers, exploiting people's illnesses, suffering, and disabilities for financial gain. They are, in my opinion, the lowest of the low, the most depraved individuals. Getting rich by promising a healing to suffering people—a healing you cannot deliver and a healing God does not promise—is as low as it gets. Every time I hear Benny Hinn and his ilk say, *"If you send me your seed faith, you send me your money, I'll pray over your letter, and God will send you healing."*

I grieve in my heart. Those false promises prey on desperate people, and the world is full of them. It is, to me, the most heinous possible misrepresentation of God and Christ. To me, it is a form of blasphemy, as it results in you receiving all my money while I remain ill, leading me to reject your God. It's horrendous. Look, since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, disease has been a terrible reality. The search for cures to alleviate illness and suffering has consumed mankind and created ground for false healers. If there was such a thing as a healing gift, I'd ask God for it. I would love to be able to do what Jesus did: go up and down the halls of hospitals and have everybody get out of bed and walk out. How wonderful would that be? Now ask yourself: Why doesn't Benny Hinn do that? Repent and believe! GTY.org (41-6) – Kingdom Power – [TOC](#)

Day 429

The Ministry of Reconciliation

You know, if I were God, I might have said to Jesus, *"I need You to die for sinners, so I need You to go down and do that, but I only need You for the weekend. You can descend on Friday, undergo crucifixion, emerge from the grave on Sunday, and be back here by Sunday evening. That's all I really need."* You might wonder, *"Why was Jesus here for 33 years? What is the purpose of the 30 years of obscurity, during which you only catch a fleeting glimpse of Him at the age of twelve, when you know that He is aware of what's happening? What's that about? And why, having endured all of that, would he have to endure three more years of that horrendous ministry? If the cross is everything and the grave is everything, why was that necessary?"* And the answer is this: He was in all points—that is to say, in all chronological points through His entire life—without sin. He was tempted at all points, like we are, but without sin. Jesus lived a perfect infancy, sinless childhood, perfect adolescence, perfect young manhood, perfect adulthood. Why? So that that perfect life in its totality could be credited to your account and my account. And therefore, God treated Jesus as if He lived our sinful life, and God treats us as if we lived the perfect holy life of Jesus. That's the glory of the gospel. That's the doctrine of imputation: our sins are imputed to Him, and His righteousness is imputed to us. That's the defining character of the Reformation. This is too glorious, is it not? He is not worthy of suffering, just as we are not worthy of being saved. He, the worthy One, takes the wrath of God; we, the unworthy, receive the righteousness of God. This is the glorious, glorious gospel that we preach and proclaim, and isn't that the message of Isaiah 53? *"He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities."* Of course, it is. This is in Galatians 3: *"He became a curse for us."* This is the good news of the gospel. I just fear that in this day, being in a big hurry to get a response, we don't really unfold the full glory of the gospel. We want to make sure that while we're inviting people to get into the kingdom, we're getting the door open, and we're making clear what the gospel is and how they are to respond to it. One last little note: he says in this passage, *"We're ambassadors for Christ as though God were begging through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."* So, what do we do? We tell them that God is a reconciler. We tell them that He will forgive all of their sins. We tell them that Jesus is the sufficient and perfect offering who bears God's full wrath for

our sins, and we beg them to take this gift. That's what we do; that's the ministry of reconciliation. Repent and believe! GTY.org (GTY113) – Called to the Ministry of Reconciliation – [TOC](#)

Day 430

A Lack of Penitence

In Matthew 5:20, Jesus said, *“Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”* God doesn't accept superficial self-righteousness. And if your adherence to the law of God is strictly on the outside, you have not only cut yourself off from salvation, but you've put yourself in a position where it won't even appeal to you. And so He's describing a wicked generation that, by our standards today, would be a moral, righteous, even godly society. However, they stand out as the most wretched of all societies due to their belief that forgiveness is unnecessary. That damns. In fact, Jesus says in Matthew 12:39, *“This generation is a wicked generation.”* And then he gives the reason: *“It seeks a sign.”* The totality of their wickedness is tied to the fact that they seek a sign. What's so wrong with that? How does that make them unredeemable? How does this expose them to demonic forces and divine judgment? In this way, they were asking Jesus for a sign to prove to them that He was not Satan's servant. Prove it. We want a sign. If you are not performing miracles by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons, then prove it with a sign. In other words, they were saying their unbelief and their rejection of Jesus Christ and their conclusion that He was satanic rather than divine was His fault, not theirs. If they didn't believe that He was from God, it was His fault. They blamed Jesus for their conclusions. They were saying Jesus left them no other option than to conclude that He was satanic. This is a level of blasphemy that is beyond comprehension. They were considered a wicked generation due to their extreme blasphemy, which included rejecting everything Jesus said and did and concluding that it only demonstrated His service to Satan. Therefore, this wicked generation sought a sign. This is a taunt and a mockery. Prove to us that You're not Satanic. My, my! He had banished disease from Israel. He banished demons from men's souls. He had conquered death and raised the dead. He had created food for thousands. He had calmed a storm. He had controlled the fish. He had walked on the water. All of it together wasn't enough. They had all the required evidence and much more. It wasn't about evidence. It was about their self-righteous moralism, which led them to despise the diagnosis that Jesus had given them. They were so self-righteous. They were unable to refute His supernatural power, leaving only one possible explanation. If not God, then Satan. This is not a lack of evidence; this is a lack of penitence. And in the end, they hated the very God they said they loved. Self-righteousness is so tragic. Repent and believe! GTY.org (42-162) – The Last Sign – [TOC](#)

Day 431

Christ-Centered Sanctification

Some people claim that the key to sanctification is cross-centered sanctification. In other words, you must keep looking at the cross. No, you can't limit it to the cross. It's Christ-centered sanctification. You're looking at Christ. Focusing on Christ transforms you into His image, according to 2 Corinthians 3:18. If we expand that view of Christ to include all that He provides, it encompasses all God's mercies. So what motivates me to make my life a living sacrifice? The mercies of God. It's not narrowly limited. It's expansive. Psalm 116:12 puts it this way: *"What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits unto me?"* In other words, *"What shall I give the Lord in response to all His benefits?"* Here's the answer: You offer your entire life as a living sacrifice. That's what you give. First, you give your soul to God in faith in Jesus Christ, and that's where it starts. It starts with the soul, and then, when you contemplate all that salvation is, that becomes the driving motive for sanctification. People sometimes ask me, *"Why do you focus so much on doctrinal teaching? Can't you be more practical?"* Well, the truth is that your orthopraxy is a direct reflection of your orthodoxy. Your ethical behavior is a direct reflection of your beliefs. Your duties flow out of your doctrine. It's what you believe that essentially shapes your behavior. Therefore, relying solely on practicality is a superficial understanding, as right doctrine serves as the foundation for right behavior. As you gain a deeper understanding of the significance of your salvation, your motivation to continuously offer yourself as a living sacrifice increases. You have to keep doing it because we have a tendency to crawl away from the altar, don't we? Jesus Himself said, in John 13:17, *"If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."* The assumption is that you must know them before you can do them. Paul does that in all his epistles. He begins with the doctrine, transitions with the word *"therefore,"* and then moves on to the application, or the behavior. Peter actually asserts that forgetting the events of your salvation leads to sin. Listen to 2 Peter 1:9: *"Sin comes because you're blind and shortsighted, and you've forgotten your purification from your former sins."* One of the things that we want to do as teachers and preachers is constantly remind you of the glories of salvation so that you don't forget what God has done for you and so that your gratitude affects obedience and sacrifice. In summary, salvation—the saving of the soul—is the first step in making a living sacrifice to God. We must give our soul to God, and the panoply of realities associated with salvation then serves as the motivation for the remainder of the sacrifice, Christ-centered sanctification. Repent and believe!
[GTY.org \(80-414\)](http://GTY.org) – [Elements of a Living Sacrifice](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 432

A Distinctively Christian Doctrine

It's important to understand that sin brings judgment. Sinners are headed for eternal judgment in hell. It's the most hated doctrine because that is so offensive, so unacceptable, and so unbelievable. Therefore, evangelicalism, in its current form, chooses to ignore this and assert, *"Jesus wants you happy. He wants you to be successful. He wants you to compile a list of things you desire from Him, and then you can speak them into existence. And no matter what your carnal desires are, Jesus is here to satisfy them. You don't have to recognize that you're a sinner. In fact, you're born innocent. You don't have to believe that He's the Son of God. You don't even need to*

adhere to the Christian religion, as God embraces all religions." If I say those things to others, that's not offensive. If I say, *"Well, the Bible's a wonderful book, and it has a lot of truth, but of course it's not all true; some of it's myth, you can pick the parts that you want to be myth and eliminate them."* That's not offensive. But when you assert, *"This is the truth, this is all the truth, and the truth is that you are a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, and your default position is to believe lies to such a degree that the truth seems demonic, you are profoundly evil, destined for eternal judgment,"* then you have just destroyed the sinner's house of cards that he has built for self-protection. This is not only the most hated, but also the most distinctively Christian doctrine. What do I mean by that? I mean this: No other religion has this doctrine. Did you hear that? No other religion has this doctrine because all other religions have some form of works salvation, some good in me that can achieve salvation, gain favor with the deity, or cooperate with God. All religions, including false forms of Christianity, affirm that people are good or have enough good in them to contribute to their salvation. They can choose to believe. They can choose to be saved. They can choose to accept Christ. They can bring some of their religiosity, some of their morality, and some of their human goodness as part of the payment for salvation. Every religion is that way. Only Christianity says you bring nothing. Salvation is *"not by works, lest any man should boast," Ephesians 2:9*, it's by grace alone. Only Christianity teaches that. And in order to be a Christian, you have to understand that the salvation that you receive is all of grace, because if you add works, then grace is no more grace. Therefore, although the doctrine of human depravity is the most hated, it is also the most distinctively Christian doctrine, as only Christian truth teaches it. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-132\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Most Hated Christian Doctrine** – [TOC](#)

Day 433

Repentance is Intellectual

Repentance is certainly not some pre-salvation human work. Repentance is not a work added to salvation; it's a part of the saving work that God does in the heart. The call to repentance is not a call to fix up your life or to stop sinning so that you can be saved. I recall a conversation I had with a medical doctor in my office several years ago. He said, *"My life is such a mess. I'm going to come to Christ, but first I want to straighten out my life."* I said, *"Good luck. Can the leper change his spots? Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Of course not. Neither can you, who are accustomed to doing evil, do good."* It's not about you changing your life; it's about the saving work that God does. And when He does His real saving work in the willing heart, repentance is produced. Repentance, the kind that God requires, consists in a settled refusal to set any limit on the claims Christ will lay on your life. You give up everything; take up the cross; follow Him at any cost, even death. This is genuine repentance. You are so eager to give up sin; it doesn't matter what the requirements are or what He asks. This process operates within our will. But first and foremost, it's intellectual. It begins with a recognition of sin as an affront to a holy God. You've got to have a definition of sin, because you're not going to turn away from it until you understand what it is, right? So, part of effectively reaching people and calling them to repentance is defining for them what sin is. Sin is not simply a human weakness or a matter of normalcy, despite the common

misconceptions about it today. We have to make people understand that sin is a violation of God's law and an insult to a holy God. It produces personal guilt that can never be removed throughout all eternity and will require everlasting punishment for those whose sin is not covered. And then you must explain why Christ came: to bear the sins of those who would believe and take their punishment, so God could be just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. Thus, it's intellectual. Understanding sin and the provision for sin in Christ is essential. The horror of sin is evident not only in the Bible's definitions of sin, but also in what sin produced: Christ's death. So, as we look at this issue of repentance, what do we learn about it? It's a part of faith, though it is not just that, and because it's intellectual, it produces a redirection of the will to turn from sin and follow Christ at any cost. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-288\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Doctrine of Repentance** – [TOC](#)

Day 434

Satan's Agents

In John chapter 6, we read about many of the disciples who were with Jesus, but some who were no longer walking with Him turned away. John 15:6 describes them as branches who are cut off and thrown into the fire. The Bible defines apostasy as a departure from the truth, despite having heard, known, professed, and possibly even believed in it. Apostasy is the deliberate rejection of the truth that one has heard and understood. Apostasy is the gravest sin, resulting in the most severe eternal punishment. Now, of those who are apostate, Jude is specifically targeting a particular group of apostates. These apostate false teachers end up serving as Satan's instruments. Despite their departure from the faith, they have become deadly terrorists embedded within the church. They resemble the terrorists of today's world. The world has many Muslims, but not all integrate into society to kill as many as possible and commit suicide. And not all apostates remain in the church as terrorists or as agents of Satan disguised as angels of light, but there are many, many of them. Sometimes they're dressed in backwards collars. Sometimes they're dressed in clerical robes. They're homosexual priests, lesbian pastors, and liberal preachers. Sometimes they wear a cardinal's hat or sit on a pope's throne. Sometimes they are the leaders of a heretical sect. Sometimes, they are professors at a so-called Christian university or seminary. Sometimes they are self-styled scholars writing about biblical issues for national magazines. Sometimes they're debating me on television. Sometimes they're TV preachers and television healers. These terrorists propagate falsehoods, wreak havoc within the church, and blow up people's souls as it were. They are Satan's agents in the church, attempting to corrupt and destroy. Listen to 2 Peter chapter 2, verse 1, *"False prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will"* – and here's the key – *"secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves."* They come in with their heretical bombs and, in the process, willingly blow themselves up. Their own deceptions ultimately condemn them. Every time the writers discuss them in 2 Peter and Jude, they strongly emphasize that their actions inherently bring about their own destruction. They bear a striking resemblance to terrorists. We don't know who they are,

and in many cases, it doesn't seem people even care, so they willingly damn themselves in their effort to damn others. Second Peter deals with Satan's agents, and so does Jude. Second Peter was very likely written before Jude. And Peter says, "They're coming." Jude says, "They're here." Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(65-7\)](http://GTY.org) – **How to Identify Terrorists in the Church** – [TOC](#)

Day 435

The Perseverance of the Saints

God will never allow any temptation to overtake you that you will not be able to endure. That's the promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13. During the great tribulation, we hear about the most tested and potentially terrified believers in history, facing the most powerful assaults from hell's hosts. This occurs during the most troubled and wicked period of human history, when the Holy Spirit's restraining work is removed, Satan makes his final attempt to destroy God's work, and the true saints persevere to the end. You think you've got troubles now; you have no idea how strong saving faith really is. This will be for the whole world of believers what Job's tests were for him – horrific. But Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him," because saving faith perseveres. This brief passage of encouragement is for believers. A lot of folks think this is the worst of times in their lives—maybe so. But it's nothing compared to the great tribulation. People say, "I'm afraid for what's going to happen to the church and believers." Don't be afraid; they will persevere. That's the nature of saving faith. Those who truly belong to Christ will remain loyal. They will not fall prey to the lies or to the deception, and they will not be undermined in their faith. Satan cannot touch them anymore than he could touch Job. This is the special benediction, blessing, and beatitude placed on all of us and those who belonged to the Lord during Antichrist's reign of terror. Where did these saints come from? Before this time, God raptures the church and takes all the believers to heaven. However, as the tribulation period commences, a remarkable explosion of the gospel occurs. The preaching of the two witnesses in chapter 11, the preaching of the 144,000 Jews—12,000 from every tribe that are saved and evangelize the world—and the preaching of an angel in the sky preaching the everlasting gospel. All of these gospel opportunities will explode on the world of that day and many people will be saved. Revelation 7 says, "They'll be saved from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation; and they will be saved in such numbers they can't be counted." Jews and Gentiles will be saved. They will then become the martyrs, crying out for God to bring judgment. But they will persevere. According to 1 John 5:4, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." No matter what happens in the world, no matter how much power Satan, who rules this world, unleashes, our faith overcomes. Verse 5 says, "Who is it that overcomes the world?" Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, you have overcome the world. And these saints will have overcome the power of Satan at its worst. This is the great truth of the perseverance of the saints. In the end, they survive with their faith intact. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-423\)](http://GTY.org) – **Blessing the Dead** – [TOC](#)

Day 436

Confounding the Church

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two solemn acts that the Lord has appointed for His church, and the church has the sacred duty to persevere and administer these precious institutions throughout its life. The significance of baptism is unmistakably clear. In our day, an open, solemn confession of the crucified, risen Lord is necessary. All who experience the reality of the power of the risen Savior should give this public testimony to His glory as an act of obedience. In the New Testament manner of biblical baptism, believers not only testify to their union with Christ but also to their thoughtful, careful, and submissive obedience to the holy Scripture, where nothing can be considered unimportant. Furthermore, in biblical baptism, believers testify to a redeemed church. We testify to a redeemed church being made up only of those who have made that open and public confession because they are truly in union with Christ. This is very, very important. Every expression in the New Testament concerning baptism assumes that the convert receives Christ, embraces Him as Lord, renounces his former life, and is willing and eager to make that public confession. That's the true believer, and that leads to an understanding of the true church. Every New Testament baptism presupposes true saving faith or personal salvation, which is not applicable to infants. Infant baptism is nothing more than a bizarre fabrication because infant baptism is not in Scripture, and it's not a New Testament baptism. There is no call for infant baptism in the Bible. There have been no instances of infant baptism in the bible. And there is no description of infant baptism in the bible. The only baptism that the New Testament knows anything about is the baptism of people who put their faith in Christ. And since infants haven't done that, what does this mean? That means that there are millions of people who wrongly believe they received salvation during their infant baptism. As a result, churches are overflowing with individuals who have not undergone true conversion. Millions of people around the world have received baptism as infants. What spiritual state are these people in? Are all of them going to heaven? As you can see, infant baptism confounds the nature of the church. Infant baptism hopelessly confuses the church because those who are baptized become part of it. You can't distinguish between a believer and a non-believer. Infant baptism destroys the reality of a regenerate church. Who's a Christian? A baptized person? The world is full of infant-baptized people who are indifferent, blasphemous, haters of Christianity, not in the church at all, and have no interest in it. What are we to think of them? What are they? To be in the church, you must put your trust in Christ. And infants can't do that. So why baptize infants and confound the church? Repent and believe! GTY.org (80-369) – **Is Infant Baptism Biblical?** – [TOC](#)

Day 437

The Curse Christ Carried

Galatians 3:13 says, "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law.*" That's the meaning of our redemption. And that's why I say the cross isn't about the emotion of a man scourged. It isn't

about the sympathy we have toward one who was betrayed and hated and rejected and misunderstood. It isn't even that we feel sorry for the nails and the crown of thorns and the public humiliation. Those things occurred to a lot of people. What's really going on here is that Christ is freeing us from the divine curse that falls on all who violate the Law of God by becoming a curse for us. To understand the cross is to understand that the curse that we deserve fell on Christ. He felt the full power of the destruction that should have come on us. He took the curse. This is a stupendous, monumental reality. If you're unfamiliar with the concept of a curse, it can be challenging to comprehend the extent of what He accomplished for us. He took the full impact of God's holy wrath against all our violations of His Law. In a short period of time, he felt the full curse. And the question always comes up: *"How could He feel the full curse in such a brief period of time?"* Because He is an infinite person. It's as if all the curses that should have fallen on all the people who would ever believe and be saved all hit Jesus at the same moment, and He bore the full curse. And He could do that because of the infinity of His person. Therefore, when contemplating the significance of the cross, it's crucial to consider the curse associated with it. God pronounced some horrific judgments in the Bible, and of course, the ultimate judgment is eternal hell for all who violated His Law. But Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, by snatching us out from under the wrath of God and taking the wrath upon Himself. And did He successfully take the wrath? Yes, He did. That's why, throughout the New Testament, it says over and over that God raised Him from the dead. God raised Him from the dead. God killed Him, and God raised Him. Under the weight of the curse, God killed him. And when God's wrath was satisfied and the curse was paid for, He raised Him from the dead. It's just an awesome thing to contemplate, stretching way beyond our feeble minds. When we reflect on all the sins we've committed, all the violations of God's Law, we realize that every sin we commit throughout our lives is accumulating wrath against the day of wrath, accumulating a massive judgment, with each sin adding more weight to the mass of guilt. And so it is with all men; but on behalf of those who believe and are saved, Jesus Christ bears the full curse for all their sins. Oh, what a Savior we have in Jesus! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-333\)](http://GTY.org) – **Considering the Curse Christ Carried** – [TOC](#)

Day 438

The Purpose in Our Pain

Let's apply the word *"grace"* to a very common category: suffering. Job was obviously correct when he said, *"Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward."* In other words, just as it's inevitable that sparks from a fire will go up, it's also inevitable that people will have trouble. But it is equally true for believers that our sufficiency comes from God (2 Corinthians 3:5). We will have trouble. But Jesus said in John 16, *"In this world, you will have trouble. But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* Or, *"My grace is sufficient for you,"* as we read in 2 Corinthians 12:9. All the necessary resources are available to those who believe in Christ. In fact, we turn to the throne of heaven for all our necessities; we approach it for our salvation when we surrender to God, confess and repent of our sins, embrace Jesus Christ, and implore Him to save us. From this throne, we seek wisdom, understanding, and knowledge; we seek sanctifying power and mercy;

we seek the will of God, understanding His thoughts and direction; and we seek hope for the future from this throne, which we refer to as the throne of grace. When monarchs ruled in the ancient world, thrones were not usually places of grace. They ruled with fear, terror, and threat, wielding the power of death. However, the throne of heaven, where the penitent sinner and the believing saint approach, is a throne of grace, constantly dispensing abundant grace to assist us during our times of need. So the question then is: *"When we go through the deepest and most profound of all our troubles in life, is there sufficient grace?"* The answer is yes. But why does God allow us to suffer? God uses suffering to humble His children. God's goal in the life of a believer is that believer's humility. Humility is the ultimate virtue. Pride is the ultimate sin. All other sins stem from pride. This resulted in Lucifer's expulsion from heaven, as well as Adam and Eve's expulsion from the garden. Lucifer wanted to be like God, and Eve wanted to be like God. Pride always leads the parade. The greatest sin is pride, and the noblest virtue is humility. It is necessary to be humble in spirit, to not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to, to focus on the needs of others rather than our own, to have the humble mind of Christ, and to consider others better than ourselves. This is the purest kind of spiritual attitude. It all begins with experiencing brokenness, mourning, hunger, and humility. So God has a purpose in our pain—to humble us and prove that His grace is sufficient. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-313\)](http://GTY.org) – **God's Purpose in Our Pain – [TOC](#)**

Day 439

Is Christ Enough?

Paul, deeply concerned about the Corinthians, says in 2 Corinthians 11:3, *"I am afraid lest, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity associated with Christ."* Christianity is very simple and pure; it's about having and knowing Christ. In Philippians 1:21, Paul also says, *"For to me, to live is Christ, to die is gain."* Furthermore, Philippians 3:14: *"I press on toward the goal, which is the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* When God calls us up, what is the prize? It's to be like Christ. Paul says, *"One day I will be like Christ. Until then, my goal is to pursue that Christlikeness."* We have only one message, and that is Christ. We tell sinners they can have a relationship with Christ, and in that relationship, they will receive everything they need—all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. However, under the guise of Christianity, the gospel, the church, and evangelism, individuals receive a variety of promises and sales pitches. And somewhere in the middle is a significantly diminished, if recognizable, Christ. Anything that diminishes Jesus Christ is a perverted presentation; it is another gospel, a false gospel. We must understand the centrality of Christ because He is everything. He is the all-in-all. In Him all fullness dwells. Colossians 2:3 says, *"Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* Verse 9 says, *"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form."* Verse 10: *"In Him, you have been made complete."* When you ask what a Christian is, it's the one for whom to live is Christ. Jesus is our life. We have no other life; we have nothing but Christ, and we have everything in Him. However, false teachers told the Colossians that they needed more than just Jesus Christ and that Christ alone was insufficient.

The insufficiencies in Christ can be made up by philosophy, human wisdom, legalism, ceremony, ritual, externalism, mysticism, asceticism, or some efforts at self-denial. Nothing has really changed. There are people today who tell us that Christ is not enough; we need more than Christ, more than all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are found in Him. We need Christ, as well as philosophy, human wisdom, and so on. Paul says in verse 8, *“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy.”* This is human opinion. There are no human solutions to spiritual problems. There are no human insights that take us where the Bible doesn't or can't. That is to say, there is nothing necessary for life and godliness that is not delivered to us by the Word through the Spirit. We don't need Christ plus insights into human wisdom and spiritual intuition. You can include all the philosophers from both ancient and modern times, as well as authors, writers, playwrights, movie producers, talk show hosts, psychologists, sociologists, and religious leaders. Their endless discourse on truth, life, and morality, as well as their solutions to human problems and dilemmas, add nothing to what is already in Christ. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-329\)](#) – **Jesus Plus Nothing Equals Everything** – [TOC](#)

Day 440

The Testimony of Our Conscience

False teachers were attacking Paul's integrity, righteousness, credibility, and effectiveness. In defense of himself, he appeals to the highest court, and the highest court that is on earth apart from God Himself is our conscience. He doesn't ask for the testimony of some other men to come to his aid. He doesn't ask for some group to write a letter of commendation. He simply says, *“Whatever you may be saying, our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience.”* Conscience, therefore, is the highest court on earth. According to Romans 2:15, conscience is the soul's warning system, which either accuses us or excuses us. That is, it either affirms us as being good, righteous, and holy, or it indicts us as being evil, sinful, and wicked. And frankly, conscience is the best critic because it knows the innermost secrets of our heart that nobody else does except for God. If we are going to have a peaceful life, a tranquil life with happiness and fulfillment, and if we're going to have the kind of joy that causes our heart to rejoice and gives us the freedom to serve God gladly and happily and without constraint, then we have to have a clear conscience. That should really be the desire and goal of every believer: to be able to say what Paul said: *“You can bring all the accusations against me you want, but the proud testimony of my conscience is that I am living in holiness and godly sincerity.”* We want to experience that kind of affirmation from our conscience, and that's challenging because sin pervades all of our being. Sinfulness is at the very core of the human soul. Jesus said, for example, in Matthew 15:19 and 20, *“Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man.”* And then, in Luke 6:45, he said, *“The evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth what is evil, for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”* In other words, deep down in the human heart is pervasive sinfulness, which rises to create the kinds of words and actions that we label as sinful. Frankly, it's human nature to love sin and hate God. The carnal mind, Romans 8:7 says, is enmity against God. We are born loving sin, loving

ourselves, hating righteousness, and hating God. However, though we are born that way, mark this: sin is not a weakness or a flaw for which we cannot be held responsible. It is an energetic, purposeful antagonism toward God that arises out of our will. Sinners choose sin freely, willfully, and gladly. In other words, the sin that is in us manifests itself in a deliberate, willful rebellion against God. And it's our conscience that will either accuse or excuse us of this. Repent and believe! [GTU.org \(80-129\)](#) – **Keeping a Pure Mind** – [TOC](#)

Day 441

The Third Member of the Trinity

In order to worship the Holy Spirit as He deserves, we are examining His person and work. In my mind, the Holy Spirit is the most abused member of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is often associated with untruth. So many deceptions are basically assigned to the Holy Spirit in order to gain the necessary ground with people for those who have illegitimate desires and goals. The Holy Spirit is blamed for so many terrible things. The Bible warns us about the dangers of blaspheming, insulting, resisting, grieving, quenching, and the way we refer to the Holy Spirit Himself. However, the issue extends beyond simply avoiding blasphemy, abuse, and attributing to the Holy Spirit actions that He would not approve of. It's more than that. We need not only to avoid certain errors regarding the Holy Spirit, but we also need to worship the Holy Spirit fully for what He has done and who He genuinely is. John Owen, in his treatise, urges us to recognize that each member of the Trinity, individually and specifically, has bestowed upon us specific benefits. Since each member of the Trinity has given us these gifts, we must respond to them so that our Trinitarian worship is not as blended as it is separated. To better understand this, consider 2 Corinthians 13:14, which states, *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."* That is a Trinitarian benediction that sorts out the individual features of the ministry of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit for us as believers. It is the love of God. This divine, sovereign love comes from God. It is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Son who provides divine, sovereign grace. And it is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. From the Father comes divine love; from the Son, divine grace; and from the Spirit, divine fellowship. Throughout Scripture, there is overlap in the work of the Trinity, but there is still an emphasis on those specific works that each member does in some unique way. In regard to the Holy Spirit, John Owen writes, *"The Spirit's ministry consists in bringing the promises of Christ to remembrance, glorifying Him in our hearts, shedding abroad the love of God in us, witnessing with us that we belong to God as to our spiritual state and condition, sealing us to the day of redemption, being the earnest or the guarantee of our final inheritance, anointing us with comfort, confirming our adoption, and being present with us in our supplications."* Each member of the Trinity, having done these specific things for us, is to be worshiped in specific response to the work that each has done. Therefore, let's worship the Holy Spirit in the way He deserves. Repent and believe! [GTU.org \(90-416\)](#) – **Giving Thanks to the Spirit** – [TOC](#)

Day 442

How to Live Skillfully

What does it really mean to be educated? Is college really what educates a person? What is most important to know? What is most needed? I think you know the answer because the Bible very clearly says, *"In all of your learning, get"* —what?— *"wisdom,"* spiritual wisdom. We want to learn the book of Proverbs because we want wisdom. Wisdom applies to everything in our lives. Proverbs 2:1 says, *"My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your ear to understanding"*— a synonym for wisdom — *"cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures, then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God."* To pursue wisdom, you must search for it as diligently as you would for hidden treasures. In the book of Job, he discusses mining and digging into the earth. And in Job, it says they do that to find earthly treasure, but nobody can find wisdom. And here it says: *"If you're going to find anything, find wisdom."* Make your ears attentive. If you want to listen to anything, listen for wisdom, turn your heart toward wisdom, plead for discernment, and lift your voice for understanding. He continues to expound on the virtues of wisdom throughout the second chapter. Proverbs 8:11 sums it up: *"Wisdom is better than jewels, and all desirable things cannot compare with her."* The most important thing you will ever gain is wisdom. That leads us immediately to ask the question, *"What is wisdom?"* For a Greek, wisdom meant understanding a concept, being able to comprehend something, analyzing it, thinking about it, and coming to a comprehension about it. In Hebrew, it has a very concrete meaning: *"skilled in living."* The key is to learn how to live skillfully. If you want to pursue something, pursue skillful living and wisdom in every aspect of life. The clarion call of the book of Proverbs says, *"Wisdom cries in the street, and wisdom pleads and pleads and pleads, and you will not listen and you will not hear."* And it says, *"O you naive ones, and O you fools, and O you people who lack discernment, why will you not turn to wisdom?"* What distinguishes a Christian college and those committed to Jesus Christ is not only our pursuit of learning and understanding about our created universe, but also our pursuit of skill in all facets of life, derived from the Scripture and the Word of God. God incarnate in Christ personifies wisdom, and Scripture verbally reveals God incarnate in Christ. Therefore, when we come to Scripture, we learn wisdom. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TMU135\)](http://GTY.org(TMU135)) – Pursuing Divine Wisdom – [TOC](#)

Day 443

The Goodness of God

Romans 2:4 says, *"Do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"* The word *"kindness"* appears twice in that verse. Kindness is a good way to explain goodness, because it's not goodness as opposed to badness. It's not that God is good as opposed to bad; it's that He is good in the sense

of being benevolent. That is the attribute of God that we want to focus on. We want to concentrate on God's innate goodness and goodwill toward sinners. God is by nature merciful, tender-hearted, and compassionate. God withholds judgment. God grants benevolent favors because it's His nature. It's a reason to praise, honor, and worship Him. The Psalms, the Old Testament's worship book, most frequently references kindness and goodness. Psalm 23: verse 6: *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,"* says the psalmist when he contemplates the goodness of God, who is a shepherd who cares for his sheep and provides for them kindness and mercy all the days of their lives. Psalm 25:8 says, *"Good is the Lord"*—that is, kind, merciful, benevolent, and generous. Psalm 31:19 says, *"Great is Your goodness."* You cannot worship God and leave out His goodness, His kindness, His generosity, His benevolence, and His mercy. But how did the Jews respond to God's goodness? The Bible is the story of a rebellious, sinful, impenitent, disobedient people in the face of constant goodness. It was 700 years of God's goodness to a rebellious, idolatrous northern kingdom before God hauled them off in judgment. They had God's Word, the revelation written—not just written in their hearts like the Gentile nations. They had God's goodness in large measure, as well as God's covenant protection and provision. Yet they abused the goodness of God. They trampled on His mercy, spurned His kindness, mocked His love, and rejected His grace—as people continue to do in this nation, in the western world. Exposed to Christianity and all its fullness and richness, this society in which we live abuses God's tolerance and goodness, tramples on His mercy, spurns His goodness, mocks His love, and rejects His grace, just like the people of the past. Matthew Henry said, *"There is in every willful sin a contempt for the goodness of God."* Now, go back to verse 4: *"Do you think lightly of the riches of His goodness?"* In other words, *"Do you underestimate the true value of God's kindness?"* The severest of all sins is mercy despised, and the basic attitude of society today is that God is harsh. They occasionally witness God's judgment and cataclysmic judgment, leading them to conclude that God is harsh, without mercy, and without kindness. Nothing could be further from the truth. The truth is, all sinners should have perished long before, right? The wages of sin is what? Death. The fact that sinners even live is evidence of God's great mercy, kindness, and goodness. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-400\)](http://GTY.org) – **Abusing the Goodness of God** – [TOC](#)

Day 444

Make Disciples

Scripture affirms our primary responsibility as Christians in the world. Of course, we engage in Christian fellowship, engage in praise and worship, and learn and teach the Word of God, but these activities are not our primary responsibilities. Our primary responsibility is summed up in one verb here in this passage in Matthew 28:19, *"make disciples,"* and then the breadth of it, *"of all the nations."* That is the primary reason the church is here. If we were saved for fellowship, then we would be taken to heaven, where fellowship is perfect. If we were saved for praise and worship, we would be taken to heaven, where praise and worship are unhindered and perfect. If God saved us for the purpose of teaching, training, knowledge, and wisdom, He should take us to heaven, where knowledge is perfect. The reason we are left here is in order that we might make

disciples of all the nations. That is our God-given priority as a church. The Bible says, *“Jesus came to seek and save the lost,”* and we have the same task, to seek and bring salvation to the lost. This is what it means to make disciples. It simply refers to the process of becoming a learner and a follower of Jesus Christ. That’s what we are to do. The Bible commands us to carry out this task. Acts 1:8 provides us with the necessary tools to carry out this command: *“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses.”* Therefore, having received the spirit at conversion, we have the resource to witness. Teaching, ministry, fellowship, and worship are all important, but the primary goal is not to do something with the saints but to do something for the lost. That is everyone’s task. However, it can be easily overlooked. We get so enamored and so involved in spiritual ministry and in Christian fellowship and Christian relationships and so busy in church activities and service that we lose touch with the needs of lost people. Sometimes even our theology accommodates us a little bit, and we assume that because the elect are the elect and the Lord will never close the kingdom down on earth until the elect are all in, we have less responsibility to be faithful to this commission. All these things need to be set aside. We must find ourselves obedient to His command and *“make disciples.”* Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-66\)](http://GTY.org) – [Reaching the World](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 445

The Evidence of Regeneration

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that people who are a part of His Kingdom will be different than the rest of the world. They will think differently, talk differently, and act differently. They will have different motives and worship differently. In other words, one can easily distinguish true children of the Kingdom from the rest of the world. There has to be a difference. We’re not to be like the world. When God recreates a person in Jesus Christ, there’s something new; there’s something different. That new creation is, indeed, a new creation. In Matthew 5 to 7, the Lord was talking to a group of people who believed that they were the citizens of the kingdom. However, they were professors of the Holy Spirit, not possessors. They had covered up their sinful hearts with religious garb. They had masked with pseudo-spirituality the real carnality that was characteristic of their nature. They were religious, but they were not regenerated. And so our Lord says, *“Unless your righteousness exceeds that kind of righteousness, you won’t even be a part of My Kingdom.”* So we observed that our Lord was advocating for a high standard of righteousness, which is the fundamental definition of a Christian. He was not endorsing the false, phony, superficial religious practices of those in His day or ours. So our Lord was saying, *“It’s not the ones who claim to be in the Kingdom, but it’s the ones who prove it by their living; by the fact that they are distinct, different, and unique.”* And we told you that if you are not living that way, if your life is not distinctly different from the world, there is a real possibility that you are not a Christian at all, no matter what you claim, no matter what you imagine, no matter how religious you are. Unless there is a distinction in your living, there is a good possibility that there is no distinction in your nature, either. Paul says the same truth in Ephesians chapters 1 to 3: *“If this is who you are,”* verses 4 to 6, *“then this is how you act.”* You can never separate the two. There is

always the standard in terms of position, and then there is always the activity in terms of behavior, and they go together. Peter, John, Paul, and Christ are all saying the same thing. If you are a believer, this is how it is manifest. Peter says you have received the new nature. You have received a nature that is beyond corruption. You have received great and precious promises; you have been made a partaker of the divine nature. Therefore, if you're not living a different life, there's a real possibility you're not a new creation. Because new creatures act like new creatures. That's the evidence of regeneration. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(1930\)](#) – **Principles of New Life** – [TOC](#)

Day 446

A Death Cult

The 2024 Democratic National Convention is a revelation of the sinful depths to which our society has sunk. It's a celebration of all that God hates. A keynote speaker, Oprah Winfrey, declared that without aborting babies, there is no American dream. Achieving limitless abortion is at the top of their agenda. The Democratic Party has become a death cult. In further evidence of the prevailing evil, a clinic/alter was set up at the convention to provide attendees with free abortions and vasectomies—a hateful assault on family. The DNC platform emphasizes the celebration of homosexuality and transgender perversion—a further assault on the Creator and His creation. The DNC set up gender-neutral prayer rooms throughout the convention center equipped with Islamic prayer rugs, thus promoting satanic religion. So here is the new American dream—blatant immorality, homosexuality, child sacrifices, and satanic religion—all reflecting the death of truth, conscience, and virtue, but mostly a rejection of the Bible—the Word of God. Blasphemy against God is the dominant theme. God is not mocked. He will respond with judgment. His first wave of judgment is operating even now, as described in Romans 1:18–32. That passage in Romans describes what takes place when God abandons a nation. God abandons them to immorality, homosexuality, and a reprobate mind, also known as moral insanity. In the future, there will also be a final judgment, as described in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10. Everything leads to physical, spiritual, and eternal death. Shockingly, joining the death cult are “*Judas evangelicals*,” who have sold their souls to the devil, supporting his cause for popularity, fame, and money. While the DNC is the catalyst, the need for addressing these pressing issues is much bigger than any political agenda, as society at large has moved beyond acceptance of sinful behavior and now celebrates it. The promotion of this behavior is inescapable and spreads far beyond the United States' borders. Therefore, in these days of God's judgment, it's imperative to comprehend crucial biblical truths, enabling us to share them with both the lost and those who profess Christ but lack faithfulness to God's Word. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-448\)](#) – **Abortion and the Campaign for Immorality** – [TOC](#)

Day 447

What is Peace?

The world defines peace as calm, tranquility, quietness, bliss, contentment, and well-being when you believe everything is well and everything is as you want it. Now that's a nice worldly definition of peace, but it's rather shallow because, frankly, calm feelings, tranquility, and quietness can be produced by a pill, a nap, alcohol, or when your wealthy aunt dies and leaves you a fortune. That's not the kind of peace that Paul has in mind in 2 Thessalonians 3, because the kind of peace he prays for with regard to believers has nothing to do with human beings and nothing to do with human circumstances. It can't be produced by a pill, by sleep, or by alcohol. You cannot achieve it through material gain or any mechanism that manipulates your mind. You cannot produce it on a human level or through circumstantial means. It's not that kind of peace he's talking about. That kind of peace, honestly, is very fleeting. The kind of peace that the world experiences is easily destroyed, rarely lasts very long, and can be diminished by many things. For example, failure, doubt, fear, difficulty, anxiety over the outcome of something, violated relationships, guilt, shame, distress, regret, sorrow, the fear of being overpowered or defeated, the anxiety about being wrong, the anxiety about making a bad decision or a wrong choice, the anticipation of being mistreated or maligned, actually being mistreated, or being victimized by someone. That peace can be shattered by the unknown, the uncertain future, bitterness, anger, pride, vengeance, or any challenge to your place, your position, your possessions, or your security. That is a very fragile kind of peace. That's just life. And as life doses out its normal dose, it just robs us of human peace. This type of peace is extremely fragile. But we're not talking about that kind of peace. We're not talking about a fragile, human, circumstantial sense of calm induced by a drug. We're talking about something completely different. We're talking about a spiritual peace—the true, deep-down peace—the attitude of the heart and mind that calmly, confidently believes and thus knows that all is well between the soul and God. That's the peace we're talking about. It's that confidence that everything is right between myself and God, and He is lovingly in control of my life in time and eternity. It's the presence of a calm assurance based on the knowledge that God has forgiven my sins, cares for my well-being, and heaven awaits. It's a deep-down peace. It has nothing to do with what anybody says to you, what anyone does to you, or doesn't do to you; it has nothing to do with any circumstance in life whatsoever. It's the spiritual peace that God gives to His beloved children. It's their rightful possession, and their rightful privilege. It's the peace of God. Repent and believe! GTY.org (53-17) – [Peace in Every Circumstance](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 448

Understanding Darkness

What is the outcome of salvation? Ephesians 5:8 tells us: *“For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord.”* And since you are now of the light, there are two commands: One: *“Walk as children of Light.”* Two: *“Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness.”* So

darkness and light are set against each other. This is a stark contrast. They are mutually exclusive, and that is why the Lord has chosen, by His Spirit, this particular analogy. It's the best figure to show the complete separation of the non-Christian from the Christian, the complete separation of the child of Satan from the child of God. One is darkness, the other is light, and the contrast is extreme to show the difference, the distinction, and the opposite nature between Christians and non-Christians. The darkness of this world is deep and ever-increasing. It's a spiritual black hole engulfing the world, and into which the world plunges deeper and deeper all the time. Scripture prefers to use this comparison because it is so stark and extreme. For example, 2 Corinthians 6:14: *"What fellowship has light with darkness?"* Colossians 1:12: *"For He rescued us from the domain of darkness."* Peter 2:9: *"Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."* This is the contrast that's so familiar in the New Testament. Now, darkness represents four things. It represents depravity; it describes the human condition in sin. Not only does it represent depravity, but it also represents deception; it speaks of the darkness of the mind. So darkness is associated with depravity, as well as deception. Thirdly, it is clearly associated with death; the profound darkness of death defines the spiritual condition of nonbelieving people, people outside the kingdom of God. And finally, darkness is used to describe the destruction of hell, which is a place of blackness, a place of outer darkness, in which people are bound in chains of darkness and blackness forever. So darkness is depravity, deception, death, and destruction in hell. In the Bible, it's an ominous reality, but this is what darkness represents. There are also instances in the Bible where darkness symbolizes divine judgment, such as during Jesus' death, when the Lord God was judging Him and punishing Him for our sins. So the concept of darkness relates to all that is unrighteous, from our depravity to our eternal destruction. Therefore, the apostle Paul gives us instruction for living the Christian life and walking through the world in a way that honors the Lord. He tells us to walk worthy, walk in unity, walk in purity, walk in integrity, walk in love, and walk in light. Why? Ending where we began; Ephesians 5:8 says, *"For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord."* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49-30\)](http://GTY.org) – **From Darkness to Light – [TOC](#)**

Day 449

Our Responsibility to Government

Romans chapter 13 is the most formidable New Testament chapter summing up the believer's responsibility to the government. This chapter is universal in its application. Whatever kind of government, whatever era, whatever century, whatever circumstances, the general principles that we see here about our conduct apply. And this, of course, is the supernatural wonder of Scripture, that two thousand years after it is written, it speaks specifically and applicably to the times in which we live. It describes government as an institution established by God in all its forms for the punishment of those who do evil and the protection of those who do good. According to Scripture, our responsibility is to submit and pay our taxes. For many of us, particularly Christians, we don't like the direction that our government is taking. We object to the moral decisions the government is making, such as legalizing gay marriage, abortion, and stem cell research, among

other things, which we believe elevate immoral people, encroach on our lives, and erode our freedoms. These actions deeply disturb Americans, particularly those who identify as Christians. These issues have led many Christians to develop a rebellious attitude towards the government. It may not take the form of an outright revolution, but it's definitely a heart revolution. Maybe you feel it would be okay not to pay your taxes. In Matthew 22:21, Jesus washes that thought away very rapidly when He says, *"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."* Despite its unfairness and your lack of involvement in its use or abuse, pay Caesar's tax. Jesus did it Himself. Jesus did not come to seek social change. His appeal was always to men's hearts; it was always to their souls, not their political freedoms. He preached the gospel, understanding that the transformation of hearts brings about all that is just, equitable, good, noble, and elevated. He was not interested in establishing a new social order, but rather in establishing a new spiritual order. Therefore, He did not come to establish a new nation, but rather to establish the church. We cannot allow the fact that everything isn't as we would like it to cause us to shift our focus from an appropriate responsibility to the government to an inappropriate one. Nor can we turn away from the necessary message of the gospel to any other lesser message that relates to politics or social change. We are to live godly lives in the world. We are to demonstrate and pursue righteousness, call for righteousness, and uphold righteousness. Clearly, our role is to bring God's revelation into our society, enabling everyone, including those who do not believe, to experience the common grace that God bestows when they adhere to His laws. We have the responsibility to carry out all these tasks. We are the very expression of divine righteousness in the world and in culture. And Scripture specifically states two things about our responsibility to the government: submit to it and pay your taxes. Repent and believe!

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Day 450

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Scripture tells us in Lamentations 3:23 that *"Great Is Thy Faithfulness."* That means that God keeps His word, that He is trustworthy. How important is that? That's all-important because we have committed our lives to Him, right? We're counting on His faithfulness. We're counting on the fact that what He promised, He will do; that when He said, *"If you put your trust in Me, embrace Christ as Savior and Lord, I will forgive your sins, I will bring you to heavenly glory, and give you an inheritance of everlasting wealth."* That's the promise. The question is: *"How do we know God is going to keep His promise to us?"* A graphic illustration of that is the nation, Israel. Are we seeing any indication of God's faithfulness to Israel? Well, indeed, we are, because they are still here. Since the Old Testament, there have been nonstop attempts to exterminate the Jews. Why do all these people hate the Jews? The answer is pretty simple. Satan has two objectives. One is to destroy the Messiah, but he failed. So now he must destroy God's people, Israel. Satan is attempting to thwart God's plan by destroying Israel. Scripture lays out Satan's plan for us, and it goes like this: Create a global animosity towards Jews and intensify it. Where is it going to come from? How can you incite hatred towards Jews throughout the world? The answer lies in Islam

and its global spread, which fuels this hatred towards Jews. That's part of the strategy, but it's not the whole thing. There is a massive effort to create a one world government. It's called globalization. And what is this about? Well, behind it lies the idea that peace in the world is never going to come as long as you have nations, because nations make war against each other. Therefore, the only way to achieve global peace is to eradicate all nations by establishing a single global Islamic government that will control everything for the sake of peace. National sovereignty poses the greatest threat to this goal, and the United States stands as the biggest obstacle. In their pursuit of establishing a global government, they are making every effort to undermine the governments of all nations, particularly the United States. That's the satanic plan. And it's a plan that is being implemented by Hamas and Hezbollah and any other terrorists who kill Jews. It's a plan that will eventually infect the entire world, and it doesn't seem nearly as distant as it once was. Isn't it amazing that God protects the Jews and preserves them? That is proof that He keeps His word. He promised them that He would protect them, preserve them, and one day bring them to the land, salvation, and kingdom. You are witnessing the evidence of God's faithfulness. So, if you ever wonder whether God will keep His promises to you, just look at Israel. Great is thy faithfulness! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(82-23\)](http://GTY.org) – **In God We Trust** – [TOC](#)

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The Truth in Love,

Mark Paul

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